

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

CHINA'S MEASURE AND SUGGESTION ABOUT THE CONSERVATION OF TOTOABA
(TOTOABA MACDONALDI)

This information document has been submitted by China in relation to agenda item 58 on *Totoaba macdonaldi*):
Opportunities for international collaboration within the CITES framework.



中华人民共和国濒危物种进出口管理办公室

THE ENDANGERED SPECIES IMPORT & EXPORT MANAGEMENT OFFICE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Ref: 2015-EL-001

22^{ed} Dec, 2015

To:

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**China's measure and suggestion about the conservation of Totoaba
(Totoaba macdonaldi)**

Dear Mr. Scanlon,

Regarding with the Notification No. 2015/50 published and forward by the Secretariat dated August 24th 2015 on the conservation of Totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*) and vaquita porpoise (*Phocoena sinus*). The Chinese government

attaches great importance to this issue and adopts various measures to address the issue. Thereafter, I would like to communicate you the relative information and our suggestion as follow.

The CITES MA of China immediately issued official letter to all relative Chinese agencies of law enforcement and wildlife conservation, including agriculture, fishery, customs, police, quarantine, border control and coast guard, requesting them to enhance the supervision of the smuggling and control of the illegal sale of totoaba bladder at the market. The General Administration of Customs then forwarded a notice to all local customs requesting them to strengthen the examination of the species. The Fishery Department of Guangzhou province organized special inspections and necessary publicity campaigns.

On December 17, 2015, a joint investigation on the Guangzhou Qingping aquatic product and medicine material markets was organized by CITES MA of China, together CITES SA, Ministry of Agriculture and Chinese office of IUCN. Besides visiting and routine examining many stores in the market, the investigation team took a non-notice inspection to two of the related shops mentioned by some NGOs. Not only any totoaba bladder was found in any store during the investigation, but also the team was told by the employee of these shops that, since the high price of dry totoaba bladder, the trade generally bring high pressure of funds occupation and high risk. Moreover, the shopkeepers are worrying about the fake products as it's hard for them to identify the differences. Therefor, they are reluctant to be engaged in trade of totoaba bladder.

After the site inspection, a meeting was held to the local officials responsible for the issue and market managers who was informed the international community's concern about the illegal harvest of Totoaba and smuggling of bladder, as well as the basic knowledge of Totoaba and its bladder. They will pay more attention to and properly handle the issues of Totoaba bladder.

In future, relative management authorities in China will take further steps to enhance the supervision of the illegal entry of Totoaba bladder into China and effectively control the smuggling. Meanwhile, the supervision and inspection to the main domestic markets will be continuously enhanced to eliminate openly sale of the Totoaba bladder.

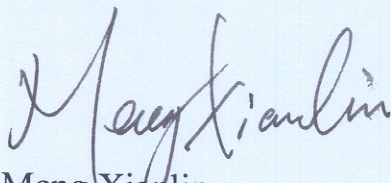
As far as we understand, the survival of wild population of Totoaba has been facing three kinds of main threats. Firstly, by-catch of the baby fish of Totoaba during shrimping. Secondly, the degradation of its habitat due to the construction of dam in the upstream and followed decreasing of the flow.

Thirdly, the overexploitation of its wild populations to meet the demand of its meat since 1920. Of course, the illegal trade in bladder may surely speed up the process.

Hence, we believe that the key elements for the protection of Totoaba are firstly to perfect and regulate the fisheries management policy in the habitat of Totoaba. The development and implementation of a workable and practical fishery regulation without unduly threaten the livelihood of local fishermen is vital to the survival of Totoaba; Secondly, to continuously improve quality of Totoaba habitat, exploit the self-developing potentialities of Totoaba and promote the rapid population recovery of it; Thirdly, to take resolute measures to crack down illegal harvest and smuggling, strengthen the lawful punishment to criminals, and carry out international cooperation with transit and destination countries to break the smuggling chain. China will, as always, cooperate with other countries on law enforcement and carry out investigation upon the timely information of illegal case.

It's regrettable to us that the Secretariat hurriedly published this notification contain unverified accusations against China from Mexico. And we do hope the Secretariat may could be more cautious about this kind of the issue.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Meng Xianlin', written in a cursive style.

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