

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



Twenty-fifth meeting of the Plants Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 17 and 20-23 July 2020

Regional matters

Regional reports

NORTH AMERICA

1. This document has been prepared by Rosemarie Gnam, Regional Representative for North America, in collaboration with CITES Authorities of Canada and Mexico.* This document reports on activities undertaken in the Region since the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Geneva, 17 – 28 August 2019) to May 2020.

2. 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 of America - None to report for this period.

b) Periodic Review of the Appendices:

Mexico

During the 23rd meeting of the Plants Committee (Geneva, Switzerland, July 2017), and in response to the Notification to the Parties No. 2017/069, Mexico agreed to assess two Appendix I species as part of the periodic review of species included in CITES: one cactus, *Ariocarpus retusus*; and one cycad, *Ceratozamia hildae*. The National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO), in its role as CITES Scientific Authority, concluded the review of *A. retusus* and has presented it for consideration of the Plants Committee (PC25; Geneva, Switzerland, July 17th – 23rd 2020). Also, CONABIO is currently supporting a project with experts from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), for the periodic review of *Ceratozamia hildae*.

* 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.

c) Non-detriment findings:

Canada

In Canada, Non-Detriment Findings (NDF) 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 American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*). 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

During the period from August 2019 to May 2020, CONABIO formulated 90 Non-Detriment Findings (NDF) on a permit-by-permit basis, for seven Appendix II plant species: *Euphorbia antisiphilitica*, *Swietenia macrophylla*, *Stenocereus dumortieri*, *Myrtillocactus geometrizans*, *Beaucarnea recurvata*, *Guaiacum sanctum* and *Carnegiea gigantea*. Most NDFs submitted were for *E. antisiphilitica* (candelilla). Likewise, CONABIO formulated 87 technical opinions concerning management plans in order to guide the sustainable use of CITES species, mainly for *Euphorbia antisiphilitica*, *Swietenia macrophylla*, *Dalbergia granadillo* and *Guaiacum sanctum*.

United States of America

The Scientific Authority of the United States (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Division of Scientific Authority (DSA)) provided advice to the U.S. Management Authority (USFWS-Division of Management Authority) on over 2,100 plant species and hybrids. The DSA issued 22 individual non-detriment findings (NDF) for the export of CITES-listed plant species from August 2019 to April 22, 2020, in addition, to the NDFs we make in the form of General Advices. An NDF was made for the export of wild American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) legally harvested during the 2019 harvest season in 19 States and one Indian Tribe Reservation. We made our first NDF on *Ravena rivularis* from cultivated parental stock in Florida. The Scientific Authority provided 18 individual advices for the registration of scientific institutions for the issuance of certificates of scientific exchange for specimens (COSE) of CITES-listed species.

3. Activities of regional representatives

Canada

At CoP18 (Geneva, August 2019), on the margins of the meeting, Natural Resources Canada-Canadian Forest Service (NRCan-CFS) and the World Resources Institute co-hosted an event to exchange information on wood identification technology development. The session was attended by the CITES Secretariat, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, the Chinese Academy of Forestry, Canadian wildlife enforcement officers, and observer organizations including the Global Timber Tracking Network, the Royal Museum for Central Africa, University of Washington and the International Tropical Timber Organization. The topics discussed included new identification techniques, geo-referenced species and origin databases, increasing traceability capacity, and anticipated amendments to Resolution Conf. 10.13 on *Implementation of the Convention for tree species*. Participants expressed interest in continuing the identification of areas for collaboration on wood identification science.

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.

Mexico None to report for this period.

United States of America None to report for this period.

4. Regional cooperation and priorities

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

In the framework of the Action Plan for North America on Sustainable Trade in Timber, information was compiled with the objective of strengthening the development of protocols for NDFs for species of the genus *Dalbergia* and *Swietenia*. CITES Scientific Authority (CONABIO), currently implements recommendations on the formulation of NDFs and technical opinions (OT). As part of this project, available information was compiled and analyzed regarding the biology, ecology, distribution, management and trade. Also, potential and current distribution maps were elaborated for the period between 1985 and 2018.

United States of America

The USFWS' Division of Scientific Authority and the IUCN-Medicinal Plant Specialist Group co-authored an article titled "Strengthening Sustainable International Trade in Medicinal and Aromatic Plants: Updates from the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES and potential future directions," to be published in the American Botanical Council's *HerbalGram* (anticipated in May 2020). The *HerbalGram* is widely read by the U.S. herbal and medicinal plant industry, among others.

5. Meetings and workshops

Canada

Training course on wood anatomy and practical wood identification

- On March 6-8, 2019, a training course on wood anatomy and practical wood identification took place in Canada in Quebec City, Quebec. Training was provided to a total of 11 Environment and Climate Change Canada Wildlife Enforcement (ECCC-WED) officers, through a collaborative effort of wood anatomy scientists from NRCan-CFS and ECCC-WED. Training in wood anatomy provides field officers with fundamental knowledge that allows them to intervene in an informed and effective manner when international wood shipments enter into Canada.

Wood Identification training for Wildlife Enforcement Officers

- On February 24 and 25, 2020, a two-day training was delivered to Wildlife Enforcement Officers on new notifications following CoP18, smuggling methods, countries and problematic species, as well as on tools to identify exotic wood species that are imported into Canada. This includes the use of tools already available around the world such as the CITES Wood ID program, and a new identification guide for exotic wood species found in Canada created jointly by ECCC and the Canadian Forest Services (CFS). This new guide brings together various field methods already known (Ethanol test, Ultraviolet, odor, color, weight, hardness) and presents them in a simplified manner to facilitate the work of agents in the field and help them make quick decisions, whether a cargo is held for further checks or released. Xylotron, which is a device to assist agents in the identification of wood from a camera and software (still in development), was also presented. In addition, ECCC Science and Technology laboratory presented a new test for the identification of wood species in the laboratory.

Wood Identification Workshop

- On February 26-28, 2020, NRCan-CFS and Environment and Climate Change Canada organised a Wood Identification Workshop at its Pacific Environmental Science Centre in North Vancouver British Columbia. The workshop featured overviews of the Canadian program's seven wood identification research projects, focused on wood anatomy, genomics, biochemical analysis using mass spectrometry, and development of new screening and testing tools for enforcement officers. Presentations were made by global experts from the USFS, the World Resources Institute, the Universities of Washington and Connecticut, and the European Forest Institute, which provided an overview of current GTTN initiatives. There were 34 participants, on site and online. Workshop participants, including forestry, enforcement,

trade, customs, phytosanitary and prosecution experts, discussed best approaches to interagency coordination on identification of wood products in international trade.

Mexico

Is currently defining a strategy to implement recommendations derived from the “Regional Workshop on Capacities Assessment to Identify Woods in Trade of CITES-listed Priority Timber Species” held in 2018 in Chetumal, Mexico, which brought together law enforcement officials, CITES Authorities, researchers, producers and industry representatives to share information on six priority timber species: *D. granadillo*, *D. retusa*, *D. stevensonii*, *S. humilis*, *S. macrophylla* and *S. mahogani*. Also, Mexican Authorities are conducting a project to improve governance and traceability of forest derived products and international trade in a partnership between SEMARNAT, PROFEPA and CONAFOR under the auspices of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the USFWS.

During the 1st International Congress of Cacti and Succulents, in Saltillo, Coahuila (September, 2019), the CITES Scientific Authority of Mexico gave the keynote presentation titled “Mexican cacti in international trade”, which covered CITES generalities, cacti species listed in its Appendices, Annotation #4, artificial propagation, periodic reviews, cacti trade registered in UNEP-WCMC, potential for sustainable use and cooperation with the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC).

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) organized by Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), for regional capacity building on the formulation of NDF for CITES species. During the Workshop, Mexico gave the presentation “Implementation of CITES Appendix II for timber species”.

United States of America

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal Plant Health Inspection Service-Plant Protection Quarantine (APHIS-PPQ) is the U.S. inspection authority for all export shipments of CITES-listed plant species and the inspection of imports containing live plants of CITES-listed species at designated import inspection stations. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Customs and Border Protection (CBP) inspects and clears imports containing non-living specimens (e.g., timber, wood products) of CITES-listed plant species through designated ports. APHIS-PPQ conducted three CITES regulatory workshops for APHIS-PPQ and CBP officers and identifiers at three Plant Inspection Stations in the United States. The 2-day training sessions provided a comprehensive overview of CITES and updates from CoP18, permitting requirements, identification resources, seizure/forfeiture protocol, and other areas related to port enforcement and capacity building to strengthen officers’ roles and responsibilities.

The U.S. Scientific Authority participated in the 2019 symposium “Science, Traditions, and Economics of Tennessee Ginseng” at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU). Invitees, including government officials, researchers, industry, and conservationists, discussed American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) management, forest-cultivation, and market trends to improve the conservation, sustainability, and market access of Tennessee-grown ginseng, with emphasis on improving livelihoods of small landowners. For more information, click on [MTSU symposium](#) and [MTSU-IGI](#).

The U.S. Scientific Authority attended “The Goldenseal Summit – A Round Table Discussion on the Future of Goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*),” held online on Earth Day, April 22, 2020, and hosted by North Carolina Ginseng Association, United Plant Savers and Living Web Farms. The focus of the event was to decrease harvest pressure on wild populations of goldenseal by encouraging and reinvigorating forest farming of goldenseal in North Carolina. Over 30 participants from the medicinal plant industry, academia, and government were organized into six round table discussions including legislation, product manufacturers, existing goldenseal farmers, universities and agricultural extensions, herb schools, and non-profit plant organizations. The discussions were taped and will be made available by Living Web Farms in the near future.

6. Other issues

Canada - None to report for this period.

Mexico

Between September 2019 and March 2020, Mexico's CITES Law Enforcement Authority (PROFEPA), verified 2,698 transboundary movements of wild species: 1,711 imports and 987 exports, including timber and non-timber species. The following is an example of trade statistics regarding the verification of international trade of some timber species included in the Convention. It should be noted that the quantity of merchandise moved across borders may vary from the authorized quotas, because these may not be used in their entirety, and the only measurement units reported are round and sawn wood (the figures are not shown for pieces, square meters, sets, and others).

Imports of *Swietenia* spp., *Dalbergia* spp., *Cedrela odorata*, *Guaiaacum sanctum* (2019, m³)

Year	<i>Swietenia</i>	<i>Dalbergia</i>	<i>Cedrela odorata</i>	<i>Guaiaacum sanctum</i>
2019	26.7693	1.484	1,166.85	0.00

Exports of *Swietenia* spp., *Dalbergia* spp., *Cedrela odorata*, *Guaiaacum sanctum* (2019, m³)

Year	<i>Swietenia</i>	<i>Dalbergia</i>	<i>Cedrela odorata</i>	<i>Guaiaacum sanctum</i>
2019	55.075	30.383	0	42.726

FUENTE SIREV 2019

Numbers are show for some CITES species traded in 2019. In 2020, there are no records for such species yet.

PROFEPA collaborates closely with INTERPOL in the follow-up of notifications of those allegedly involved in the illegal trafficking of cacti. Likewise, collaboration with the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic and the National Guard has been strengthened to efficiently deal with attempts to illegally export Mexican species of wild flora included in any category of risk under national legislation and regulated by CITES.

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.

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). The project aims 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 bicultural focal areas. The list of focal species includes several listed in CITES Appendix II.

The National Forestry Commission (CONAFOR) implements the National Strategy for Forest Restoration and Productive Reconversion, that includes CITES species with the view to restore and incorporate sustainable forest management practices and trade with an investment of \$1,293,944 pesos MX (approximately \$54,000 USD), directed at the following CITES species:

Species	State	Municipality
<i>Euphorbia antisyphilitica</i>	Chihuahua	Delicias
<i>Swietenia humilis</i>	Chiapas	Suchiapa
	Guerrero	Olinalá
		Chilpancingo
	Puebla	Chietla
<i>Swietenia macrophylla</i>	Chiapas	Chilon
<i>Cedrela odorata</i>	Veracruz	Paso de ovejas
	Yucatán	San José Tecoh
<i>Swietenia humilis</i>	Morelos	Cuernavaca
		Zacatepec
	Oaxaca	Ixtepec
<i>Swietenia macrophylla</i>	Veracruz	Tuxpan
		Paso de ovejas
	Yucatán	San José Tecoh

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.

The U.S. Management Authority's CITES Plant Rescue Center Program (PRC), in cooperation with USDA-APHIS, was formed to place live plants of CITES-listed species legally abandoned or forfeited to or seized by the U.S. Government due to non-compliance with CITES. Currently, 90 institutions cooperate as volunteer PRCs in the United States, all of which are public botanical gardens, arboreta, zoological parks, or research institutions. In 2019, APHIS confiscated 36 shipments (a total of 6,598 live plants) that were in violation of CITES, and placed at various PRCs. The plants included 5,641 euphorbias, 811 cacti, 100 *Operculicarya* spp., 18 orchids, 17 agaves, 6 *Fouquieria* spp., 4 lillies, and one Apocynaceae.

In 2020, the USFWS assumed the role of Chair (Ms. Patricia De Angelis, Division of Scientific Authority botanist) to the Federal Committee of the Plant Conservation Alliance (PCA). The PCA is a collaboration of federal agencies, that provides an interagency forum to focus on native plant conservation issues, and provides an opportunity to raise the visibility of CITES across other federal agencies. The PCA-Medicinal Plant Working Group focuses on issues of sustainable use and conservation of U.S. native species. For more information, click on [PCA](#).

The USFWS published a blog titled "Don't Forget to Celebrate Plants on World Wildlife Day" to celebrate and raise awareness of the importance of plants on World Wildlife Day. The blog focused on CITES-listed plant species native to the United States, and highlighted the important role of CITES in ensuring international trade is sustainable, including native orchids, cacti, tree ferns, carnivorous species, and American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*). To read the blog and view the photos, click [here](#).

The USFWS website highlighted CITES with the release of the U.S. Postal Service's "Wild Orchids" stamp series, which feature images of nine U.S. native orchids: To view the orchid stamps and the article click [here](#).

The U.S. Scientific Authority participated in the "Restore the Earth" Global Landscapes Forum to inform and shape the forthcoming UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030). Hosted at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, NY, on September 28, 2019, the meeting was attended by more than 400 people from 46 countries, and live streamed to more than 9,800 people from 138 countries. The meeting provided an opportunity to share information and progress on implementation of the U.S. 2015 National Seed Strategy for Restoration and Rehabilitation (Seed Strategy). Written by a collaboration of 12 federal agencies and more than 360 nonfederal partners, the Seed Strategy was developed to increase the availability of locally appropriate native

plants for use in ecological restoration across the United States (click on [seed strategy](#)). Implementation of the Seed Strategy will improve habitat resiliency for many U.S. native CITES animal and plant species that have experienced habitat loss or degradation. These include Appendix-I species such as green pitcher plant (*Sarracenia oreophila*) and mountain sweet pitcher plant (*Sarracenia rubra ssp. jonesii*), and Appendix II species, such as white fringeless orchid (*Platanthera integrilabia*), and small-whorled pogonia (*Isotria medeoloides*).

Capacity Building Activities:

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.

United States of America

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

- In August 2019, a U.S. Government (USG) interagency team of instructors including representatives of the USFS, the Department of Justice-Environment and Natural Resources Division (DOJ-ENRD), and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement-Homeland Security Investigations (HSL) provided a 2-week training on illegal logging and associated trade to 90 professionals from sub-Saharan Africa. The first week of training was held at the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Gaborone, Botswana. The second week was held in Kasane, Botswana, for the participants from the five countries (Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) that share international borders in the Kavango–Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA). Training topics covered the typology of forest crime and investigation methods; coordination among investigators, prosecutors, and judges; evidence processing and interviewing; international statutes; international financial investigations; customs and border enforcement; and successful prosecution strategies.
- In August 2019, the USFS and the DOJ-ENRD presented a 4-day workshop on “Combating Timber Trafficking” in Gabon for 33 officials of the Gabonese National Police. Workshop topics included laws and regulations of Gabon; forest investigation: basic evidence collection and evidence collection practical exercise; tracking wood, identifying key players and open source investigations; the role and tools of INTERPOL to fight environmental crimes; investigating and charging for the deterrent sentence; and money laundering.
- In October 2019, the USFS and the DOJ-ENRD conducted a 3-day capacity building session for investigators and prosecutors on combating timber trafficking in Colombia. The training included sessions on illegal timber transportation, environmental impacts of illegal timber harvesting and coca cultivation, the intersection between illegal wildlife trafficking and illegal logging and timber trafficking, developing domestic and transnational investigations and other related topics.
- In 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 3-month professional, accredited course for Honduran government judicial and technical officials. The course focused on the 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 diploma from Universidad Zamorano.
- In February 2020, a USG interagency team of instructors including representatives of the USFS, DOJ-ENRD and HSL provided a week of training on illegal logging and trade for 38 professionals from sub-Saharan Africa (Botswana, Cameroon, Gabon, Kenya, Madagascar, Republic of Congo, Uganda, and Zambia) at the ILEA in Gaborone, Botswana. Instructional topics covered the typology of forest crime and investigation methods; coordination among investigators, prosecutors, and judges; evidence processing and interviewing; international statutes; international financial investigations; customs and border enforcement; and, successful prosecution strategies.

- The USFS International Programs is working with a consortium of partners on the World Forest ID (WFID) project, that are building global reference databases of commercially traded timber species, which will improve the ability of enforcement officials to identify timber specimens in trade and verify the accuracy of timber declarations, as well as support private sector entities in validating their wood products supply chains. Physical wood samples are collected globally with Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and in-country partners, which are sent to The Royal Botanic Gardens Kew for verification and accessioning, and then to Agroisolab lab, also in the United Kingdom, for Stable Isotope Ratio Analysis (SIRA), and then to USFWS and USFS labs for Direct Analysis in Real Time-Time of Flight Mass Spectrometry (DART TOFMS) analysis. Major collection of wood samples have taken place to date in Peru, the Solomon Islands, and Gabon.