

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



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

CORALS

Membership (as decided by the Committee)

Co-Chairs: the acting representatives of Europe (Mr. Nemtsov) and Asia (Mr. Diesmos);

Parties: China, European Union, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan and United States of America; and

IGOs and NGOs: FAO, Association of Western Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Conservation Force, Environmental Investigation Agency US, Global Guardian Trust, Natural Resources Defence Council, TRAFFIC, World Wildlife Fund, and University of Cagliari.

Mandate

Taking into account the information provided in document AC Doc. 19, the expert study and the analysis of the intersessional working group thereof, as well as discussions in plenary, the in-session working group shall endeavour to prepare draft recommendations, as appropriate, on actions needed to enhance the conservation and sustainable harvest and use of all precious corals in international trade and on any other relevant issues it identified for reporting to the Standing Committee at its 70th meeting. Where this is not possible, the in-session working group shall advise on a way forward, including draft decisions.

Recommendations

A. On future drafts of the FAO report

The in-session working group recognizes that the draft FAO report is very wide-ranging, that it was received by the working group in its present form not long before the Animals Committee meeting, that before it can be finalised it still requires input from Parties and other stakeholders and that it will be peer-reviewed. The working group acknowledges that the FAO will welcome suggestions from the Animals Committee for peer-reviewers of the report.

The working group recommends that:

1. The Animals Committee invites the Secretariat:
 - a) to work with FAO to finalize the report by CoP18;
 - b) in doing so, and in order to make the report as useful as possible and to ensure input from the Parties and from a peer-review process from a broad range of experts, to liaise with the members of the intersessional working group on corals including on the review of future drafts;
2. The Animals Committee encourages TRAFFIC to make its relevant information on Pacific precious corals available as soon as possible for inclusion in the FAO report.

3. The Animals Committee recommends to the Standing Committee to propose to CoP18 the extension of Decisions 17.192 and 17.193.

B. On conservation and sustainable use:

The working group recognizes the importance of science-based management for conservation and sustainable use.

For the CITES-listed black corals, the working group recognizes the need for better information on their conservation and sustainable use, and the need for strengthening data-collection and reporting from most areas.

For *Corallium* species, the working group acknowledges that there have been advances and developments in fishery management and conservation arrangements in some regions, such as Japan's new regulation in the Pacific, the new adaptive management plan by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) for red corals (*Corallium rubrum*) in the Mediterranean Sea, and others.

The working group recommends that:

4. The Animals Committee:
 - a) to continue to look at issues of conservation and sustainable use of precious corals, and to continue to keep track of new institutional changes in order to understand their effectiveness;
 - b) encourage Parties to continue to strengthen their domestic management and conservation measures concerning all precious corals; and
 - c) remind Parties which export CITES Appendix-II listed black coral species, to make non-detriment findings (NDFs) and encourage these Parties to provide copies of the NDFs to the Secretariat.

C. On international trade

The working group recognizes the challenges in acquiring data on international trade in precious corals from many countries.

The working group recommends that:

5. The Animals Committee:
 - a) notes the challenges of analysing trade in coral products since the current Harmonized System (HS) classification amalgamates them with other species due to the lack of specific custom codes;
 - b) further notes the cumbersome process of adopting specific custom codes on an international level;
 - c) in this light, recommend to the Standing Committee to take into account the challenges posed by the lack of specific customs codes for international trade in precious corals and their parts and derivatives, when considering the finalized FAO report and making its recommendations, as appropriate.
 - d) recommend to the Secretariat to follow-up on cases of illegal trade for CITES-listed species black corals referred to in the FAO report.

D. On a way forward

6. The working group recommends that the Animals Committee notes Decision 17.181 on the new treaty on marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) which may have relevance to CITES listed corals and CITES Introduction from the Sea certificates.
7. The working group recommends that the Animals Committee notes that there are many potential impacts on many coral populations in the wild (including climate change, ocean acidification, and others) which may affect precious coral too, which should be taken into account to understand the coral diversity of marine waters.
8. Notwithstanding the possible future implementation of Decision 17.192, the working group encourages the Animals Committee to keep the issue of precious corals under review, in order to determine what new data are available with a view to updating the study before the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP19, 2022).