

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



Sixty-sixth meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 11-15 January 2016

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation

Sturgeons and paddlefish (*Acipenseriformes* spp.)

REPORT OF THE ANIMALS COMMITTEE

1. This document has been submitted by the Animals Committee.*

Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP16)

2. In Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP16) on *Conservation of and trade in sturgeons and paddlefish* the Conference of the Parties:

*DIRECTS the Animals Committee ... to monitor progress on the relevant provisions of this Resolution and to carry out on a three-year cycle starting in 2008, and using information from preceding years, an evaluation of the assessment and the monitoring methodologies used for stocks of *Acipenseriformes* species subject to the provisions under RECOMMENDS further, paragraph a)...*

and

DIRECTS the Animals Committee to provide to the Standing Committee its recommendations on actions to be taken based upon the above-mentioned monitoring of progress and three-year cycle evaluation.

3. The Animals Committee reported accordingly at the 61st meeting of the Standing Committee (Geneva, 2011; see document SC61 Doc. 48.2); orally at the 62nd meeting of the Committee (Geneva, 2012); and through document SC65 Doc. 47 at the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee (Geneva, 2014).
4. The Animals Committee discussed its mandate and the trade in sturgeons and paddlefish at its 28th meeting (AC28, Tel Aviv, 2015).
5. The Animals Committee noted document AC28 Doc. 16.1, in which the Secretariat reported that there had not been commercial caviar harvest or export for at least six years from the shared stocks of the range States shown in the table below (trade in such specimens from these stocks would only be allowed if comprehensive requirements indicated in Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP16) were met by the range States concerned). The Secretariat indicated that under the given circumstances, all these joint stocks may qualify for the exemption indicated in footnote 2 in Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP16). The footnote states: "At the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP13, Bangkok, 2004), it was agreed

* *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.*

that this recommendation would not apply to those range States where there is no commercial caviar harvest or export from shared stocks. It was also agreed, however, that the Secretariat or any Party would bring to the attention of the Standing Committee or Conference of the Parties any significant changes in the harvest or export of sturgeon products from such stocks.”

If this were the case, the Secretariat would no longer publish zero annual quotas for caviar and meat of Acipenseriformes species from stocks shared between these range States.

The Animals Committee noted the intention of the Secretariat to seek further clarifications from the Parties concerning footnote 2 of Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP16).

Shared stock	Range States	Species
Caspian Sea	Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Turkmenistan	<i>Acipenser gueldenstaedtii</i> <i>Acipenser nudiiventris</i> <i>Acipenser persicus</i> <i>Acipenser ruthenus</i> <i>Acipenser stellatus</i> <i>Huso huso</i>
North-West Black Sea and Lower Danube River	Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Ukraine	<i>Acipenser gueldenstaedtii</i> <i>Acipenser nudiiventris</i> <i>Acipenser ruthenus</i> <i>Acipenser stellatus</i> <i>Huso huso</i>
Saint John River/Bay of Fundy	Canada, United States of America	<i>Acipenser oxyrinchus</i>
Amur/Heilongjian River	China, Russian Federation	<i>Acipenser schrenckii</i> <i>Huso dauricus</i>
Azov Sea	Russian Federation, Ukraine	<i>Acipenser gueldenstaedtii</i> <i>Acipenser nudiiventris</i> <i>Acipenser ruthenus</i> <i>Acipenser stellatus</i> <i>Huso huso</i>

6. Concerning its implementation of relevant provisions in Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP16), the Animals Committee discussed the relevance of undertaking a three-year review to monitor progress on the provisions of this Resolution given the lack of commercial export from the identified shared stocks over the past six years. The Animals Committee considered whether a review of the provisions of the Resolution would be useful to reflect the current conditions for the fishery. The Animals Committee agreed to report to the Standing Committee its above discussion on the role of the Animals Committee as currently mandated in Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP16), and request views on how it could support the conservation and management of sturgeons and paddlefish in the context of a changing fishery.

Decisions 16.136-137

7. At its 16th meeting (Bangkok, 2013), the Conference of the Parties adopted interrelated Decisions 16.136 and 16.137 on *Sturgeons and paddlefish (Acipenseriformes spp.)*, as follows:

Directed to the Secretariat

16.136 *The Secretariat shall:*

- a) *subject to external funding and in consultation with the Animals Committee, organize a study to:*
 - i) *provide an overview of molecular, DNA-based and other forensic methods that could assist in identifying the species and populations of Acipenseriformes specimens in trade, determining the origin or age of specimens, and differentiating wild from captive-bred or aquacultured specimens;*

- ii) *review relevant developments in this area, including the availability and reliability of uniform identification systems;*
 - iii) *evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the different methods (including practicality, costs, time-efficiency, reliability, technical requirements, etc.); and*
 - iv) *formulate relevant guidance for CITES Parties, enforcement agencies, the private sector and other stakeholders;*
- b) *ensure consultation with Parties that authorize trade in specimens of sturgeons and paddlefish, appropriate experts, institutions and organizations, and the private sector in the conduct of the study;*
 - c) *make the results of the study available to the Animals Committee at its 27th or 28th meeting for its consideration; and*
 - d) *disseminate the recommendations formulated by the Standing Committee pursuant to Decision 16.138 in a Notification to the Parties.*

Directed to the Animals Committee

16.137 *The Animals Committee shall assist the Secretariat in determining the specifications for the study referred to in Decision 16.136 and monitoring its conduct. It shall review the report of the study at its 27th or 28th meeting, and make recommendations as appropriate for consideration by the Standing Committee.*

- 8. During AC28, the Secretariat informed the Animals Committee that a preliminary expert view on the elements of the study requested in Decision 16.137 was available on the CITES website (Document AC 28 Inf.18), but that the necessary external funds to conduct a full study had not been available.
- 9. The Animals Committee noted with regret that the funds had not yet been made available to support the study requested in Decision 16.136.

Recommendations

- 10. The Animals Committee invites the Standing Committee to take note of the present document.
- 11. The Animals Committee further invites the Standing Committee to consider whether the provisions of Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP16), including how the Animals Committee can best support the conservation and management of sturgeons and paddlefish, merits review in the context of a changing fishery.