

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



Thirty-first meeting of the Animals Committee  
Online, 31 May, 1, 4, 21 and 22 June 2021

Species specific matters

ADDENDUM TO WEST AFRICAN VULTURES (ACCIPITRIDAE SPP.)

1. This document has been submitted by the co-chairs of the working group on West African vultures (Accipitridae spp.).\*

Update on progress since May 2020

2. Following the postponement, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, of the 31st meeting of the Animals Committee meeting, scheduled to take place from 13 to 17 July 2020, the Committee took a number of intersessional decisions (see Notification No. 2020/057 of 22 September 2020), including the establishment of an intersessional working group on *West African vultures (Accipitridae spp.)*, with the following mandate:

Address key gaps in knowledge as it relates to the biological and trade issues highlighted in the Vulture Multispecies Action Plan (Vulture MsAP), with particular attention for the six species mentioned in Decision 18.188 and the West African region, and including but not limited to trade in vulture parts of belief-based use (Objective 4), sentinel poisoning by poachers (Objective 5), cross-cutting actions that contribute to addressing knowledge gaps (Objective 11), and contribute to effective implementation of the Vulture MsAP (Objective 12), by:

- a) reviewing the information on West African vultures (Accipitridae spp.) submitted under Notification No. 2020/034, and any additional relevant information submitted by the United Nations Environment Programme – World Conservation Monitoring Centre and the International Union for Conservation of Nature – Species Survival Commission Vulture Specialist Group;
  - b) conducting a detailed assessment on the scale and impact of legal and illegal trade in live birds, eggs, and vulture body parts across the range of the Vulture MsAP with the assistance of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and other relevant stakeholders; and
  - c) providing findings and recommendations to the Animals Committee for consideration at its next meeting.
3. The membership of the working group was decided as follows:

Co-chairs: Guy Appolinaire Mensah (representative for Africa), Ashgar Mobaraki (representative for Asia) and Ngalié Maha (alternative representative for Africa);

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\* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

- Members: Hugh Robertson (representative for Oceania) and Saeko Terada (alternate representative for Asia);
- Parties: Burkina Faso, European Union, Hungary, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America; and
- Observers: Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), United Nations Environment Programme- World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Animal Welfare Institute (AWI), A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute (APLORI), Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), BirdLife International, Born Free USA, Humane Society International (HSI), Nigerian Conservation Foundation, Sahara Conservation Fund, Species Survival Network (SSN), TRAFFIC and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).

4. The group worked electronically.
5. In support of the mandate of the working group, UNEP-WCMC collated information on the conservation of and trade in vultures in the report “West African vultures – a review of trade and sentinel poisoning” (2021), and shared key resources and documents on the issue.

#### Revised recommendations

6. The Animals Committee is invited to:
  - a) request the range States to manage available resources to provide information on population estimates, population monitoring, collection of legal and illegal trade data, data to understand the drivers of the trade and the development of interventions to address those drivers, as well as implementation of existing laws and regulations at national scale;
  - b) encourage the Secretariat to cooperate closely with CMS regarding the conservation of vultures, with an emphasis on species highlighted in the Action Plan (AP);
  - c) consider whether the transfer of any or all of the focus species to Appendix I would be appropriate;
  - d) request the Standing Committee to develop capacity-building mechanisms for providing support to the West African range States in implementing the Action Plan and providing information on species to the Secretariat;
  - e) urge the range States to give details on their national programmes for the implementation of the AP and to prepare relevant reports on the conservation status of the species in each range State;
  - f) request the Standing Committee to recommend range States not to undertake commercial exports of vulture species until further population data is collected;
  - g) based on the available data on trade, include the whole geographic range of the six species in further work rather than focus on only West African States;
  - h) request the Secretariat to encourage Parties to complete and submit CITES illegal trade reports in order to strengthen data on illegal trade to inform decision making; and
  - i) recommend that the range States monitor use of Diclofenac in livestock and possible effects on vulture species, and act to prepare a plan to prevent of any serious harm to the vulture species, like experienced in other parts of the world and emphasized in technical reports.