

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



Seventieth meeting of the Standing Committee
Rosa Khutor, Sochi (Russian Federation), 1-5 October 2018

Species specific matters

REVIEW OF PRECIOUS CORALS IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE
(ORDER ANTIPATHARIA/FAMILY CORALLIDAE):
REPORT OF THE ANIMALS COMMITTEE

1. This document has been submitted by the Chair of the Animals Committee.*
2. At its 17th meeting (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016), the Conference of the Parties adopted the following Decisions on *Precious corals (Order Antipatharia and family Coralliidae)*:

Directed to the Secretariat

17.190 *The Secretariat, subject to external funding, is requested to:*

- a) *issue a notification that invites precious coral range States and relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organizations, on a voluntary basis, to complete a questionnaire/survey (Annex 2 of document CoP17 Com. I. 11) to report data on their precious coral resources (black, red, and pink coral species including species within the order Antipatharia, and family Coralliidae), especially current and historical abundance, biological status, management, and any known harvest for domestic or international trade; and*
- b) *compile range States' and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations' data into a report for submission to the 29th meeting of the Animals Committee for its consideration.*

Directed to the Secretariat

17.191 *The Secretariat, subject to external funding, is requested to collaborate with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to commission a study by species experts on CITES and non-CITES listed precious coral species (black, red, and pink coral species including species within the order Antipatharia, and family Coralliidae) including:*

- a) *consideration of any responses received to the Notification issued in response to Decision 17.190;*
- b) *compilation of available data and information on the biology, population status, use and trade in each species, as well as identification of gaps in such data and information;*

* *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.*

- c) *comparison of the management and harvest regulation schemes for black and red and pink coral species; and*
- d) *preparation of a report for consideration at the 30th meeting of the Animals Committee, on the conservation status and trade of precious corals, including guidance, if appropriate, on the actions needed to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of precious corals.*

Directed to the Animals Committee

17.192 *The Animals Committee is requested to:*

- a) *analyse the outcomes of the precious coral survey and the FAO study and prepare recommendations, as appropriate, on actions needed to enhance the conservation and sustainable harvest and use of all precious corals in international trade; and*
- b) *report these recommendations to the Standing Committee at its 70th meeting.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

17.193 *The Standing Committee is requested to consider the information and recommendations of the Animals Committee, made in accordance with Decision 17.192, and make its own recommendations, as appropriate, for communication to the Parties or for consideration at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties*

3. In order to facilitate the implementation of its mandate in Decision 17.192, the Animals Committee established an intersessional working group tasked with analysing and reviewing the study produced pursuant to Decision 17.191 as soon as it becomes available, with the following mandate:
 - a) *to analyse the study commissioned in response to Decision 17.191 and to formulate recommendations for consideration at the 30th meeting of the Animals Committee;*
 - b) *to analyse the outcomes of the study and prepare recommendations on actions to enhance the conservation and sustainable harvest;*
 - c) *to review other relevant issues, such as identification of corals and coral products in trade issues; and*
 - d) *to think about potential future enforcement issues such as synthetic corals.*
4. Further to the working group recommendations, the Animals Committee noted Decision 17.181 on the new treaty on marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) which may have relevance to CITES listed corals and CITES Introduction from the Sea certificates. Moreover, the Animals Committee noted that there are many potential impacts on many coral populations in the wild (including climate change, ocean acidification, and others) which may affect precious coral too, which should be taken into account to understand the coral diversity of marine waters.
5. With regard to the future of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) report, further to the recommendations of the inter-sessional working group, the Animals Committee invited the Secretariat to:
 - a) to work with FAO to finalize the report by CoP18;
 - b) in doing so, and in order to make the report as useful as possible and to ensure input from the Parties and from a peer-review process from a broad range of experts, to liaise with the members of the intersessional working group on corals including on the review of future drafts.
6. Moreover, the Animals Committee encouraged TRAFFIC to make its relevant information on Pacific precious corals available as soon as possible for inclusion in the FAO report. Further to the working group's recommendations, the Animals Committee will continue to look at issues of conservation and sustainable use of precious corals, and will continue to keep track of new institutional changes in order to understand their effectiveness. Moreover, the Animals Committee encouraged Parties to continue to strengthen their domestic management and conservation measures concerning all precious corals; and reminded Parties

which export CITES Appendix-II listed black coral species, to make no-detriment findings (NDFs) and encourage these Parties to provide copies of the NDFs to the Secretariat.

7. With regard to international trade, the Animals Committee noted the challenges of analysing trade in coral products since the current Harmonized System (HS) classification amalgamates them with other species due to the lack of specific custom codes; and, further noted the cumbersome process of adopting specific custom codes on an international level. Moreover, the Animals Committee recommended to the Secretariat to follow-up on cases of illegal trade for CITES-listed species black corals referred to in the FAO report.
8. Non-withstanding the implementation of Decision 17.192, the working group encouraged the Animals Committee to keep the issue of precious corals under review, in order to determine what new data are available with a view to updating the study before the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP19, 2022).

Recommendations

9. The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - a) propose to CoP18 the extension of Decisions 17.192 and 17.193; and,
 - b) take into account the challenges posed by the lack of specific customs codes for international trade in precious corals and their parts and derivatives, when considering the finalized FAO report and making its recommendations, as appropriate.