

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



Sixty-first meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 15-19 August 2011

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation

Snake trade and conservation management

REPORT OF THE ANIMALS COMMITTEE

1. This document has been prepared by the Chair of the Animals Committee.*
2. At its 15th meeting (Doha, 2010), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 15.75 to 15.78 as follows:

Directed to the Secretariat

15.75 *The Secretariat shall, subject to available funds, convene a technical workshop to consider the conservation priorities and management and enforcement needs related to the trade of snakes in Asia, with a particular focus on the markets and commercial trade in East, South, and Southeast Asia.*

- a) *The Secretariat shall invite the members of the Animals and Standing Committees, representatives from range, exporting and consumer states, and relevant inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations to participate in this workshop, to be held within 12 months of the conclusion of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*
- b) *The Secretariat shall contract with appropriate technical experts to prepare documents on Asian snake conservation, trade management, enforcement, and biology for the workshop and shall invite workshop participants to submit the same.*
- c) *The findings and recommendations of this workshop should be reported by the Secretariat to the Animals and Standing Committees.*

Directed to the Animals Committee

15.76 *The Animals Committee shall consider the results of this workshop and provide their recommendations to the Standing Committee for its consideration.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

15.77 *The Standing Committee shall consider the recommendations by the Animals Committee and make its own recommendations at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

* *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.*

Directed to Parties, non-governmental organizations, commercial traders, and donors

15.78 Parties and non-Parties, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, commercial traders, and donors are encouraged to provide funding to the Secretariat for this technical workshop.

3. In compliance with Decision 15.76, at its 25th meeting (Geneva, 18-22 July 2011) the Animals Committee considered the results of the Asian snake trade workshop held in Guangzhou, China, from 11 to 14 April 2011 and reported in document SC61 Doc. 46.1.
4. The Animals Committee formulated its own recommendation on the basis of the workshop report. These concern primarily the scientific aspects of the workshop report and can be found in the Annex to the present document.
5. The Standing Committee is requested to consider these recommendations and make its own recommendations at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ANIMALS COMMITTEE

1. Subject to external funding and with appropriate assistance, the Animals Committee should, as a matter of priority:
 - a) undertake a study of production systems for Asian snake species listed in CITES Appendix II and the use of CITES source codes. In evaluating different production systems, the biological feasibility and, where possible, economic viability of captive production operations should be considered;
 - b) based on this study, develop guidance to assist the Parties in evaluating captive breeding operations and other production systems; and
 - c) conduct one or more workshops in the use of this guidance for CITES and other relevant authorities of range States of Asian snake species, including sea snakes, subject to international trade.

The status of this work should be reported to AC26 and SC62.

2. The Animals Committee should review the output of the IUCN Red Listing process for Asian snakes and make recommendations at AC26 for the consideration of the Parties with regard to amending the CITES Appendices.
3. Given the current lack of sufficient scientific data, the Animals Committee encourages Scientific and Management Authorities to establish conservative annual catch and export quotas for CITES-listed snake species in trade and communicate those quotas to the CITES Secretariat. The Animals Committee will ask the Secretariat to communicate this recommendation through a Notification to the Parties.
4. By CoP16, the Animals Committee will assist the Parties (through consultation with relevant experts) by identifying the types of data and building on existing examples of good management practices that could assist the Parties in making non-detriment findings and setting quotas for Appendix-II snakes in trade.
5. Subject to external funding and with appropriate assistance, the Animals Committee should select one or more high-value snake species in the pet trade (e.g., unique colour or morphological forms, range-restricted endemics), engage independent consultants to carry out case studies to determine the impacts of legal and illegal harvest for the pet trade on wild populations, and identify the information necessary to prepare non-detriment findings for those species. Recognizing that such case studies are a high priority, the Animals Committee shall liaise with the Secretariat, Parties, and the academic and conservation communities to enable such studies to be carried out. Those species identified in Document AC25 Doc. 18 as meeting these criteria should be considered as potential case studies. The Animals Committee should provide a progress report at CoP16.
6. The Animals Committee should:
 - a) subject to external funding and with appropriate assistance, engage independent consultants to investigate methodologies to differentiate between wild and captive-bred CITES-listed snakes, including parts and derivatives, in trade;
 - b) encourage interested institutions to investigate forensic identification and make this information available to the Animals Committee; and
 - c) report on the status of this work at CoP16.
7. Through an inter-sessional working group, the Animals Committee should collate and evaluate existing identification materials for live snakes, parts and derivatives, and make recommendations at AC26 regarding the need for additional materials. With the assistance of the Secretariat, existing materials should be brought to the attention of the Parties.
8. Noting the potential conservation impacts of undocumented trade in CITES-listed snakes, and specimens thereof, the Animals Committee encourages the Standing Committee to examine the trade, including the trade in venom and other frequently unreported specimens.