

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Thirtieth meeting of the Animals Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 16-21 July 2018

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION ON LION TRADE

This information document has been submitted by the Secretariat at the request of the Environmental Investigation Agency in relation to agenda item 25*.

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CITES AC30 AGENDA ITEM 25: Supplementary information on lion trade, July 2018

1. Rather than serving as a ‘cheaper more readily available substitute’ to tiger in consumer markets, lion trade is exacerbating demand for tiger and other big cat products

AC30 Inf. 15 notes “it is speculated that ... lion bone can be used as a cheaper more readily available substitute” to tiger in consumer markets. However, publicly available court records from China indicate that lion parts are not traded as a cheaper substitute to tiger, and instead are sold to consumers as tiger. We are very concerned that trade in lion is exacerbating the perceived availability and acceptability of tiger products and is stimulating further demand.

In eight of a total 23 seizures of lion parts in China collated by EIA (see overleaf), court records specifically indicate that the item in question was being sold as tiger, and thus was not serving as a substitute product. We therefore support the alternative interpretation that lion parts are serving to augment demand for tiger.

Court records also reveal that per kilogram prices for lion bone in China one step in the trade chain away from the final consumer are 2-3 times higher than those for wild-sourced tiger bone.

2. The scale of illegal lion trade in China is much larger than reported

EIA has collated information on seizures of lion parts and products in China from open source media, including news reports and publicly available court records. While this is not a comprehensive dataset, EIA totals are significantly higher than those included on the table on page 27 of AC30 Inf. 15.

Total seizures of lion parts in China, comparison of data from Inf. 15 and EIA records

	Inf. 15	EIA records		Inf. 15	EIA records
Claws	1	343, plus additional seizure, no. seized not specified	Bones	0	123, plus 7 additional seizures, no. seized not specified
Teeth	2	24, plus 4 additional seizures, no. not specified	Skeletons	11	31
Skins	2	3	Bodies	1	2

This information demonstrates that China is a key destination country for trafficked lion parts.

3. A severe lack of oversight from importing countries, particularly Lao PDR

According to AC30 Inf. 15, the Lao PDR Scientific Authority denies that the country has imported or re-exported any lion parts and products, despite indications that Lao PDR is the single biggest importer of lion bones and skeletons, and indications of extensive illegal international trade in lion parts and products out of the country. Lao PDR is currently under the Article XIII process, and this response is symptomatic of persistent failures in the country.

Recommendation: Noting the information above and

- a) the observations in AC30 Inf. 15 and other sources regarding widespread overlap between those involved in international lion trade and trade in tigers and other CITES-listed species;
- b) the observations in AC30 Inf. 15 and other sources regarding lack of oversight of importers and routine leakage of imported lion products into illegal international trade;
- c) and a deficit of information regarding potential impact of this trade on lions and other big cats,

EIA calls for a zero-export quota for lion parts and products for commercial purposes from any country, including from captive sources, and supports the SSN’s recommendations.

Seizures of lion parts and products in China, 2011-2017 (cases where lion was sold as tiger are highlighted in orange)				
INCIDENT	Lion bone seized	Lion teeth seized	Lion claws seized	Other lion parts seized
North Korea to Jilin tiger, lion and bear bone smuggling and seizure, 5 September 2011	0.97 kg			
Jinan lion teeth, Asian big cat skins and ivory seizure, 22 June 2013		Y, amount not specified in source		
Changbaishan tiger bone and lion teeth seizure, 9 October 2013		Y, amount not specified in source		
Yunnan Wildlife Seizure, 10 January 2014	100			
Leizhou, Guangdong tiger and lion seizure, 14 March 2014	Y, amount not specified in source			
Tianjin tiger, lion, ivory trading and seizure, transported via Guangxi, to April 2014	31 skeletons			
Leizhou, Guangdong lion parts seizure, 20-22 July 2014				3 skins, 10.5 kg organs and 2.6 kg meat
Jilin lion, tiger, leopard & clouded leopard parts seizure, 14 August 2014	Y, patella and phalanges	Y, amount not specified in source	Y, amount not specified in source	
Zhejiang lion skeleton seizure and wildlife consumption investigation 2015, reported May 2016	20 kg			
Guangxi lion teeth, ivory, rhino horn seizure, 16 March 2015		0.19 kg		
Suifenhe lion bone and tiger whiskers seizure, 4 May 2015	2			
Xiamen Airport lion claw, lion teeth and leopard teeth seizure, transported via Hong Kong, 13 May 2015		4	343	
Shandong seizure of lion bone, sold as tiger bone, June 2015	2			
Suzhou, Asiatic lion carcass sold, July 2015				
Suifenhe ivory and lion tooth seizure, transported from Russia, 30 July 2015		2		
Leizhou, Guangdong tiger and lion seizure, transported from Anhui, 9 August 2015				2 carcasses
Hunchun lion bone, tiger bone and bear teeth seizure, 13 August 2015	Y, amount not specified in source			
Qinzhou seizure of lion bone, pangolin, bear paws and elephant skin, 9 January 2016	12			
Dongxing seizure of lion bones, tiger meat, pangolins, bear paws, elephant skin, 10 January 2016	4			
Qingdao Airport lion teeth and ivory seizure, 26 August 2016		2		
Dongxing lion, ivory, rhino horn, pangolin seizure, February 2017	6.95 kg	16		
Nanjing ivory, lion bone and other wildlife operation, 2016-2017	Y, amount not specified in source			
Wangqing County lion bone seizure, 25 March 2017	3			