

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

TIBETAN ANTELOPE (*PANTHOLOPS HODGSONII*)

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. Resolution Conf. 11.8 (Rev. CoP13) on *Conservation of and control of trade in the Tibetan antelope*, directs the Standing Committee as follows:

DIRECTS:...

- b) the Standing Committee to undertake a regular review of the enforcement measures taken by the Parties in eliminating the illicit trade in Tibetan antelope products on the basis of the Secretariat's report, and to report the results at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

3. At its 16th meeting (CoP16, Bangkok, 2013), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 16.93 and 16.94 on *Tibetan antelope* (*Pantholops hodgsonii*), as follows:

Directed to the Parties

16.93 *All Parties should immediately bring every seizure of illegal Tibetan antelope wool and its products made within its territory to the attention of authorities in countries of origin, transit and destination, as applicable, and to the attention of the Secretariat. Information of the seizure should be accompanied by available associated information, to enable follow-up investigations to take place. The progress of follow-up investigations should also be reported to the Secretariat.*

Directed to the Secretariat

16.94 *The Secretariat shall report information on seizures made and on the progress of investigations referred to in Decision 16.93 at the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee.*

4. At its 65th meeting (SC65, Geneva, July 2014), the Standing Committee endorsed the following recommendations:
 - a) *remind Parties of the need to continue to implement Decision 16.93 and to report information on seizures made and on the progress of investigations to the Secretariat by 31 August 2015;*¹

¹ See Notification to the Parties No. 2015/004 on Changes to deadlines established by the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee at <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/notif/E-Notif-2015-004.pdf>

- b) *request the Secretariat to evaluate the reports submitted by Parties in accordance with Decision 16.93, and to report its findings and recommendations at the 66th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC66); and*
- c) *reconsider, at SC66, the recommendation to delete paragraph b), under 'DIRECTS', of Resolution Conf. 11.8 (Rev. CoP13).*

5. On 30 July 2015, the Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties [No. 2015/042](#), inviting Parties to report to the Secretariat on any seizures of illegal Tibetan antelope wool and its products made within their territory, and on any investigations conducted into the illegal trade in Tibetan antelope wool and its products. In response to the Notification the Secretariat received reports from Australia, China, Greece and Switzerland.
6. Australia reported that no seizures of Tibetan antelope wool or its products have been made in the country. China reported that no seizures have been made by Chinese customs since SC65, and Greece reported that since 1 January 2014, there had been no seizures of illegal Tibetan antelope wool or its products in the country.
7. Switzerland, however, reported that it continued to detect illegal trade in shawls containing fibres of wool from Tibetan antelopes (shahtoosh), similar to what was reported at SC65 in document [SC65 Doc. 41 \(Rev. 1\)](#). From SC65 to 28 August 2015, Switzerland made 16 seizures involving a total of 195 shawls containing fibres of Tibetan antelope wool. In the majority of seizure incidents, the offenders were European nationals. It should however be noted that three of these seizures, involving 155 shawls, were made from shops in Switzerland. Switzerland reported that its Management Authority (MA) is currently working closely with INTERPOL to finalize a report on shahtoosh seizures made in the country between 2010 to 2015. This report includes information about inspection procedures, emerging trends, and identification methods. The report also contains images of shawls from cases that are still under investigation, and, for this reason, it is a restricted report. Switzerland however indicated that it invites enforcement agencies from interested Parties to contact its MA to request access to the report. Switzerland further reported that it continues to consider the illegal trade in shahtoosh shawls of modern design, reduced purity and cheaper price, to be of concern. In July 2015, the INTERPOL National Central Bureau of Switzerland published INTERPOL Purple Notice PN-331/7-2015 on this illegal trade, which is available on the INTERPOL restricted access website.
8. Switzerland also indicated to the Secretariat that it invites Parties affected by illegal trade in shahtoosh to liaise with its MA for support, in particular with regard to identification methods and exchange of information and knowledge about this topic. With the aim to strengthen enforcement cooperation between range, transit and destination countries, the MA of Switzerland was at the time of writing planning to share their enforcement experience regarding the illegal trade in shahtoosh with other INTERPOL member States at the INTERPOL Wildlife Crime Working Group meeting in Singapore in November 2015. Switzerland might wish to provide additional information about this to the Standing Committee at the present meeting.
9. In accordance with the provisions of Decision 16.93, Switzerland reported at SC65 that it had at the time been in contact with India, as the primary country of origin of seized shawls, as well as with Italy and Germany. The Secretariat notes that progress of follow-up investigations had not been reported to it in accordance with Decision 16.93, since SC65. This might be because these cases are still under investigation and such reporting might not be appropriate at present. The Secretariat however believes that there could be valuable sources of information about the origin of shawls containing fibres of wool from Tibetan antelopes in particular shops from which seizures took place. It encourages Switzerland to continue in its positive efforts to combat this illegal trade.

Final remarks

10. Shahtoosh shawls of modern design and reduced purity continues to be detected in Switzerland. These shawls could be changing the consumer base, by making shawls available to a wider range of consumers at a lower prices. Information suggests that such shawls are also being imported to other European countries, and the fact that three large seizures were made at stores in Switzerland gives further reason for concern.
11. In the light of the above, the Secretariat believes that paragraph b), under 'DIRECTS', in Resolution Conf. 11.8 (Rev. CoP13), should be maintained for the foreseeable future.

Recommendations

12. The Secretariat recommends that the Standing Committee:

- a) request India, as the primary country of origin of shahtoosh shawls, to report to the Secretariat by 1 March 2016 on the results of any follow-up investigations that have been conducted based on information received from Switzerland;
- b) encourage Germany, India and Italy to review their implementation of Resolution Conf. 11.8 (Rev. CoP13), taking into consideration the newly identified trends identified by Switzerland; and
- c) recommend to the Conference of the Parties, at its 17th meeting, that paragraph b), under 'DIRECTS', of Resolution Conf. 11.8 (Rev. CoP13) be maintained, and that Decision 16.93 be included in the Resolution.