

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



Thirty-first meeting of the Animals Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 13-17 July 2020

Regional matters

Regional reports

NORTH AMERICA

1. This report, covering the period from August 2019 to May 2020, was prepared by Hesiquio Benítez, Regional Representative for North America, in collaboration with the CITES authorities of Canada, Mexico, and the United States.*

Overview of major developments

a) Review of Significant Trade

Canada. None to report for this period.

Mexico. None to report for this period.

United States. None to report for this period.

b) Periodic Review

Mexico

During the 29th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC29, Geneva, 2017), and in response to Notification to the Parties No. 2017/069, Mexico agreed to evaluate four native species as part of the Periodic Review of species included in CITES Appendices in accordance with Resolution Conf. 14.8 (Rev. CoP17) as follows:

1. Mexican prairie dog (*Cynomys mexicanus*);
2. Coahuila box terrapin (*Terrapene coahuila*);
3. Guadalupe Fur Seal (*Arctocephalus townsendi*), in conjunction with the USA; and
4. Mexican Grey Tarantula (*Aphonopelma pallidum*).

The National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO), in its capacity as Scientific Authority (AC-CITES), concluded the review of the Coahuila box terrapin (*Terrapene coahuila*) and the Mexican prairie dog (*Cynomys mexicanus*), and submitted both reviews for consideration by the Animals Committee (AC31). Also CONABIO is supporting a project for the periodic review of *Aphonopelma pallidum*.

* 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.

Since the United States (US) is coordinating the periodic review of Guadalupe Fur Seal, CONABIO shared with US Authorities contact information of Mexican experts, so they can provide input regarding its situation in the Mexican range of the species.

United States of America

At the Twenty-ninth meeting of the Animals Committee (AC29; Geneva 2017), the United States agreed to take the lead in preparation of periodic reviews for Aleutian Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis leucopareia*) and Short-tailed Albatross (*Phoebastria albatrus*) as part of the Periodic Review process. Both species are currently included in CITES Appendix I. We have consulted with range states and the review process is still underway.

Canada and Mexico contributed information toward the periodic reviews for Aleutian Canada Goose and Short-tailed Albatross in the Periodic Review Process that is being led by the United States.

c) Registration of operations that breed Appendix-I animal species in captivity for commercial purposes

Canada. None to report for this period.

Mexico. None to report for this period.

United States of America. None to report for this period.

d) Non-detriment findings (NDFs)

Canada

In Canada, NDFs are determined on a permit-by-permit basis. For heavily traded species, standing NDF reports are prepared to support the issuance of export permits. Canada's species-specific standing NDF reports are developed in collaboration with the federal-provincial/territorial CITES Scientific Authorities working group, as well as participation and review by species experts and Indigenous peoples. Canada has standing NDFs that cover the majority of Canada's trade including for Atlantic Sturgeon, Black Bear, Bobcat, Canadian Lynx, Cougar, Goldenseal, Grey Wolf, Grizzly Bear, Narwhal, Polar Bear, River Otter and Sandhill Crane. Every three years, standing NDF reports are reviewed and, if necessary, updated with the most recent information. Canada's Standing Non-Detriment Finding Reports are available on the Environment and Climate Change Canada's website.

Mexico

From August 2019 to May 2020, CONABIO formulated 153 NDF on a permit-by-permit basis for 11 animal species (*Panthera onca*, *Ovis canadensis*, *Carcharhinus falciformis*, *Sphyrna zygaena*, *S. lewini*, *S. mokarran*, *Alopias pelagicus*, *Isurus oxyrinchus*, *Puma concolor*, *Crocodylus moreletii* and *Boa constrictor*). CONABIO also formulated 11 technical opinions regarding management plans for CITES species (*Ovis canadensis*; *Puma concolor*; *Lynx rufus*, *Spizetus* spp., *Accipiter bicolor*, *Ctenosaura defensor*, *Falco ruficularis*, *Terrapene carolina*, *Heloderma horridum* and *Abronia graminea*).

In December 2019, the General Directorate for Wildlife of the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (DGVS-SEMARNAT; CITES Management Authority) conducted aerial monitoring of bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*) in Baja California Sur, where CONABIO also participated. Results will be used to determine harvest quotas and to NDF issuance for the next three seasons; likewise, these will indicate if it is necessary to reinforce particular conservation actions (*i.e.* repopulation, main impacts, etc.).

CONABIO in cooperation with experts from the Interdisciplinary Research Center for Integral Regional Development Oaxaca Unit (CIIDIR); UNAM Institute of Ecology; Predator Conservation, A.C.; UAM-Lerma; Autonomous University of Nayarit and independent consultants; conducted an analysis to update the potential distribution model and estimates of potential densities of lynx (*Lynx rufus*) and cougar (*Puma concolor*) to establish precautionary harvest quotas in the states of Nuevo León and Sonora (completed in March 2020).

Following on the "Workshop to strengthen technical and administrative capacities in the issuance of export permits for Mexican sharks listed in CITES" (Mexico City, June 2019), the National Institute of Fisheries (INAPESCA) and CONABIO reviewed methodologies and jointly agreed on sustainable export volumes for each of the Mexican CITES shark species of commercial interest as a pilot for 2020.

United States of America

Since Aug 2019 (to April 22, 2020), the United States of America has issued 314 individual Non-Detriment Findings (NDFs) for animals and 18 COSEs, which cover both animals and plants in addition, to the NDFs we make in the form of General Advices.

e) Capacity-Building

Canada. None to report for this period.

Mexico

In March 2020, CONABIO gave presentations about CITES, its goals and implementation in Mexico at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), to increase their comprehension of the Convention and to generate awareness about the importance of its correct implementation and compliance.

USA

Through two partnerships, one with Atecma Asesores Tecnicos de Medio Ambiente (ATECMA) and another with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) with funding from USAID supported 16 professionals from 12 countries in Central America (6), South America (1), the Caribbean (4), and Central Africa (1), to participate in the University of Andalusia's Master's Degree Program on the Management and Conservation of Species in Trade: the International Framework (aka CITES Master's Course) from April 2017 – March 2018. The partnership with WCS further aims to strengthen country and regional-level capacity for CITES in Central America and the Caribbean by supporting the development of non-detriment findings (NDFs), improving availability of data on illegal trade in CITES-listed species, and increasing knowledge of emerging regional illegal wildlife trade threats and rapidly developing markets. Both projects supported the attendance of the graduates to CITES CoP18 allowing for an unprecedented learning opportunity for graduates involved in CITES work. Both projects were successfully completed in 2019.

In partnership with Wildlife Impact and in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment of Angola (MINAMB), the USFWS is supporting efforts to strengthen CITES capacity and enhance enforcement of wildlife crime law in Angola with a specific focus to counter wildlife trafficking in Maiombe National Park and surrounding areas of Cabinda Province.

USFWS continues to collaborate with the CITES Secretariat through a cooperative agreement (2017-2021) to build capacity for implementing CITES in Southeast Asia. Key outcomes thus far include enhanced legislation in Myanmar (moving the Party to Category 2 under the National Legislation Project); the development of implementation steps for National Ivory Action Plans in Cambodia and Vietnam; and a national self-assessment workshop in Laos, where the government created an Article XIII Action Plan in March 2019. Most recently, this agreement supported two delegates from Laos to attend CoP18. Since that time, Laos has received funds to continue a work plan through a Small-scale Funding Agreement with the Secretariat and is preparing for a workshop on non-detriment findings.

The USFWS Division of Management Authority is representing the United States in the Working Group on capacity building, following CoP18. The U.S. provided feedback regarding the Notification to Parties on the development of a capacity-building framework.

DOI-ITAP

With funding from the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of the Interior's International Technical Assistance Program (DOI-ITAP) along with partner governments and organizations, developed and delivered the following CITES regional cooperation and CITES training and support from August 2019 – April 2020:

Belize | Trafficking Wild Flora/Fauna Sensitization Trip for Judges | August 2019

DOI-ITAP provided additional support to the Belizean NGO Friends of Conservation Development (FCD), to extend an already-planned counter wildlife trafficking activity from one to two days. FCD and the Government of Belize took eight Belizean judges on a site visit to the Chiquibul National Forest along the Belize-Guatemala border to sensitize them to on-the-ground realities of trafficking wild flora/fauna, to highlight the importance of investigating and prosecuting CITES violations, and to encourage full application of environmental laws in court.

Switzerland | 3rd Global Wildlife Enforcement Network meeting | 21-22 August 2019

DOI-ITAP supported travel of staff and the Secretary of the Central American and Dominican Republic Wildlife Enforcement network (CAWEN, or ROAVIS in Spanish – www.roavis.net) to Geneva, Switzerland for the third global WEN meeting to support the Central American and Dominican Republic Wildlife Enforcement Network's participation and share best practices and lessons learned re: establishing, sustaining, and operationalizing a WEN. The Secretary discussed the importance of including CITES officials in the core group of a Wildlife Enforcement Network and the efforts of the U.S. and CAWEN/ROAVIS to include CITES implementation and enforcement training modules in all 2019-2020 DOI workshops in Central America.

Kenya, Namibia, Botswana, Malawi | Wildlife Officials Exchange | 27 October-16 November 2019

DOI-ITAP coordinated a 3-week exchange between wildlife officials in four African countries with U.S. State Fish and Game Wardens. DOI-ITAP, in conjunction with the DOI/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Office of Law Enforcement-Bureau of Training and Inspection conducted the first week of the exchange at the national Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia to build adaptive leadership skills. Following the training session, the ten participants split into five pairs, each consisting of one African and one U.S. wildlife official and traveled to their U.S. counterpart's duty station for hands-on training and exchange re: wildlife inspection (CITES and non-CITES species), CITES and other document review and false document detection, and related topics.

Guyana + Suriname | Combating Wildlife Trafficking Scoping Trip | 26 January-1 February 2020

DOI-ITAP staff and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Law Enforcement (FWS-OLE) Attaché for South America traveled to Guyana, then Suriname, to meet with U.S. Embassy personnel, host government officials, and a variety of nongovernment organizations (NGOs) to identify priorities and needs for capacity building to combat trafficking of wild flora and fauna. The team met with CITES officials in both countries to discuss the current state of CITES implementation and enforcement and identify areas for future training to strengthen capacity. Resulting information from this trip is being used to design training courses and identify workshop participants to include CITES officials.

Oman | CITES Training and Advising | 19 February-22 April 2020

DOI-ITAP facilitated an advisor to support implementation of CITES in Oman. The advisor, formerly with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, will serve as a CITES Advisor to Oman's Management and Science Authorities within the Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs. This work is in support of the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement and will contribute to Oman's aim to achieve CITES Category 1 status.

Honduras | Judicial Course Graduation | 21 February 2020

DOI-ITAP staff worked with the Public Ministry of Honduras, the Honduran Public Ministry Judicial College, and the Universidad Zamorano in Honduras to design and deliver a three-month long professional, accredited course for Honduran government judicial and technical officials. The course focused on familiarization with national environmental laws including CITES implementing legislation, familiarization with CITES documents and permits, implementing and enforcing CITES through the legal system, and combating trafficking of wild flora/fauna via successful case preparation, prosecutions, and adjudication. Successful graduates received a diplomado (university certificate) from Universidad Zamorano.

Jordan | ECC CITES Capacity Building | 21-28 February 2020

In support of environmental cooperation under the United States-Jordan Free Trade Agreement, DOI-ITAP technical experts partnered with a representative from the CITES Secretariat to assist Jordanian authorities in strengthening their implementation of CITES and developing Jordan's national CITES implementing legislation and policies. An additional goal was to increase the capacity of law enforcement bodies to effectively enforce CITES.

Psijdoia El Salvador | Judicial Course Graduation | 29 February 2020

DOI-ITAP staff worked with the Public Ministry of El Salvador and the Salvadoran Public Ministry Judicial College, to design and deliver a 7-week long professional, accredited course for Salvadoran CITES, enforcement, and judicial officials. The course focused on familiarization with national environmental laws including CITES implementing legislation, familiarization with CITES documents and permits, implementing and enforcing CITES through the legal system, and combating trafficking of wild flora/fauna via successful case preparation, prosecutions, and adjudication.

NOTE: A series of other DOI-ITAP events in March, April, and May (Chile, Cambodia, Panama, Jordan, Kenya, Namibia, Botswana, and Malawi) have been postponed due to COVID-19 concerns and restrictions. New dates will be determined with partners as appropriate.

f) Other

Canada

Amendments to Canada's Fisheries Act legislation came into force in August 2019. The amendments provide protections for sharks by prohibiting the import and export of shark fins not naturally attached into and out of Canada. This new legislative requirement includes both CITES listed and non-listed shark species. The new legislation also prohibits the practice of shark finning in Canadian waters.

Recent management measures have been implemented in Canada for Shortfin Mako shark. In April 2020, Canada implemented a new prohibition on retention of Shortfin Mako in Canada. This new management measure

has been included in licence conditions for 2020 for the pelagic longline fisheries. All licence holders are now prohibited from retaining Shortfin Mako on-board fishing vessels. Canada regularly reviews management of all fisheries and will continue working to identify ways to strengthen our domestic management of sharks.

Canadian Wildlife Enforcement authorities continue to conduct a variety of activities to enhance CITES controls. In Fall 2019, two one day CITES Blitzes were carried out by Canada's Enforcement authorities in Montreal, Quebec. One with Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) Montreal-Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport in their commercial section, and the other one in their passenger section.

Operation "FRONTIÈRES" from Wildlife Enforcement in Quebec, visits of all the border outpost of the Eastern district of the province were done during Fall 2019. During these visits CITES merchandise was targeted. At the same time information to our partners (CBSA) about Wildlife Enforcement was provided.

Numerous inspections were conducted for import or export of CITES goods.

East Kootenay Interprovincial Boundary Blitz

- This blitz occurred from September 18th until October 8th, 2019. Projects run on the US side of the British Columbia/Idaho border have shown that many US hunters are not in compliance with *Canada's Migratory Birds Convention Act (MBCA)*. This project will use a couple of geographical 'pinch points' present in the region to intercept non-resident waterfowl and big game hunters transiting through British Columbia on their way back to the US. Waterfowl hunting season opens on September 1st in the province of Saskatchewan and on September 1st or 8th in the province of Alberta, depending upon which Wildlife Management Unit you are hunting in.

Beaver Creek Blitz (Prairie Yukon Region)

- Annual blitz that occurs in September. It targets American hunters returning from hunting in Alaska to travel through Canada to lower 48.
- Bears, wolves, and marine wildlife are our target but we inspect all wildlife.

Kingsgate Blitz

- Occurred during the end of September and the first week of October. This blitz targeted CITES and MBCA species. The second week was spent at the border.

Mexico

In November 2019, CONABIO sent for consideration of the Specialist in Nomenclature of the Animals Committee, the publication of Mendoza, J., & Francke, O. (2019), which proposes changes in the nomenclature of tarantulas of the genus *Brachypelma*; included in Appendix II.

In response to Notifications to the Parties 2020/015 and 2020/016, Mexican CITES Authorities sent detailed information to Secretariat on national measures for seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp.) management, implementation and enforcement, as well as conservation and management measures of sharks and rays.

CONABIO will support the project "Evaluation of the impact and relevance of experimental releases of captive bred totoabas (*Totoaba macdonaldi*) as a wild populations conservation strategy", in order to determine success of releases of totoaba juveniles.

Between June and December 2019, CONABIO, in collaboration with Amigos de Sian Ka'an AC coordinated the implementation of the Monitoring Program for Morelet's crocodile (*Crocodylus moreletii*) in the Yucatan Peninsula, which provided information on the conservation status, population trends and its potential for establishing sustainable harvesting quotas.

Mexico is preparing a GEF project "Fomento del aprovechamiento comercial legal, sustentable y trazable de especies silvestres nativas de México", with the participation CITES Authorities, relevant government agencies and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). To promote conservation of wild native Mexican species and their habitats through sustainable, legal and traceable harvesting and trade, improvement of national and international value chains, and addressing the main direct drivers of biodiversity loss in five biocultural focal areas. The list of focal species includes several listed in CITES Appendix II.

Mexican CITES Authorities participated in the “First Workshop on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework” (Mexico City, 29-30 January) in order to know the national and international contexts on which the strategy for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of global biodiversity is being defined, and to provide feedback on the Zero Draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Participation of CITES Authorities was key to relate CBD and CITES work and to identify opportunities to link Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework with CITES Strategic Vision: 2021-2030, and the way to approach sustainable use of wild species by both agreements.

Between September 2019 and March 2020, the CITES Law Enforcement Authority in Mexico (PROFEPA) verified 2,698 transboundary movements of wild species: 1,711 imports and 987 exports, including wildlife species subject of special attention by the Convention such as sharks and rays (particularly fins), as well as tortoises, tarantulas, game species and sea cucumbers, among others.

Permitting

United States of America

The USFWS has improved and streamlined its website user experience for individuals, organizations, and companies seeking CITES permits from the USFWS. The redesigned webpages use visual images, open and collapse content, and focus on answering the key questions that applicants and stakeholders might have concerning CITES permits and the permitting process. View the redesigned webpages "[Do I Need a Permit?](#)" and "[Which Permit Application Do I Need?](#)" It is hoped that the clarity these new pages bring also result in more complete permit applications being submitted, and a consequential demystification of the CITES permitting process.

Mako Shark Listing on Appendix II

In November 2019, the U.S. prepared outreach materials for stakeholders and industry representatives regarding new requirements for obtaining appropriate CITES documents for the international trade of short fin mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) and long fin mako shark (*Isurus paucus*) following their listing on Appendix II at CoP18. An outreach letter with permitting guidance was sent to stakeholders in both the Atlantic and Pacific regions. Updates were also made to the CITES permit application page for sharks and rays. Please see: <https://www.fws.gov/international/permits/by-species/sharks-and-rays.html>.

Activities of Regional Representatives

Canada. None to report for this period.

Mexico. None to report for this period.

United States of America. None to report for this period.

Regional cooperation and priorities

The members of the North America Region communicate regularly as part of our ongoing commitment to meet and discuss regional CITES issues including CITES implementation, preparations for CITES meetings, and other CITES issues of interest to our region. In this reporting period, we would have communicated during the Trilateral to be hosted by Mexico but it was postponed due to COVID-19. In between meetings, the North America Region maintains communication through conference calls and emails.

Canada

Environment and Climate Change Canada is advancing a comprehensive risk analysis of all its laws and regulations to identify the greatest risks to conservation and biodiversity stemming from non-compliance. This risk-based approach will inform enforcement planning and priority setting.

Mexico

Currently, the North American Action Plans for the Sustainable Trade of CITES-listed tarantulas, sharks, parrots and tortoises adopted by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation of North America (CEC), are under implementation. In addition, within the framework of the Mexico-Canada Strategic Alliance, a project is being developed to use genetic barcoding as a tool to improve CITES implementation.

Also PROFEPA is working on strengthen collaboration with national agencies (FGR, Customs, National Guard) and international agencies (INTERPOL) to detect illegal trafficking of species through continuous monitoring and alerts about illegal sale of wild species on social media, as well as strengthening the prevention of illegal traffic attempts and attention to cases detected at exit points for people and goods. This collaboration implies intensifying coordination to face the illegal trafficking of species, which is one of the issues of greatest concern in

the environmental sector, as well as formulating new strategies to efficiently combat organized crime networks linked to this issue.

The National Forestry Commission (CONAFOR), has a department that deals with fauna in an integral manner with habitat, plant species and ecosystems. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), in cooperation with CONAFOR and the Northwest Fund (FONNOR), developed the MiJO Project (Integrated management of jaguar habitat through community participation in western Mexico), through which the conservation of this species habitat, as well as that of other wild cats, has been promoted.

Meetings and Workshops

Within the Region:

Mexico

From September 2019 to March 2020, PROFEPA participated in meetings with the Tax Administration Service (SAT) -Customs, as well as with the National Guard, the Attorney General's Office and INTERPOL to improve inter-institutional coordination in dealing with attempts to export wild species irregularly. Likewise, it participated in meetings of the Airport Operational Coordination Commission of the Mexico City International Airport, as it is the main point of airport interconnection in the country.

Also, identification workshops for protected marine species were conducted in Mexico City (January 2020) jointly with PROFEPA and the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic. Similar workshops were also held with different authorities in the city of Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico.

The MiJO jaguar project focuses on reducing conflicts between forest land owners located within the jaguar corridor (mostly ejidos and communities) and wild cats present in their territory. To this end, between August 2019 and March 2020, 5 workshops for awareness-raising related to reconciling the coexistence of human activities with wildlife, have been held. Topics addressed were: identification of cases of livestock predation, livestock insurance, sampling units for monitoring biodiversity (flora and fauna), governance and exchange of experiences in wildlife monitoring.

Other Meetings and Workshops (Outside the Region):

Mexico

In 2019, the CITES Scientific Authority of Mexico participated in the "Regional Workshop for CITES Scientific Authorities: Exchange of experiences, guides and good practices in the elaboration of Non-Detriment Findings for CITES species" (Guatemala City), to build regional capacity for the formulation of NDF for CITES species. During the workshop, Mexico gave presentations on its experience with the implementation of Appendix II for sharks, and on the non-binding guidelines for the issuance of NDF of *Strombus gigas*.

CONABIO, in cooperation with the Sonora state government (SAGARHPA), the Quintana Roo state government (SEDARPE), and Cocodrilia farm, presented informative posters on successful cases of CITES species management, at the 23rd Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA; Montreal, November 2019), within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): "Bighorn sheep in Sonora, Mexico: A tale of recovery due to its sustainable use", which won the award for the most outstanding poster, and "Promoting the conservation of Morele's crocodile (*Crocodylus moreletii*) by sustainably managing it through community-based ranching activities in Quintana Roo, Mexico". The case study for Bighorn sheep will also be included in the online journal Conservation Frontlines this year.

United States of America

In 2019, the USFWS awarded a grant to Colorado State University to help counter trafficking of cheetah in the region of Somaliland by addressing important gaps in cheetah population data, by developing models to identify trafficking routes from the Horn of Africa to the Middle East, and to increase expertise in law enforcement and the judiciary within Somaliland. The USFWS also participated in a March 2020 workshop held in Ethiopia bringing together U.S. and East African government and NGO stakeholders on cheetah trafficking to coordinate efforts to halt trafficking stemming from the region. Discussions at the workshop included soon to be published data estimating that more than 1,750 cheetahs were illegally traded between 2010 - 2019 (300 from the Horn of Africa in the last 3 years) with an estimated mortality rate of 75%. Experts from Somalia/Somaliland, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Kenya outlined an action plan to align a new Cheetah Conservation Fund-DEFRA project with the Colorado State Univ.-USFWS project, and prioritized working with Middle East partners on demand reduction. An estimated 6,000-10,000 cheetah remain in the wild.

Other Regional Information

Canada. None to report for this period

Mexico. None to report for this period

United States of America

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reports no activity during this period

USFWS continues to collaborate with the CITES Representatives of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) on the legal and sustainable use of native species, including furbearers, alligators, and freshwater turtles and tortoises. We last met March 3, 2020.

U.S. Law Enforcement Activities:

The USFWS Office of Law Enforcement reports no activity during this period.