

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

Regional Matters

Reports of regional representatives

NORTH AMERICA

1. This document has been submitted by Canada as the Regional Representative for North America.*

2. INTRODUCTION

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

This Regional Report for North America covers the period from December 2017 (69th meeting of the Standing Committee) through to August 3, 2018. 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. This report does not, for the most part, include topics covered in the North American Regional Reports to the Animals and Plants Committees.

3. OVERVIEW OF MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

CANADA

Canada reports highlights of CITES implementation under the *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act* (WAPPRITA) to Parliament annually. This report fulfills the Minister of the Environment's obligation, under section 28 of WAPPRITA, to report annually on the administration of the Act (<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/eccc/documents/pdf/WAPPRITAAnnualReport2016-en.pdf>).

Canada ensures predictability in the implementation of CITES for Canadians, by capturing and reporting on standards and performance for the issuance of CITES permits in Canada on our Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) website at <http://www.ec.gc.ca/cites/default.asp?lang=En&n=B02A39A6-1>.

Canada continues to build on its wildlife compliance outreach activities. After months of collaboration between departments of ECCC and the Toronto Zoo, a new CITES exhibit was developed and installed at the zoo on August 1, 2018. The exhibit, aimed at youth and their families, features objects made from species of plants and animals listed in the CITES Appendices and information on how CITES protects wild plants and animals around the world. The exhibit will increase public awareness of CITES, encourage compliance with its requirements and

* *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.*

provide a learning opportunity for young visitors and their families in regards to wildlife conservation and trade issues.

Operation Thunderstorm: During the month of May 2018, Environment and Climate Change Canada's enforcement officers, along with provincial and territorial enforcement agencies, participated in INTERPOL's Operation Thunderstorm, a month-long international operation aimed at averting illegal trade in wildlife, plants, and timber. The operation involved 92 countries, and it resulted in close to 2000 seizures worldwide of protected animals, plants, and associated products. During the operation in Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada and conservation enforcement agencies in several provinces conducted hundreds of inspections and enforcement actions, including inspections of live animals in transport, responses to complaints of habitat and wildlife destruction, hunter/angler checks, and border-crossing blitzes. Officers intercepted items such as finished products made of rosewood, shark fins, controlled snakes, and commercial products such as briefcases and handbags made with endangered species. Canadian authorities detained 18 tons of suspected European eel meat arriving from Asia, which is designated as endangered and has been banned for export, by the European Union, since 2010. Canada participated as a coordinating country along with several others.

Operation VITRUM: In November 2016, processed European eels (CITES Appendix II species) were detected entering the port of Vancouver along with processed American Eel. Their final destination was Toronto. No CITES-Export permit accompanied the shipment. Environment and Climate Change Canada's (ECCC) enforcement officers detained and sampled the shipment. Between November 2016 and June 30, 2018, ECCC Enforcement officers have inspected an additional 13 large containers of frozen eels imported into Canada from China. A total of 10 of the containers were confirmed to contain European eel through the application of DNA testing. The containers are being detained pending completion of associated investigations. Operation VITRUM includes a joint investigation between ECCC and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Multiple investigations are continuing in 2018.

Wood Identification Workshop for Canadian Enforcement Officials: 28th – 31th of May 2018, the Enforcement Branch of Environment and Climate Change Canada hosted a hands-on tropical wood identification workshop in Vancouver, British Columbia. The workshop was led by Anton Huitema, Customs Officer for the Port of Rotterdam, Netherlands. Content included information on wood anatomy, taxonomy and techniques and materials for macro- and microscopic wood identification, as well as risk assessment for wood shipments. In addition to ECCC Enforcement officers, the workshop was attend by representatives of the United States Forest Service (who demonstrated their machine vision-based xylotron wood identification tool), the Canada Border Services Agency, and the Canadian Forest Service of Natural Resources Canada.

Canada's involvement with the Interpol Wildlife Crime Working Group (WCWG) has included building capacity and facilitating the exchange of information in support of coordinated and enhanced enforcement efforts around the world. Environment and Climate Change Canada has a part-time basis officer at the INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB) located at the RCMP headquarters in Ottawa. The aim of these assignments is to improve Environment and Climate Change Canada's ability to exchange operational information with INTERPOL, with other countries' NCBs and with other domestic agencies. Canada continues to sit on the executive of the WCWG as post-chair.

Import restriction on all species of the order Caudata: Import restriction made permanent. The *Regulations Amending the Wild Animal and Plant Trade Regulations* (WAPTR) have included all species of the Order Caudata (all species of salamanders, newts and mudpuppies) to Schedule II of WAPTR. These regulations came into force on May 12, 2018. The objective of the import restriction is to prevent the introduction of an infectious fungus (Bsal) into Canadian ecosystems.

As the Enforcement Branch of ECCC strives at being an Intelligence-driven organization, great efforts are put in place in order to better identify trends and better understand the trade as well as key players involved in the illegal trade in CITES-protected species and other species protected by WAPPRIITA. To that effect, over the reporting period, ECCC's Wildlife Enforcement Directorate has developed a Strategic Intelligence Assessment (SIA) on the trade in Rosewood and another one on the trade in Shark. Those two SIAs will support our risk-based decision making process.

Canada continues to work on ensuring that permitting processes are responsive, where possible, to the needs of exporters. Canada works closely with the various types of exporters of products made from CITES-listed species or captive breeders to promote compliance, and streamline the permitting process to meet the varying needs.

MEXICO

Implementing CITES in Mexico

Taking into consideration the recommendations made by the International Committee for the Recovery of the Vaquita (CIRVA), on 20 April 2018 Mexico published an Agreement that extends the area of the wildlife refuge for the vaquita porpoise (*Phocoena sinus*), providing it with 1,841 square kilometres to allow and encourage the recovery of its population.

Mexico has developed a new Official Mexican Standard, PROY-NOM-169-SEMARNAT-2018, establishing the marking specifications for specimens, parts and derivatives of totoaba sourced from Wildlife Conservation Management Units. It includes traceability features that employ microsattelites as genetic markers, which allows distinguishing between individuals raised in captivity and those from the wild.

Verifying Compliance with CITES

1. Inspecting Cross-Border Movements:

During the period from December 2017 to June 2018, 3,107 wildlife inspections were conducted, of which 2,243 were imports and 864 were exports.

The main fauna taxa being transported are *Alligator mississippiensis*, *Python reticulatus*, *Python reticulatus [sic]*, *Varanus salvator* and *Salvator merianae*. Movements of flora are not very representative, the only ones of note being *Dalbergia latifolia*, *Swietenia macrophylla* and *Euphorbia antisyphilitica*.

Main taxa being transported, based on the frequency of recorded movements:

DECEMBER 2017						
Species/Unit of measure	SET	KILO	PAIR	PIECE	TROPHY	Grand Total
ALLIGATOR MISSISSIPPIENSIS			21	480		492
CAIMAN YACARE		9	1	202		212
PYTHON RETICULATUS	1		75	44		120
PYTHON RETICULATUS			15	50		65
ARAPAIMA GIGAS			62	2		64

2018					
Species/Unit of measure	m ²	PAIR	PIECE	TROPHY	Grand Total
ALLIGATOR MISSISSIPPIENSIS	5	36	960		989
PYTHON RETICULATUS		45	263		308
PYTHON BIVITTATUS		22	75		97
VARANUS SALVATOR		54	30		84
SALVATOR MERIANAE		74	9		83

2. Capacity-Building

Training:

During the period from December 2017 to July 2018, three training events were organized, with participation in two more, namely:

-The Tarantula Trilateral Trade and Enforcement Workshop, March 2018.

-Workshop on Identifying and Intercepting Invasive Aquatic Species Associated with the Trans-Border Movement of Goods Regulated by SEMARNAT, May 2018.

-Capacity-Building Workshop to Prevent and Fight the Illegal International Trade in Totoaba, June 2018.

-Training Workshop on Identifying Shark Fins, July 2018.

- Tools For Fighting the Illegal International Trade in Wildlife Used by INTERPOL Conference, July 2018.

At these events, 126 individuals received training, chiefly law enforcement officials of Mexico's CITES authority and including the operational personnel of public and national security, criminal prosecution, fisheries and customs authorities, as well as representatives of the manufacturing sector and the academic community.

In May, June (and upcoming in September of 2018), Mexico's three CITES authorities took part in the Environmental Mission Gendarmerie Certificate Course (General Directorate for Strategic Operations and Special Units of the Federal Police) to train personnel on biodiversity and wildlife issues, most notably on CITES and its implementation at the national level, including tools for identifying commonly traded wildlife species.

Supplying Equipment:

An essential part of reinforcing CITES inspections is equipping inspection offices and operational personnel. The outcome has been the provision of 107 work tools (including electronic tablets and microscopes) and 69 pieces of equipment for taking samples and handling wildlife, as well as compact discs containing reference literature such as identification guides, manuals and legal tools.

Leaflets distributed:

Among activities conducted to promote compliance with CITES, during the reporting period 22,000 leaflets on wildlife species listed under CITES and/or under national legislation were distributed.

3. Law Enforcement

An important part of the work being done is intercepting attempts to illegally export specimens, parts and/or derivatives of wildlife species regulated by CITES and/or included in some risk category in Mexican legislation, as the result of ongoing surveillance at maritime ports, international airports and border crossings, which is co-ordinated with other authorities such as Customs, Fisheries, and Public and National Security.

During the period from 01 December 2017 to 31 July 2018, the Federal Agency for Environmental Protection (PROFEPA) carried out a total of eleven (11) precautionary seizures of specimens, parts and derivatives of wildlife in the 57 established inspectorates, which included species of birds (songbirds and ornamental birds), mammals such as the bighorn sheep, terrestrial invertebrates such as tarantulas and centipedes, marine species (totoaba, seahorse, sea cucumber) as well as flora (*Sempervivum*).

It is important to mention the attention devoted to particular aspects of illegal international trafficking that have required co-ordination with the CITES authorities of other countries, such as the totoaba (with China) and the keel-billed toucan (with Spain).

There is also a special project to monitor and oversee the export of hunting trophies of bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*). This is a game species highly prized worldwide and thus subject to constant trans-border movement.

In conclusion, it should be mentioned that, as part of collaboration with the academic community (the National Autonomous University of Mexico and Northumbria University, United Kingdom), case studies were contributed for the publication of the book Green Crime: a Collection of Case Studies, edited by Palgrave Macmillan.

UNITED STATES

SUPPORT FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE CITES MASTER'S COURSE: Through two partnerships, one with Atecma Asesores Tecnicos de Medio Ambiente (ATECMA) and another with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) with funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) supported 16 professionals from 12 countries in Central America (6), South America (1), the Caribbean (4), and Central Africa (1), to participate in the Master's Degree Program on the Management and

Conservation of Species in Trade: the International Framework (CITES Master's Course), April 2017 – March 2018, in Spain. The partnership with WCS further aims to strengthen country and regional-level capacity for CITES in Central America and the Caribbean by supporting the development of non-detriment findings (NDFs), improving availability of data on illegal trade in CITES-listed species, and increasing knowledge of emerging regional illegal wildlife trade threats and rapidly developing markets.

CAPACITY-BUILDING SUPPORT TO ANGOLA: In partnership with Wildlife Impact and in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment of Angola (MINAMB), USFWS is supporting efforts to strengthen CITES capacity and enhance enforcement of wildlife crime law in Angola with a specific focus to counter wildlife trafficking in Maiombe National Park and surrounding areas of Cabinda Province.

INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION CHIEF'S ACADEMY: In September 2017 and March 2018, the USFWS Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) hosted the International Conservation Chief's Academy at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. OLE, along with the National Association of Conservation Law Enforcement Chief's (NACLEC), provided instruction and training for the program, which was funded by the Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics & Law Enforcement Affairs (INL). In total, 80 leaders from global conservation law enforcement agencies, wildlife conservation law enforcement leaders from 17 African nations and 6 Southeast Asia nations, met in an effort to build capacity and collaborate to combat wildlife trafficking.

WILDLIFE INVESTIGATION COURSES AT ILEA: OLE produced an unprecedented number of wildlife investigation courses at the International Law Enforcement Academies (ILEA) during this reporting period. In total, there were three training missions at the ILEA in Bangkok, Thailand; five training missions at ILEA in Gaborone, Botswana; one training mission at ILEA in Budapest, Hungary; and one training mission at ILEA in San Salvador, El Salvador. The wildlife investigation course focused on wildlife crime scene investigation (CSI) and investigative techniques specific to wildlife trafficking investigations.

LAW ENFORCEMENT CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR BENIN AND GHANA: OLE began two additional wildlife programs to increase capacity and skills to combat wildlife trafficking. The Wildlife Border Inspection Training Program (WBITP) was conducted at the West Africa Regional Training Center in Ghana. The WBITP brought together wildlife inspectors from West African nations to collaborate on counter wildlife trafficking techniques at ports of entry. In conjunction with the WBITP, OLE partnered with U.S. Customs and Border Protection to conduct two International Wildlife Port Assessments in Benin. The assessments identify proper procedures to combat wildlife trafficking at sea, land, and air ports of entry.

LAW ENFORCEMENT ATTACHÉ TRAINING: OLE produced nine additional courses outside of the ILEAs. These attaché training programs are designed to support OLE attachés stationed at U.S. Embassies in seven regions of the world. The trainings were conducted in Canada, Kenya, Malaysia, Namibia, the Philippines, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda. Courses included training in forensic science, wildlife crime scene investigation, marine crime scene investigation, shark fin identification, buy bust techniques, and law enforcement case management.

CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION TRAINING: OLE, in partnership with host country governments and NGO's, provided over 100 customized, CSI Kits to national police, game rangers, and other enforcement authorities during four separate training missions organized in Uganda, Botswana, and Namibia. The CSI kits contained evidence collection materials such as evidence bags, tape, tags, crime scene tape, digital cameras, and chain of custody forms. Course instructors included OLE scientists from the National Forensics Laboratory; information technology special agents from the Digital Evidence Recovery and Technical Services Unit (DERTSU), and senior special agents from the field.

OPERATION THUNDERSTORM: During the period of May 1 – May 31, 2018, the United States participated in a global wildlife enforcement operation, organized under the auspices of the International Consortium to Combat Wildlife Crime (ICWC). The operation, facilitated by the INTERPOL Wildlife Crime Working Group (WCWG), the World Customs Organization (WCO), and the CITES Secretariat, aimed to counter wildlife trafficking in a global effort and establish a platform for information sharing among CITES and WCWG partner nations to initiate joint investigative efforts to combat transnational wildlife crime. The operation involved the participation of CITES law enforcement authorities from over 60 countries including Canada, China, the European Union, India, Mexico, Mozambique, the Russian Federation, South Africa, the United States, and Zambia. This operation is a continuation of the success of Operation Thunderbird, the global enforcement operation initiated in February of 2017. During Operation Thunderbird, OLE seized CITES protected wildlife and plant products including tortoises and reptiles, live birds, shark fins, sturgeon caviar and sturgeon extract cosmetics, dried orchids, wild American ginseng, and elephant ivory.

INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS UNIT: OLE has deployed special agent attachés to serve at U.S. Embassies in strategic regions throughout the world. USFWS special agent attachés are experienced criminal investigators specialized in wildlife and natural resource investigations. The attachés' mission is to support wildlife investigations within the host country and region, to provide training and capacity building, and to advise on the leverage of U.S. assets in the host region to combat wildlife trafficking. With additional attachés assigned to new posts, USFWS has posted special agent attachés at U.S. Embassies located in: Bangkok, Thailand (Southeast Asia Region); Beijing, China (Asia Region); Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (Eastern Africa Region); Gaborone, Botswana (Southern Africa Region); Libreville, Gabon (West/Central Africa Region); Lima, Peru (South America Region); and Mexico City, Mexico (Mexico, Caribbean, Central America Region).

The following activities were supported through the USFWS International Affairs Combating Wildlife Trafficking Branch (CWT). The CWT program provides financial assistance through a number of cooperative agreements and grants targeting CITES-related capacity building to protect species threatened by illegal trade. In 2017, more than 30 projects were funded in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean to bolster CITES compliance and enforcement, strengthen national legislation, and reduce demand for leopards, flying fox, tortoises, saiga, and rosewood among other taxa. Funding from USAID and U.S. Department of State (DOS) helped to support these and other CITES-specific activities.

- Strengthening CITES implementation in Central America and the Caribbean: To enhance the capacity of the CITES Scientific Authorities in Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama, USFWS has provided support for activities, including NDF training, improved data collection on illegal trade in CITES-listed species, and an assessment of emerging illegal wildlife trade threats and markets.
- Strengthening CITES compliance and law enforcement in Southeast Asian Parties: USFWS has provided support to the CITES Secretariat in its efforts to improve CITES compliance and enforcement in Southeast Asia, including those related to national legal frameworks, implementation of CITES National Ivory Plans, and compliance and enforcement.
- Working with the Government of Bangladesh to strengthen their compliance with CITES CoP17 Decisions: This project strengthens the capacity of the Government of Bangladesh to implement decisions of CITES CoP17, particularly for species recently included in CITES Appendices I and II, with the co-sponsorship of the Government of Bangladesh.
- Building the capacity of the Government of Angola in countering wildlife trafficking in Cabinda Province: This project supports the Ministry of Environment in Angola in efforts to strengthen national legislation, enforcement, and permitting to disrupt trafficking in CITES-listed species such as grey parrots and pangolins.

The U.S. Department of the Interior's International Technical Assistance Program (DOI-ITAP) in conjunction with DOI Bureaus such as USFWS and the National Park Service, along with other partners including U.S. Embassies, supported the following CITES-related activities and exchanges during this reporting period. Funding for this support was largely provided by DOS and USAID.

South America: Participation of the Chilean Delegation at the Anti-Trafficking Conference

The U.S. Embassy in Colombia, with support from the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development of the Government of Colombia, organized the "Regional Conference on Cooperation to Combat Illegal Trafficking of Wildlife Species in South America" from March 14 to 17, 2017. The conference, which included representatives from the Governments of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru reached agreements regarding future activities in Chile and a review of lessons learned regarding CITES enforcement and identified common interests and opportunities to strengthen international collaboration in combating wildlife crimes.

Chile: Direct Analysis in Real Time (DART) of two Appendix-I species

With the aim of strengthening the enforcement of the national CITES implementing legislation and enforcement in Chile, in April 2017, DOI-ITAP with the Faculty of Forest Sciences and Nature Conservation of the University of Chile, sent sets of scientific samples of two Chilean timber species of high biological value and specific legal protection for a DART analysis to the USFWS National Forensic Laboratory: Patagonian cypress (*Fitzroya cupressoides*) and Guaitecas cypress (*Pilgerodendron uviferum*). This activity resulted in:

- collection of scientific samples;

- issuance of the pertinent CITES permits;
- DART analysis of 40 samples;
- chemical-molecular registration of these two species – the first time that DART allowed for the creation of a chemical-molecular registry of these species for scientific investigation purposes and criminal prosecution.; and
- Scientific co-publication (USFWS and Chile) of the outcomes.

Chile: Second Training Workshop on Illegal Trafficking of CITES Species

May 30-31, 2017, the “Second Training Workshop on Illegal Trafficking of CITES Species” was held in Valparaíso, Chile. The workshop was organized in cooperation with the National Customs Service and was attended by 53 public officials. Financed by DOS and the Government of Chile Customs authorities, the workshop’s objective was to strengthen the institutional capacity for the effective CITES implementation in Chile, through punishment of smuggling offences considered under Law 20.962. This regulation was published on November 16, 2016, in the Official Gazette, designating Customs as the CITES Enforcement Authority. The training resulted in a draft matrix of institutional needs and proposals that will serve as the basis for an interagency coordination protocol for criminal investigations and further strengthening of Customs, as well as the identification of good practices in customs intelligence and illegal trade techniques.

Washington DC: CAFTA-DR Points of Contact Meeting and App Launch

October 26-27, 2017, DOS and DOI-ITAP presented an overview of accomplishments, including support to CITES, over the past year within the framework of CAFTA-DR Environmental Cooperation. DOI-ITAP staff highlighted training and coordination activities with the focus on the operational successes of the Central American and Dominican Republic Wildlife Enforcement Network (CAWEN, or ROAVIS in Spanish - www.roavis.net) in the past year. On October 27, 2017, DOI-ITAP hosted the launch of the mobile app Vida Silvestre (Wildlife), developed with CITES officials in Central America and the Caribbean, as a tool for frontline and other officials to identify wildlife species and for the public to provide “tips” to officials regarding potential wildlife trafficking or poaching violations. A video about the app can be found at: www.vidasilvestre.net. The app can be downloaded at: Google Play Store - <http://bit.ly/vida-silvestre>; Apple App Store - <http://bit.ly/vida-silvestre-ios>.

Bangladesh: Counter Wildlife Trafficking Assessment

A three-member DOI-ITAP counter wildlife trafficking planning team met with various U.S. Government and NGO stakeholders in Dhaka, the Sundarbans, and Chittagong/Cox’s Bazar October 23-November 5, 2017, to discuss country-specific counter wildlife trafficking priorities, including CITES implementation and enforcement. The information gathered was used to formulate a strategic plan that includes actions to improve the effectiveness and coordination of U.S. Government counter wildlife trafficking efforts in Bangladesh. The plan was drafted on behalf of the U.S. Embassy.

Chile: Conference/Workshop on the National Anti-trafficking Strategies of Wildlife species

The international conference and national workshop, “Designing a National Strategy to Combat Wild Life Traffic,” was held during November 2017 in Chile’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ building.

Costa Rica: Basic CITES Training Workshop

At the request of the Government of Costa Rica, DOI-ITAP, in coordination with the Costa Rican CITES authorities, the Central American and Dominican Republic Wildlife Enforcement Network (CAWEN, or ROAVIS in Spanish – www.roavis.net), and the CITES Secretariat organized a 4-day basic CITES training workshop from January 21 to 25, 2018, for new and established CITES officials and wildlife inspectors.

Kenya: Kenya Wildlife Service Forensics Lab Status Review

From February 5 to 8, 2018, in support of the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and USAID’s Kenya and East Africa Mission, DOI-ITAP conducted a pre-assessment visit to KWS’s Forensic and Genetics Laboratory, with the aim of cooperating to develop KWS’s lab as a forensic resource in the region. Utilizing the standards and guidelines

established by the Society for Wildlife Forensics Science, the team will make recommendations to develop the lab as a national and regional center for wildlife forensics.

Oman: Wildlife and CITES Inspectors Training

From February 10 to 22, 2018, 11 employees from Oman's Ministry of Environment Climate Affairs (MECA), including land border inspectors and policy decision makers, participated in a CITES Implementation, Identification and Enforcement training course carried out by a Wildlife Inspector, Special Agent, and CITES Management Specialist from USFWS. The course covered CITES implementation, concealment methods, wildlife product identification, evidence collection, chain of custody, and CITES reporting. With funding provided by DOS, the team worked with a unit vetted and trained by the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to supplement UNODC training with wildlife specific issues and inspection practices.

Central America: Regional CITES Coordination Meeting and the 7th Annual CAWEN/ROAVIS Meeting

CITES officials from Central America and the Dominican Republic held a Regional CITES Coordination Meeting in February 2018 to share information and ideas regarding CITES issues of mutual interest or concern. The meeting was funded by DOS in support of the Environmental Cooperation Agreement under CAFTA-DR and the U.S.-Panama Free Trade Agreement and in preparation for the 7th Annual CAWEN/ROAVIS Meeting, which took place in Tegucigalpa, Honduras on February 20-21, 2018. The focus of the 7th Annual CAWEN/ROAVIS Meeting was on gathering and reporting wildlife crime data in coordination with CITES officials. OLE Attachés from Mexico and Peru as well as U.S. Embassy-Tegucigalpa and U.S. Embassy-San Jose Regional Environmental Hub Office personnel attended.

Kenya: KWS-USFWS Forensic Lab Exchange

In follow-up to the February 2018 KWS Forensics Lab pre-assessment visit, DOI-ITAP coordinated a technical exchange from May 8 to 11, 2018, between KWS and the USFWS Forensic Lab in Ashland, Oregon. The exchange served as an opportunity to share lessons learned and promote a train-the-trainer model with colleagues that were unable to attend.

Philippines: Wildlife Crime Scene Investigations

March 18-25, 2018, DOI-ITAP sent two USFWS Special Agents to the Philippines to provide a training on wildlife forensics and crime scene investigation to the Government of the Philippines. The training was attended by members of the National Law Enforcement Coordinating Sub-Committee on Environment and Natural Resources and regional representatives of Department of the Environment and Natural Resources.

Uganda: Advising Prosecutors on Wildlife Crime

March 21-23, 2018, multi-national NGO and DOI-ITAP partner Space for Giants convened a workshop for public prosecutors in Entebbe, Uganda to review current wildlife laws and sentencing guidelines with an aim to implement stricter sentencing for wildlife crimes in Uganda.

Kenya: CWT Mission Strategy Assessment

From May 12 to 24, 2018, DOI-ITAP with support from USAID/Kenya and East Africa helped the Government of Kenya develop a mission strategy to combat wildlife trafficking in Kenya, as specified in the END Wildlife Trafficking Act.

Philippines: Counter Wildlife Trafficking Strategy Development

June 4-8, 2018, DOI-ITAP traveled to Manila to work with an interagency team from the U.S. Embassy to draft develop a mission strategy to combat wildlife trafficking in the Philippines, as specified in the END Wildlife Trafficking Act. This strategy will include a list of proposed actions to improve the effectiveness and coordination of U.S. Government counter wildlife trafficking efforts, including CITES enforcement, in the Philippines and suggestions for areas for more effective cooperation with the Government of the Philippines.

Philippines: Prosecutors Training and Wildlife Crime Scene Investigation

July 18-20, 2018, DOI-ITAP sent a retired USFWS Special Agent and the USFWS Attaché in Bangkok to the Philippines to attend and manage a session of training on environmental law for prosecutors of the Department

of Justice of the Philippines. The purpose of this activity was to provide support in orientation of the untrained prosecutors.

July 22-28, 2018, DOI-ITAP sent a retired USFWS Special Agent and the USFWS Attaché based in Bangkok to the Philippines to provide a training on wildlife forensics and crime scene investigation to the Government of the Philippines. The training was attended by members of the law enforcement branch of the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development. This training was first implemented in March 2018 for law enforcement officers of the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources.

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 47 States and 32 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 814,000 tags during 2018.

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 23 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.

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 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the U.S. inspection agency for live CITES-listed plants entering the United States. Currently, 87 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 2017, APHIS confiscated 38 shipments of live plant material that were in violation of CITES. These shipments contained a total of 21,150 plants and 20 cactus parts. The 37 shipments assigned to plant rescue centers contained 70 cacti, 53 euphorbias, 308 orchids, 58 sundews, 535 lilies, 20,006 pitcher plants and 123 agaves.

U.S. CITES ANNUAL REPORTS for 2016: On October 26, 2017, USFWS submitted to UNEP-WCMC in electronic format, the U.S. CITES Annual Report data file for 2016 (142,086 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 2016. The data in this data file represent actual trade and not simply numbers of CITES permits issued. USFWS also submitted the U.S. Illegal Trade Report for 2016 (3,734 data records) in response to the Notification to the Parties No. 2017/040. The data in this file represent shipments seizures and other actions taken by USFWS wildlife inspectors and agents in 2016 against illegal trade.

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

At the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP17; October 2016), Canada was elected to be the North American Regional Representative to the Standing Committee and Canada was subsequently elected to be the new Standing Committee Chair. In its role as regional representative, Canada has maintained close contact with all three countries in the North American Region.

5. REGIONAL COOPERATION

CANADA / MEXICO / USA

The members of the North America Region communicate periodically as part of their commitment to meet and examine issues relating to CITES at the regional level, particularly application of the Convention, preparation for CITES meetings, and other issues of interest to the region.

The members of the North America Region meet every year at the CITES Working Table under the aegis of the Canada/United States/Mexico Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management in order to address issues of mutual concern. During this period, meetings were held in

Shepherdstown, West Virginia, as part of the XXIII Annual Meeting of the Trilateral Committee (9–12 April 2018). The three countries addressed issues of law enforcement, preparations for CITES meetings and other priority issues under the Convention.

Under the project entitled “Supporting Sustainable Trade of CITES-Listed Species,” which is co-ordinated and financed by the Commission for Environmental Co-operation of North America (CEC), the CITES authorities of Canada, the United States and Mexico have worked to organize and hold meetings and workshops to implement the Action Plans for the sustainable trade in four groups of priority species (tarantulas and sharks, tortoises and freshwater turtles and timber species listed in Appendix II of CITES) in the region. Two workshops were held during the reporting period, on tarantulas and sharks, and these workshops are detailed below. In addition, a turtle workshop is scheduled for Oct. 24 – 26, 2018 in Miami, Florida, USA, and a timber workshop is planned for November 2018 in Mexico.

As part of this project, consultancies have been developed to promote the legal, sustainable and traceable trade in these groups of species, and a Web site has been created for the purpose of explaining the project's objectives to the public, experts and interested parties and of providing information on the application of priority measures (<http://www3.cec.org/cites/>).

Tarantula Trinational Trade and Enforcement Workshop, held 27 February to 02 March 2018 in Guadalajara, Mexico, under the CEC project. Over 40 experts took part, including producers, importers, marketers, civil society and government authorities of Mexico, the United States and Canada. The workshop objectives were achieved, among them: identifying opportunities to promote legal, sustainable and traceable trade in priority tarantulas through the involvement of local communities; preparing a preliminary assessment of the status and conservation needs of 16 priority species according to IUCN criteria; and feedback for the Tarantula Identification Guide with a view to strengthening law enforcement.

Training Workshop on Shark Fin Identification and the Transnational Illegal Trade in Shark Fins, held 9 to 13 July 2018 in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada under the CEC project. The workshop's objective was to increase the ability of law enforcement authorities in Canada, the United States and Mexico to identify the shark fins of CITES-listed species; improve detection of illegal trade operations; and identify strategies to combat the illegal trade of these species in North America.

4. MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

CANADA

NATIONAL MEETINGS: The Canadian networks of Management, Enforcement and Scientific Authorities communicate regularly to discuss CITES implementation issues, as well as communicating with interested stakeholders including the Canadian Provinces and Territories and representatives of Canadian Indigenous peoples.

International Meetings on eels: In March 2018, the INTERPOL organized a two-day Investigative and Analytical Case Meeting (RIACM) on the illegal trade in European glass eels. The purpose of this RIACM was to allow investigators from participating countries (nine in total) to share information (operational and Intelligence) and discuss transnational cases of mutual interest in order to understand, in greater details, the current trade in European eels in these countries. Enforcement staffs from ECCC and Fisheries and Oceans Canada were representing Canada at that meeting.

In April 2018, the Secretariat of the Sargasso Sea Commission organized the Workshop of Range States of the American Eel to which Canada sent representatives from ECCC and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and funded along with the United States. This workshop was held to provide a unique opportunity to bring together all available information on the science and management of American eel through its range, and identify the challenges and difficulties associated with harvest, enforcement strategies and efforts. Even though the American Eel is not yet a CITES-Listed species, the data gathered during this workshop formed the basis of a report that was submitted by Canada and the United States to CITES at the 30th meeting of the Animals Committee in July 2018.

Timber workshop (May 28-31 2018; Vancouver, Canada): Environment and Climate Change Canada's Wildlife Enforcement Directorate has conducted hands-on training on the identification of CITES-controlled wood species for its enforcement officers. The training focused on simple and fast identification methods for frontline officers. The training included an intelligence component on known smuggling methods and routes for the illegal transport

of exotic wood. In addition, recognized wood identification scientists and specialists presented their cutting-edge scientific wood identification methods and techniques that have already been proven in court

MEXICO

CITES Scientific Committees 2018

30th meeting of the CITES Animals Committee (AC30, 16-21 July 2018, Geneva):

- Mexico presented the Identification Guide for Dragons (arboreal alligator lizards, *Abronia* spp.) regulated by CITES through document AC30 Doc. 9.2, whereby the Animals Committee was invited to request that the Secretariat publish the Guide on the CITES Web site.
- Mexico also presented the “Ranching Protocol for Morelet’s Crocodile (*C. moreletii*) in Mexico”, requesting feedback from the Parties and other pertinent actors.

24th meeting of the CITES Plants Committee (PC23; 20–26 July 2018, Geneva):

- Mexico presented the “Information Guide on the Management and Sustainable Use of Mahogany Within the Provisions of CITES,” inviting the Parties to provide feedback to Mexico’s CITES authorities. It also requested that it be posted on the CITES Web site and that the Parties co-operate in translating it into the official languages of the Convention.

International Meetings

Mexico took part in the 25th meeting of the IUCN Crocodile Specialist Group (CSG) in Santa Fé, Argentina, held 7–10 May 2018. During the meeting, it officially presented the Ranching Protocol for Morelet’s Crocodile (*C. moreletii*) as a successful Mexican experiment in the awareness, conservation and sustainable use of a CITES species.

Mexico’s CITES Scientific Authority took part in the 6th Plenary Session of the IPBES, which was held 17–24 March 2018 in Medellín, Colombia, where approval was granted for conducting a thematic assessment of the “Sustainable Use of Wildlife Species,” to be subsequently examined by the Plenary Session at IPBES-10.

Mexico will also participate in the Conference of the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation and in the Sixth Meeting of the Liaison Group on the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC) which will be held in Cape Town, South Africa, on 28–31 August 2018. The objective of the conference is to develop ideas for a Global Strategy for Plant Conservation for the period beyond 2020.

Workshops

On 10 January 2018, Mexico hosted the Second Workshop of the “Legal and Illegal Wildlife Trade Between Mexico and the European Union” project, whose objectives were the following: i) analyze the legal and illegal trade of wildlife species (whether CITES-listed or not) between Mexico and the EU over the past 10 years; ii) identify opportunities to strengthen the legal, sustainable and traceable trade in these species; iii) provide incentives to the main stakeholders of the supply chain (from local communities in Mexico to the European industry); and iv) contribute to the fight against the illegal wildlife trade. The results of the workshop included recommendations for strengthening legal, sustainable and traceable trade, as well as preventing and combating the illegal trade in 300 wildlife species between Mexico and the EU.

UNITED STATES

ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS: The U.S. CITES Authorities participated in the annual meeting of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) held in Indianapolis, Indiana, September 9-13, 2017. The meeting featured a Federal Government booth and CITES permits help desk.

INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION (IATA): The U.S. CITES authorities participated in the bi-annual meeting of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Live Animals and Perishables Board (LAPB) held in Miami, Florida September 26-28, 2017, to discuss revisions to IATA’s Live Animal’s Regulations (LAR).

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON LEGAL ACQUISITION FINDINGS: Representatives from the U.S. Management Authority and the U.S. enforcement authority for CITES plants participated in this workshop held in

Brussels, Belgium in June 2018. The workshop was organized by the Secretariat, in response to Decision 17.67, and was focused on facilitating discussion regarding guiding principles, methodologies, practical tools, information systems, and forensic expertise used by Management Authorities in verifying legality of acquisition of specimens. Over 80 participants, representing 31 Parties and IGOs, NGOs, and academic institutions, were present at the workshop.

TECHNICAL COOPERATION/CITES WORK IN ASIA: In October 2017, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) launched a partnership with the Government of Cambodia's Ministry of Environment to develop a standardized ranger training program that will strengthen the capacity of rangers to combat illegal logging, wildlife trafficking, and other environmental crimes within the Protected Area system. This partnership is funded by the INL Office of Anti-Crime Programs, with contributions from USAID's Regional Development Mission for Asia. The development of the standardized ranger training program is expected to be finalized, Train-the-Trainers activities implemented, and pilot trainings conducted by the Spring of 2019.

COLOMBIA ILLEGAL LOGGING LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING: USFS and the Department of Justice's Environment and Natural Resources Division (DOJ/ENRD) in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy in Bogota jointly organized an illegal logging workshop from November 29 to December 1, 2017. This was the third workshop related to this topic to enhance Colombia's enforcement capacity. The workshop was attended by 22 participants representing of various geographic areas of the country. The workshop was received well by participants, who expressed a strong interest in other opportunities for collaboration such as web conferencing, and specific training topics (e.g., money laundering, drones for evidence collection, and wildlife trafficking).

INDONESIA ILLEGAL LOGGING LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING: USFS and DOJ/ENRD provided expertise to "Illegal Logging, Land Use and Related Crimes" training workshop in Sumatra, Indonesia. The week-long training brought together the relevant agencies and local officials, along with NGOs, to develop practices, including the possible creation of working groups or task forces, to monitor, investigate and prosecute crimes involving the destruction of forest lands. Organized and funded by Interpol, UNODC and the DOJ office, Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development Assistance and Training (OPDAT).

CENTRAL AFRICA ILLEGAL LOGGING LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING: USFS and DOJ/ENRD organized a series of three Workshops on Combating Timber Trafficking, held May 14-16, May 19-21, and May 22-24, 2018. The first was in Yaounde, Cameroon, with six participants from the Government of Cameroon and five from NGOs. The second was in Libreville, Gabon, with six participants from the government of Gabon and five NGO representatives. The third was also in Libreville, Gabon, with four participants from the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and four from the government of the Republic of the Congo (ROC), and five NGO representatives. The government participants were judges, prosecutors and investigators from each of the countries. The NGO participants attended and gave presentations on the second day of each three-day workshop. U.S. Government speakers at the workshop included experts from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, the Department of Homeland Security, and USFWS.

VIET NAM ILLEGAL LOGGING LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING: On June 26-28, 2018, USFS and DOJ/ENRD conducted a Workshop on Combating Timber Trafficking and Related Trade in Hanoi, Viet Nam. Participants from the United States also included the retired Director of Enforcement for USFS and a representative from Department of Homeland Security-Homeland Security Investigations. Personnel from the Government of Viet Nam participating in the workshop included representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), including personnel from the CITES Management Authority, International Cooperation Division, and Forest Protection Department; the Ministry of Public Security Environmental Police; the Supreme People's Procuracy; General Department of Vietnam Customs (GDVC); and Ministry of Industry and Trade. Participants also included representatives of enforcement and police agencies in Quang Binh, Gia Lai, and Kon Tum Provinces. The workshop also included speakers and participants from INTERPOL and UNODC; the nongovernmental organizations WWF Vietnam and Sustainable Rural Development Center; and the Vietnamese trade Associations Handicraft and Wood Industry Association of Ho Chi Minh City and Vietnam Timber and Forest Product Association (VIFORES). About 31 Vietnam Government personnel from national and provincial levels participated in the workshop, along with five representatives from UNODC and INTERPOL, three timber trade association representatives, and three representatives from NGOs.

REDUCING OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNLAWFUL TRANSPORT OF ENDANGERED SPECIES : In June 2015, the 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, nine 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. In June 2018, ROUTES hosted a series of meetings bringing together Federal

agencies, NGOs, and private sector business interests to discuss ways to combat wildlife trafficking. In August 2018 ROUTES and partner C4ADS released a new report, *In Plane Sight: Wildlife Trafficking in the Air Transport Sector*, which analyzes wildlife seizures within airports and on airlines from 2009 to 2017, revealing the widespread exploitation of the air transport sector by wildlife trafficking networks. *In Plane Sight* is the most comprehensive assessment of wildlife trafficking in the air transport sector to date, and outlines more than a dozen recommendations for preventing wildlife trafficking in transport supply chains.

5. PROBLEMS FACED BY THE REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

There are no special problems faced by the Regional Representative. All three Parties in this Region are actively engaged in CITES and work together cooperatively.