

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

Regional matters

Reports of regional representatives

NORTH AMERICA

1. This document has been submitted by the United States of America and the Regional Representative for North America.

2. **GENERAL INFORMATION**

- Regional Representative: United States
- Alternate Regional Representative: Mexico
- Number of Parties in the Region: 3 (Canada, Mexico, United States)
- Number of Parties providing information for this Report: 3

2. **INTRODUCTION**

This Regional Report for North America covers the period from the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee (July 2014) through 12 November 2015. It includes summaries of key measures taken by Canada, Mexico, and the United States in their implementation and enforcement of CITES during the reporting period. It is presented in the format provided in Document SC59 Doc. 23 at the 59th meeting of the Standing Committee (March 2010) and adopted by the Standing Committee at that meeting.

At the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP16; March 2013), the United States was elected to continue to be the North American Regional Representative to the Standing Committee. All three countries in the North American Region are in close contact. All three countries also regularly coordinate with NGOs within their respective countries, in preparation for meetings and on other CITES-related issues.

3. **OVERVIEW OF MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS**

CANADA

In an ongoing effort to improve the implementation of CITES for Canadians, permit applications were modernized in 2014-2015. In addition the responsibilities of several permitting offices that were no longer viable due to the small volume of permits issued were assumed by the Management Authority permitting office at Environment Canada.

Canada has completed the transition away from the use of phytosanitary certificates as CITES certificates for artificially propagated plants. The Secretariat will be notified to remove Canada from the Reference List of countries and territories that use phytosanitary certificates as certificates of artificial propagation.

* *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.*

Canada has continued to chair the working group on cooperation between CITES and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, with a focus on developing an overarching Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations.

Canada continues to build on its wildlife compliance outreach activities. Since July 2014, new CITES airport displays have been installed at Person International Airport and two CITES posters “Travelling abroad or visiting Canada?” (<http://www.ec.gc.ca/cites/default.asp?lang=En&n=85436735-1>) and “Travelling with your exotic pet?” (<http://www.ec.gc.ca/cites/default.asp?lang=En&n=23BD6799-1>) have been published with the objective of educating travelling Canadians visiting travel agencies, small airports, border crossings, passport offices, veterinary offices etc.

As of April 2015, the CoP16 amendments to the list of CITES-regulated species were legally in force in Canada with completion of the regulatory process to update the Wild Animal and Plant Trade Regulations (WAPTR) of the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act (WAPPRIITA) and the temporary reservation on the CoP16 decisions was lifted in June 2015. The Government of Canada is serious about protecting species at risk within its borders and internationally, and committed to our responsibilities to CITES.

MEXICO

Notificación a las Partes 2015/050 MÉXICO – Totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*) y vaquita marina (*Phocoena sinus*) (agosto, 2015):

- a. México instó a las Partes de la CITES a colaborar con las acciones implementadas para frenar el comercio internacional ilegal de totoaba mediante las siguientes acciones:
 - Tomar nota de los antecedentes y las actividades recientes desarrolladas por México para atender la situación crítica de la totoaba y la vaquita marina disponibles en las ligas;
 - Confiscar envíos ilegales de totoaba y compartir con las Autoridades CITES mexicanas información sobre comercio ilegal de totoaba en su país;
 - Dar difusión a la problemática sobre ambas especies, y tomar medidas domesticas para desincentivar el mercado ilegal de totoaba; y,
 - Compartir experiencias exitosas que puedan ayudar a atender la problemática de totoaba y vaquita marina.
- b. A la fecha, México se encuentra en espera de retroalimentación de las Partes de la CITES respecto a los puntos arriba mencionados.

UNITED STATES

Amendments to the U.S. Endangered Species Act 4(d) rule for the African elephant: The African elephant is listed as threatened under the U.S. Endangered Species Act with a rule under section 4(d) of the Act regulating trade in the species. On 28 July 2015, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) published a proposed rule in the *Federal Register* to revise the African elephant 4(d) rule to more strictly control U.S. domestic trade and export of African elephant ivory (import of African elephant ivory other than sport-hunted trophies is currently prohibited). USFWS accepted public comments on the proposal for 60 days. We expect to develop and publish a final rule in early 2016.

U.S. ivory crush: On 19 June 2015, in New York City's Times Square, USFWS crushed approximately one ton of elephant ivory seized in connection with violations of CITES and U.S. wildlife laws. The vast majority of the ivory crushed was seized by USFWS agents from a Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, store in 2009. In June 2014, the store's owner was sentenced to 30 months' imprisonment, to be followed by 2 years of supervised release, for smuggling elephant ivory into the United States. In addition, the court ordered the store's owner to pay a fine of 7,500 USD and to forfeit 150,000 USD, along with the approximately one ton of elephant ivory that was seized by agents from the Philadelphia store. The crush in Times Square was the second major ivory destruction event by USFWS. In November 2013, we destroyed our six-ton stockpile of seized ivory (accumulated from the mid-1980s to 2013) in our first ivory crush. These events sent a message to the world about the plight of African elephants and the global wildlife trafficking crisis.

Ivory crush design challenge: In 2014, USFWS launched a “Crushed Ivory Design Challenge” calling on the public to submit ideas for a compelling, thought provoking, and informative display to increase awareness about the threats that poaching and illegal trade pose to elephants and other at-risk species. The goal is to use the crushed ivory from the U.S. ivory crushes to raise awareness, reduce the demand for illegal wildlife products, and ultimately protect wildlife from senseless killing and illegal trade. The Design Challenge closed on 31 March 2015, submissions were reviewed by a panel of experts, and two winners have been selected and will be announced soon.

Wildlife enforcement network: USFWS, working with the U.S. Department of State, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the CITES Secretariat, is developing a plan for wildlife law enforcement networking, capacity building, and technical assistance in the Caribbean - for both terrestrial and marine species. The development of improved enforcement coordination in the Caribbean was recommended by the Parties to the SPAW Protocol in 2014 and by an international workshop on iguana conservation in 2013. We hope to convene an enforcement workshop in early 2016 and further development of a Wildlife Enforcement Network in the region.

Listing one python species and three anaconda species as Injurious: On 10 March 2015, USFWS published a final rule in the *Federal Register* listing the reticulated python (*Python reticulatus*), the Beni anaconda (*Eunectes beniensis*), the dark-spotted anaconda (*Eunectes deschauenseei*), and the green anaconda (*Eunectes murinus*) as injurious. By this action, the importation into the United States and interstate transportation between U.S. States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or any territory of the United States of any live animal, gamete, viable egg, or hybrid of these four snake species is prohibited, except by permit for zoological, educational, medical, or scientific purposes. These four species are also listed under CITES.

Preparations for CoP17: CoP17 is scheduled to be held 24 September-5 October 2016 in Johannesburg, South Africa. During the reporting period, USFWS published three notices in the *Federal Register* as part of the process designed to allow non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the public to participate in the preparations of the U.S. Government for CoP17. The first notice, published on 27 June 2015, solicited public comments on amendments to Appendix I and Appendix II that the United States should consider proposing for consideration at CoP17; the second notice, published on 11 May 2015, solicited public comments on Resolutions, Decisions, and agenda items the United States should consider submitting for discussion at CoP17; and the third notice, published on 26 August 2015, described proposed amendments to Appendix I and Appendix II that the United States is considering submitting for consideration at CoP17.

Working group development and application of annotations: At SC61 in 2011, the Standing Committee formed an intersessional working group, under the chairmanship of the Regional Representative of North America (the United States), to explore the shared understanding among Parties of annotations, and to explore the adoption of appropriate and reasonable procedures for crafting plant annotations. In October 2012, the United States, as Chair of the working group, submitted a document for CoP16 on the development and application of annotations that proposed amendments to six Resolutions, adoption of three new Decisions, revisions to one existing Decision and the retention of one existing Decision, and adoption of a definition of the term “extract” as it applies in existing annotations in the Appendices. These proposals were adopted by the Parties at CoP16, with several changes. Also at CoP16, the Parties adopted several Decisions related to continued work on annotations, including Decision 16.162 directing the Standing Committee to re-establish a working group on annotations at SC65. The United States, as Chair of the interim working group, submitted a document for SC65 (July 2014) presenting the history of the use of annotations in CITES and a discussion of options for where to permanently include definitions of terms in annotations. The Standing Committee re-established the formal working group at SC65 and the United States was again designated as the Chair. During 2015, the United States worked electronically with the working group members to prepare a document for SC66, which it submitted to the Secretariat on 12 November 2015. The document includes draft revisions to several Resolutions to provide the Parties with guidance on how to craft plant annotations, and also reports on progress made in reviewing several on the existing CITES plant annotations.

Working group on administrative hosting arrangements: At SC65, held in July 2014, the Standing Committee established a Working Group on Administrative Hosting Arrangements. The Standing Committee Chair, Norway, was the original Chair of the working group. Norway requested that the United States, as Deputy Chair, take over as the Chair of the working group so that Norway can freely manage the discussion by the Standing Committee at SC66. The United States agreed to take over as Chair of the working group and managed the discussion during the intersessional period. The United States prepared and submitted a report on this issue for SC66.

Working group on Decision 16.39: Decision 16.39 directed the Standing Committee, at SC65, to initiate a process to assess implementation and enforcement of the Convention as it relates to the trade in species listed in Appendix I of CITES. The Committee is mandated to report its findings at CoP17. The United States chaired the working group at SC65, and the working group developed terms of reference for intersessional work. The United States continued to chair the working group during the intersessional period and prepared and submitted a report on this issue for SC66.

Online presence and social media: USFWS continues to share information regarding CITES implementation and proceedings with interested stakeholder groups via the USFWS International Affairs website (www.fws.gov/international), Facebook (USFWS_International Affairs), Twitter (@USFWSInternatl), blogs, and email distribution lists. Of particular note, USFWS launched a new webpage to educate and inform U.S. fishermen, exporters, and dealers about implementation of the shark and ray listings adopted at CoP16. This webpage can be viewed at <http://www.fws.gov/international/permits/by-species/sharks-and-rays.html>.

Applications for CITES permits: The U.S. CITES Management Authority handled over 20,500 CITES applications received in 2014, and 9,900 applications during the first half of 2015. A large portion of the applications received during the reporting period related to the export or re-export of commercially traded specimens of Appendix-II species. The bulk of CITES import permits issued by the U.S. Management Authority are for the import of sport-hunted trophies from Southern Africa.

U.S. CITES export tagging program: The United States cooperates with its States and Indian Tribes in utilizing a tagging program for the export of skins of the following Appendix-II species: bobcat (*Lynx rufus*); river otter (*Lontra canadensis*); Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*); wolf (*Canis lupus*); brown bear (*Ursus arctos*); and American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*). USFWS currently cooperates with 48 States and 31 Indian Tribes that have instituted approved harvest programs. Each approved State or Indian Tribe applies CITES tags, provided by USFWS, to skins of approved species taken in that State or Tribe and intended for export from the United States. USFWS issued 621,000 tags during 2014 and 913,000 during 2015.

U.S. CITES American ginseng program: In implementing the CITES Appendix-II listing of American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*), USFWS works closely with other Federal agencies and the 25 States and single Indian Tribe that have approved American ginseng export programs. USFWS relies on those States, Tribes, and Federal agencies to provide information on legal and illegal harvest of American ginseng, the status of the species in the wild, and population trends. During the reporting period, USFWS regularly communicated with the States and the approved Indian Tribe on issues related to American ginseng, including revision of State/Tribal ginseng management regulations and administrative changes to the State/Tribal programs.

USFWS Senior Special Agent/International Attache Program: The USFWS Office of Law Enforcement created the first-ever program for stationing wildlife special agents at U.S. Embassies as international attaches to coordinate investigations of wildlife trafficking and support wildlife enforcement capacity-building. The first posting was effective January 2014 at the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok. During the reporting period, USFWS hired four additional agent/attaches, based in Botswana, China, Peru, and Tanzania.

Operations Crash: On 2 July 2014, a Miami, Florida, wildlife dealer pleaded guilty to participating in an illegal rhino horn trafficking deal in which he brokered the unlawful interstate purchase of a black rhino mount for 60,000 USD. The mount was promptly stripped of its horns when transferred to its new owner. The defendant owns and operates a Miami business called "Art by God" and has often been a suspect in past USFWS Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) investigations of wildlife trafficking.

The owner and president of an antiques company based in British Columbia has been sentenced to 30 months in prison in New York, New York, on conspiracy charges in connection with the smuggling of more than 500,000 USD worth of rhino horn, elephant ivory, and other wildlife products from the United States to Canada. The defendant, who was investigated by OLE and Environment Canada as part of Operation Crash, was arrested by OLE in March 2015 in the Bronx, New York, after buying two black rhino horns from undercover OLE special agents.

Totoaba trafficking: In the spring of 2013 (and continuing into 2014 and 2015), the USFWS Office of Law Enforcement teamed with Homeland Security Investigations and CBP to disrupt large-scale trafficking of swim bladders removed from totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*) fish – a CITES Appendix-I species that lives off the coast of Mexico. Ten individuals (including two Canadian women) were indicted on Federal charges in San Diego, California, in connection with these smuggling operations. The more than 550 swim bladders seized are worth an estimated 3.5 million USD in Asian markets where they are prized as a culinary delicacy with alleged medicinal properties. A lead player in this trafficking, who coordinated cross-border smuggling from Mexico with plans to market totoaba swim bladders in Asia, pleaded guilty to Federal charges and was sentenced to four

months in prison and two years of probation. He was ordered to forfeit his residence (where he stored the smuggled fish parts) to the Government, but subsequent negotiations changed this penalty to forfeiting a significant percentage of its value (138,750 USD) in cash. He must also pay 500,000 USD in restitution to support conservation programs in Mexico.

Operation Delicious: USFWS wildlife inspectors in the Port of Los Angeles, California, intercepted a shipment of live macaws, amazons, cockatoos, and miscellaneous birds that were undeclared and unpermitted and destined for Viet Nam. Also part of this operation, USFWS wildlife inspectors found four exports of undeclared sea urchin roe, and two separate shipments of CITES III sea cucumbers exceeding a total of 600 pounds.

Bird importer indicted: A subject was indicted by a Federal Grand Jury for the illegal importation of Asian songbirds, for attempting to illegally import 27 Asian songbirds from Viet Nam into Los Angeles, California. The birds were discovered in his suitcase in approximately 11 bamboo cages hidden underneath a layer of clothing and aluminum foil. At least 11 of the birds have been identified by the USFWS Forensics Lab as the Chinese hwamei, listed in Appendix II of CITES.

Ivory indictment: A USFWS multi-year investigation, with Homeland Security Investigations, resulted in a Los Angeles, California, man being indicted on three counts for: 1) knowingly submitting a false record for a shipment that contained four Italian artifacts valued at 236,000 USD; 2) knowingly and fraudulently exporting worked African elephant ivory from the United States to the United Kingdom, in violation of CITES; and 3) fraudulently and knowingly smuggling a worked African ivory piece into the United States in violation of the Endangered Species Act and USFWS declaration requirements.

Operation Shamrock: USFWS OLE special agents worked with foreign and domestic law enforcement partners to extradite an Irish national, charged with illegal rhinoceros horn trafficking, to the United States to appear in Federal court in Waco, Texas. USFWS, with the U.S. Department of Justice, worked with law enforcement officials in the United Kingdom and Ireland, and also with Interpol. Through this teamwork, USFWS OLE obtained intelligence from the Irish Garda (Ireland's police force) that the subject was planning to travel from Ireland to the United Kingdom. USFWS OLE, with the Department of Justice, submitted a formal request to the United Kingdom for the provisional arrest of the Irish national. USFWS OLE then coordinated with the Durham Police Force to arrest the subject as he arrived in the United Kingdom. He was extradited due to a process governed by an extradition treaty between the United States and the United Kingdom.

Conclusions of negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement: On 5 October 2015, the United States and 11 other Asia Pacific countries announced the conclusion of negotiations on a free trade agreement known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement. When it enters into force, the TPP will require each Party to adopt, maintain and implement laws, regulations, and other measures to fulfill its obligations under CITES. It will also require Parties to endeavor to implement, as appropriate, CITES resolutions. The Parties also commit to enhance law enforcement cooperation and information sharing to combat the illegal take of and trade in wild fauna and flora. More information is available at: <https://ustr.gov/>.

U.S. efforts related to Peruvian mahogany: During the reporting period, USFWS continued to work closely with Peru regarding Peru's implementation of the Appendix-II listing of bigleaf mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*). For 2014, Peru established a voluntary bigleaf mahogany export quota of 801.143 cubic meters. It has not yet established one for 2015. USFWS closely monitored the volume of bigleaf mahogany imported into the United States from Peru during the reporting period and provided Peru with periodic reports on those imports, which totaled 72 cubic meters of wood in 2014, and 290 cubic meters of wood between January 2015 and November 2015. USFWS continues to monitor the volume of bigleaf mahogany imported into the United States from Peru and provides this information to Peru, as well as the CITES Secretariat and other major mahogany importing countries, on a regular basis to assist Peru in monitoring its exports of mahogany to the United States.

U.S.-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement: Since the U.S.-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement (PTPA) entered into force on 1 February 2009, the United States has worked very closely with Peruvian authorities in implementing the Environment Chapter and Annex on Forest Sector Governance ("Forest Annex"). The Forest Annex and its related January 2013 bilateral Action Plan include special focus on Peru's forest management with regard to CITES-listed tree species. To support Peru's obligations under the Forest Annex and implementation of the Action Plan, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) jointly developed a timber tracing software prototype that was deployed to checkpoints along Peru's most complex timber corridor to undergo a year of intensive beta testing. The final tracking system is in development and scheduled to be delivered by the end of 2015. USFS is also supporting the Government of Peru in implementing inventories of forests designated for timber production (dubbed "permanent production forests"). The first phase of inventories in Loreto and Ucayali were completed in 2015, including data from approximately 1.5 million hectares in Loreto and 1.2 million hectares in Ucayali. The first phase of inventory in the San Martin region is projected to be completed by mid-2016. Finally, USFS is

supporting a study to map the genetic distribution of *Cedrela* species in Peru, which will serve as the basis for development of tools to identify the species and geographic origin of a timber shipment. Samples from *Cedrela* trees across six regions in Peru have been collected, and genetic sequencing is expected to begin early 2016. The U.S. Department of Justice also held training workshops in November 2014 and June 2015 in timber crimes investigation for Peruvian environmental police and prosecutors.

CITES Plant Rescue Center Program: USFWS established the CITES Plant Rescue Center Program in 1978 in response to the need to care for live CITES-listed plants legally abandoned or forfeited to the U.S. Government due to non-compliance with the import/export requirements of the Convention. USFWS administers this program in cooperation with APHIS, the U.S. inspection agency for live CITES-listed plants entering the United States. Currently, 84 institutions cooperate as volunteer plant rescue centers. All of the cooperating rescue centers are public botanical gardens, arboreta, zoological parks, or research institutions, and are either government entities or governmentally or privately funded non-profit entities. During 2014, APHIS confiscated 28 shipments of live plant material that were in violation of CITES. These shipments contained a total of 3,985 plants and 16 cactus skeletons. The 26 shipments assigned to plant rescue centers contained 2,693 cacti, 1,113 euphorbias, 112 orchids, 50 podophyllums, 11 succulents, 3 tillandsias, and 2 cycads, 2,343 aloes, 27 pitcher plants, and 8 tree ferns, plus 14 cactus skeletons.

U.S. CITES Annual Reports for 2013 and 2014: On 22 October 2014, USFWS submitted, directly to UNEP-WCMC in electronic format, the U.S. CITES Annual Report data file for 2013 (148,287 data records), which contained data on all U.S. trade with the rest of the world in CITES-listed species of fauna and flora during 2013. On 26 October 2015, USFWS submitted, directly to UNEP-WCMC in electronic format, the U.S. CITES Annual Report data file for 2014 (147,439 data records), which contained data on all U.S. trade with the rest of the world in CITES-listed species of fauna and flora during 2014. The data in these data files represent actual trade and not just numbers of CITES permits issued.

U.S. CITES Implementation Report for 2013-2015: On 24 September 2015, USFWS submitted to the CITES Secretariat the U.S. CITES Implementation Report covering the period from 1 January 2013 through June 30, 2015. These Implementation Reports are what used to be called Biennial Reports. This report summarized some of the major legislative, regulatory, and administrative measures taken by the United States during 2013-2015 in its implementation and enforcement of CITES. The United States submitted its report in accordance with the *Biennial Report Format* adopted by the Parties at CoP13 and distributed by the Secretariat in CITES Notification to the Parties No. 2005/035. The USFWS has posted this report on its CITES website at <http://www.fws.gov/international/pdf/implementation-report-us-cites-2013-2015.pdf>.

U.S. elephant seizure data: On 10 December 2014, in response to CITES Notification No. 2014/052, USFWS submitted to TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa files containing data on U.S. seizures of elephant parts and products at U.S. ports of entry and exit during 2013 for inclusion in the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS). On 18 September 2015, in response to CITES Notification No. 2015/044, USFWS submitted to TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa files containing data on U.S. seizures of elephant parts and products at U.S. ports of entry and exit during 2014, and data summarizing seizures of elephant parts and products by U.S. enforcement officials at locations other than at U.S. ports of entry and exit during the time period from 2006 through 2014 for inclusion in ETIS.

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

UNITED STATES

Communications with the Chair of the Standing Committee and the Secretariat: The United States served as both the North American Regional Representative and Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee throughout the reporting period, and in the capacity of Vice-Chair had regular communications with the Secretariat and the Chair of the Standing Committee.

Regional teleconference in preparation for SC66: Since SC65, the United States, as the North American Regional Representative on the Standing Committee, has maintained contact with Canada and Mexico on Standing Committee issues. In December 2015, the United States will hold a conference call with Canada and Mexico as part of the regional consultation process in preparation for SC66.

5. REGIONAL COOPERATION

CANADA / MEXICO / USA

A two-year project submitted by the North American Region CITES Authorities on “Strengthening conservation and sustainable production of selected CITES Appendix-II species in North America” has been approved by the Commission on Environmental Cooperation (CEC) for funding under its “2015-2016 Operational Plan,” with a total budget of 300,000 USD: 65,000 USD for the first phase; and 235,000 USD for the second phase. The Project’s aim is to portray the trade of Appendix-II listed species in the Region to promote their legal and sustainable trade through: (Phase 1) the identification and prioritization of highly traded Appendix-II species, followed by a comprehensive trade analysis; and, (Phase 2) the establishment and implementation of action plans to strengthen and improve regional collaboration on the implementation of CITES provisions for the selected species.

20th Trilateral Meeting: The CITES Table met during the 2015 annual meeting of the Canada/Mexico/United States Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management, held April 2015, in San Diego, California. Much of the work of the CITES Table focuses on regional coordination in preparation for CITES meetings. Topics addressed included evaluation of the Review of Significant Trade, the periodic review of the Appendices, listing annotations, implementation of CITES listings for timber species, implementation of CITES for marine species, illegal trade of *Totoaba macdonaldi*, and the U.S. Executive Order on Combating Wildlife Trafficking.

CANADA

Canada’s involvement with the Interpol Wildlife Crime Working Group has included building capacity and facilitating the exchange of information in support of coordinated and enhanced enforcement efforts around the world. In 2014, Environment Canada seconded staff on a part-time basis to the INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB) located at the RCMP headquarters in Ottawa. The aim of these assignments is to improve the Environment Canada’s ability to exchange operational information with INTERPOL, with other countries’ NCBs, and with other domestic agencies.

MEXICO

Teleconference CANADA–UNITED STATES OF AMERICA–MEXICO (September 2015):

- a. Mexico had a teleconference with the CITES Authorities of China and the United States to discuss the illegal trade of totoaba within the CITES framework. During the conference, there was an exchange of ideas on how to improve the quality of information on the illegal trade of totoaba specimens, and on measures to prevent it. The main agreements reached were:
 - To prepare a draft letter of intent to collaborate toward conservation of the totoaba.
 - China suggested contacting the Authorities in Hong Kong, which is a potential illegal market for totoaba.
- b. The draft letter of intent is currently being reviewed by the Authorities of China and the United States, and is expected to be signed at the beginning of 2016

UNITED STATES

Polar Bear Stakeholder Forum: Canada and the United States hosted a Polar Bear Stakeholder Forum at the USFWS NCTC facility in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, in June 2015. Because Canada and the United States have shared responsibility for the management of polar bears in the respective countries, a Stakeholder Forum was convened to present information about polar bear conservation and management among a broad range of perspectives. Forum participants had the opportunity to ask questions and to improve understanding of the different perspectives to polar bear conservation and management.

6. MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

CANADA

The Canadian networks of Management and Scientific Authorities communicate regularly to discuss CITES implementation issues. There have been no formal meetings or workshops held since SC65. The Canadian Scientific Authority also communicates regularly with an Aboriginal Consult group to discuss CITES related issues as they pertain to Canadian Aboriginal peoples.

UNITED STATES

First Pangolin Range States Meeting: In June 2015, the United States, along with the Management Authority of Viet Nam, co-hosted the First Pangolin Range States Meeting in Da Nang, Viet Nam. The meeting brought together 56 representatives from 29 of the 48 African and Asian pangolin range states for the first time to discuss pangolin conservation and trade. Recommendations concerning conservation, management and implementation, and enforcement and compliance were agreed upon and made available to the CITES pangolin working group.

CITES shark workshops: NOAA Fisheries provided support for a regional workshop in Dakar, Senegal, on 12-14 August 2014, which brought together 13 West African countries to share information and to receive identification training and tools that will facilitate implementation of the Appendix-II shark and ray listings adopted in 2013. The workshop participants also adopted an [action plan](#) (also [available in French](#)) identifying recommendations to address the priority needs of the region for the implementation and enforcement of the commercially exploited shark and ray species listed under CITES (oceanic whitetip; scalloped, great, and smooth hammerhead; porbeagle sharks; and manta rays). This workshop provided the foundation for future collaboration between West African countries, helped ensure that trade in shark species in this region is sustainable and does not threaten their survival and promoted interagency and regional cooperation between the CITES and fisheries authorities.

CITES Authorities from the United States, the USFWS Office of Law Enforcement, and NOAA Fisheries participated in the “International CITES Workshop: Articulating Experiences and Strategies for the Implementation of Shark Species Included in Appendix II,” in Santa Marta, Colombia, 25-27 November, 2014. More than 60 participants, representing over 20 countries, participated in the workshop. Topics discussed included: the making non-detriment findings to ensure sustainable use of shark species in international trade; species identification; and traceability of products (fins and meat). The presentation of the identification software iSharkfin (an application to aid the identification of shark’s fins through photographs) was an outcome of the workshop. The participants also identified current needs and recommendations for effectively implementing the shark listings. This workshop was hosted by the government of Colombia, with support from the CITES Secretariat, NOAA Fisheries, and USFWS.

Needs assessments in Gabon (June 2014) and Cameroon (December 2014): The United States believes that effective implementation of CITES is a critical component in addressing international wildlife trafficking. Assistance through capacity building is key to improving CITES implementation. As such, francophone Africa is a priority area for these efforts given its high biodiversity and volume of traded wildlife. At the request of both Gabon and Cameroon, USFWS conducted two CITES Needs Assessments in these countries in 2014 in order to provide recommendations to improve CITES implementation.

Reducing Opportunities for Unlawful Transport of Endangered Species Workshop: In June 2015, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) convened a workshop in Washington, D.C., on Reducing Opportunities for Unlawful Transport of Endangered Species (ROUTES) to address the complex challenge of combating wildlife trafficking in transcontinental transportation and logistics supply chains. Participants included government agencies, NGOs, and transport industry representatives from Europe, Africa, and Asia. Participants developed a joint understanding of the problems and challenges in order to clarify existing efforts and activities and identified key areas for collaborative action. Action plans for further cooperative efforts are in progress.

Free trade agreements and capacity building: U.S. free trade agreements with Colombia, Korea, Panama, and Peru, as well as the pending TPP, include enforceable obligations for Parties to implement their CITES commitments. The United States Government, including the Department of the Interior International Technical Assistance Program (ITAP) and USFS continue to work on wildlife trafficking and CITES capacity-building projects in support of these obligations. The United States also provides capacity building and technical assistance to implement CITES obligations in support of our free trade agreements with Chile, Morocco, and Central America and the Dominican Republic. ITAP is currently working to establish similar efforts in Asia. Many

of these activities are conducted in coordination with the U.S. Department of State and USFWS provides technical experts on assessment and training missions. For additional information please visit the ITAP website at <http://www.doi.gov/intl/itap/index.cfm> and the Department of State website at <http://www.state.gov/e/oes/eqt/trade/index.htm>.

Capacity Exchange Workshop in Guatemala: Representatives of the U.S. Scientific and Management Authorities participated in a Capacity Exchange Workshop between Guatemala and the United States during 3-7 November 2014. This workshop was hosted by the Guatemalan CITES Scientific Authority for CITES-listed timber species. The purpose of the workshop was to improve the effective implementation of CITES for Guatemalan timber species.

CMS meeting: The United States participated in the 11th Meeting of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). The meeting was held 4-9 November 2014, in Quito, Ecuador. While not a signatory to the CMS, the United States has many international commitments for CMS-listed species. CMS agenda items of conservation interest to the United States included migratory birds, sharks and rays, polar bear, Asiatic and African lion, and wildlife crime.

USFWS participates in Wood Summit: A representative of the U.S. Management Authority participated in the Fifth Bi-Annual Wood Summit on 7 May 2015, hosted by the C. F. Martin & Co., Inc. at the company's headquarters in Nazareth, Pennsylvania. Topics on the agenda ranged from the regulation of international trade in CITES-listed timber species and Lacey Act Due Care to DNA Chain of Custody tracking and alternative material sourcing.

USFWS participates in European Regional CITES Plants Meeting: A representative of the U.S. Management Authority participated in the IX European Regional CITES Plants Meeting, held in Wageningen, the Netherlands, in November 2014. The U.S. representative participated in discussions on plant issues of interest to the European region and gave presentations on the progress of work in the Standing Committee Working Group on Annotations and initiatives and challenges in the United States related to implementation of CITES tree species listings.

AZA meeting: The U.S. CITES Authorities participated in the mid-year meeting of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) held in Columbia, South Carolina, on 21-27 March 2015. The meeting included a workshop on CITES permitting requirements for the export and/or import of animals.

International Law Enforcement Academy: CITES instruction was provided by USFWS OLE special agents and wildlife inspectors as part of OLE's Wildlife Investigations Training Courses at the International Law Enforcement Academies (ILEA) conducted at ILEA in Gaborone, Botswana, in August 2014, May 2015 and August 2015, and at ILEA in Bangkok, Thailand, in December 2014 and October 2015.

CITES training workshops: CITES instruction was provided by USFWS wildlife inspectors at CITES training workshops in Honduras in April 2015, in Guatemala in May 2015, and in Panama in July 2015.

Combating wildlife trafficking: During the reporting period, a USFWS OLE special agent attended a meeting hosted by the Chinese CITES Management Authority to assist African CITES Management Authorities in combating wildlife trafficking.

APHIS CITES workshop: In June 2015, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and USFWS conducted a CITES training workshop in Linden, New Jersey, for APHIS and CBP inspectors of the U.S. ports on the U.S. east coast.

Chinese CITES delegation visits the United States: In September 2015, representatives from the Beijing and Provincial Offices of the Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora Import & Export Management Office of the People's Republic of China visited the United States. The Chinese delegates visited the CITES-designated port of Los Angeles, California, and the National Wildlife Property Repository in Colorado before traveling to USFWS Headquarters for collaborative meetings with the CITES Management and Scientific Authorities, USFWS Office of Law Enforcement, NOAA Office of Law Enforcement, and NOAA Fisheries, including a trilateral discussion with Mexico regarding the illegal trade in totoaba swim bladders.

7. PROBLEMS FACED BY THE REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

UNITED STATES

At SC64 (March 2013), the United States, which had served as the North American Regional Representative on the Standing Committee for the intersessional period between CoP15 and CoP16, was again elected as the Regional Representative for the intersessional period between CoP16 and CoP17. Since then, the United States can report that coordination within the region has continued to be excellent and it has faced no special problems as Regional Representative.