

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



Seventy-first meeting of the Standing Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 16 August 2019

Species specific matters

ILLEGAL TRADE IN CHEETHAS (*ACINONYX JUBATUS*):  
REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP

1. This document has been prepared by Kuwait as Chair of the Standing Committee's intersessional working group on cheetahs.\*

Background

2. At its 17th meeting (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016), the Conference of the Parties adopted *inter alia* Decisions 17.124 and 17.125, as well as 17.128 to 17.130 on *Illegal trade in cheetahs* (*Acinonyx jubatus*), as follows:

***Directed to the Secretariat***

17.124 *The Secretariat shall, subject to external funding, and in consultation with relevant experts, commission the development of a CITES cheetah trade resource kit that compiles relevant information and tools to assist in implementing the Convention with regard to trade in cheetahs, and addresses inter alia: identification of live cheetahs and parts and derivatives thereof; advice on procedures to be followed in case of seizures including handling, DNA sampling, guidance on the immediate and long-term disposal of live animals (e.g. decision trees based on relevant CITES Resolutions, veterinary care, contact details of experts or potential rescue centres, advice on procedures, reporting on disposal activities); and lists of suitable housing facilities for long-term placement of live cheetahs; and other relevant materials.*

17.125 *The Secretariat shall submit a draft CITES cheetah trade resource kit, together with recommendations on the languages in which it should be made available, and the formats in which it should be made available (e.g. hard copy, smart phone application, web-based), to the Standing Committee at its 69th or 70th meeting for its consideration. The Secretariat shall, subject to external funding, make the final version of the kit available in the languages and formats agreed by the Standing Committee, and subject to available resources, revise it as may be necessary to ensure that it remains accurate, up to date and reflecting best practice.*

...

17.128 *The Secretariat shall keep the Standing Committee informed about its actions to implement Decisions 17.124 - 127 and report on their implementation and its efforts to halt illegal trade in cheetahs at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

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\* *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.*

### **Directed to the Standing Committee**

17.129 *The Standing Committee shall review the draft CITES cheetah trade resource kit produced in compliance with Decision 17.125 at its 69th or 70th meeting, and formulate comments and recommendations to the Secretariat for its finalization and dissemination.*

### **Directed to Parties and donors**

17.130 *Parties and potential donors are encouraged to provide funding support to the Secretariat for the implementation of the Decisions regarding illegal trade in cheetahs (Decisions 17.124 - 130), where needed.*

3. The reporting of the Secretariat to the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP18, Geneva, 2019) on *Illegal trade in cheetahs* (*Acinonyx jubatus*) is contained in document CoP18 Doc. 60, as well as document CoP18 Doc. 25 on *Review of Decisions*, and will be addressed by the Secretariat as appropriate at CoP18. The present document contains the reporting of the intersessional working group on cheetahs concerning the draft CITES cheetah trade resource kit and associated recommendations.

### Development of a CITES cheetah trade resource kit: Implementation of Decisions 17.124, 17.125, 17.128, 17.129 and 17.130

4. At the 70th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC70, Sochi, October 2018), the Secretariat reported that it had contracted the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) to develop a draft CITES cheetah trade resource kit. However, due to the late receipt of funding for this purpose, the draft resource kit could not be finished in time for review by the Committee at SC70.
5. As a result, the Standing Committee at SC70 invited the intersessional working group on cheetahs to review the draft CITES cheetah trade resource kit and the recommendations of the Secretariat in accordance with Decision 17.125, and to formulate comments and recommendations on the finalization and dissemination of the resource kit for consideration by the Committee at the present meeting.
6. The Secretariat submitted the draft CITES cheetah trade resource kit, together with the recommendations it prepared in accordance with Decision 17.125, to the intersessional working group on cheetahs for review as invited by the Committee.
7. The intersessional working group on cheetahs as invited by the Committee reviewed the draft CITES cheetah trade resource kit and the recommendations of the Secretariat, and formulated comments and proposals on the finalization and dissemination of the resource kit for consideration by the Committee, available as Annexes 1 and 2 to the present document.

### Recommendations

8. The intersessional working group on cheetahs recommends that the Standing Committee request the Secretariat to:
  - a) in the finalization of the CITES cheetah trade resource kit, take into consideration as appropriate, the comments and proposals presented in Annexes 1 and 2 to document SC71 Doc. 18;
  - b) make the CITES cheetah trade resource kit available in English on the webpage on cheetahs on the CITES Secretariat website, in a printable format; and
  - c) subject to external funding, translate the CITES cheetah trade resource kit into Arabic and French, and translate the flyer in Annex 2 to the present document into Arabic and French, and make the translated versions available on the webpage on cheetahs on the CITES Secretariat website, in a printable format.

## **Cheetah Trade Resource Kit Comments and proposals of the intersessional working group on cheetahs**

There is a consensus among consulted wildlife officials that the Cheetah Trade Resource Kit in its present form is extensive and informative, although difficult to navigate. There was a feeling that the amount of information contained in the Resource Kit can be overwhelming for confiscators who might have no internet access or knowledge about wildlife or caring for animals. Following is a list of concerns and proposals to address them. Additionally, some of the information and recommendations in the Resource Kit might be difficult to follow given the lack of infrastructure and capacity in some of the countries where illegal cheetah trade is more prevalent.

To address these issues, the Working Group offers a number of comments and proposals. Additionally, Annex 2 contains a proposed 4-panel flyer designed to make it easier for confiscators of live animals to have quick access to information and take appropriate steps for handling and reporting, especially because in most cases they might not be able to immediately access the trade kit online. This flyer uses more images than words to facilitate translation and accessibility so that it can be downloadable in several languages (e.g., Amharic, Arabic and Somali) and easily displayed at checkpoints or printed to be carried with the confiscators. To assist national authorities, Parties can also be encouraged to reach out to experts willing to assist with questions a confiscator might have regarding live animals, and request permission from these experts to make their contact information available in the different language versions. The aims of this flyer is to ensure that confiscators:

- a. can identify the species of the seized animal (e.g., cheetah vs caracal or leopard or others);
- b. have basic information to provide immediate, proper care to live cheetahs; and
- c. gather sufficient evidence and follow reporting guidelines.
- d. Provide a link to the kit where more detailed information as may be needed can be found.

Concern 1: While the kit is complete, it is also very extensive, thus a front line official in the field might not have the time/capacity to read through all of it.

### Proposals

1. Cut pages to make the kit a user-friendly, easy-to-navigate guide for confiscators. Examples of pages/sections that could be cut or left only as hyperlinks for someone interested in reading them could be the Introduction or page 36 on normal life stages, i.e., the information on whether it's an 8-year-old cheetah or a 10-year old cheetah is less crucial for protection and conservation purposes, as is the specific Body Condition Score (good condition vs. bad condition can be enough for preliminary triage purposes).
2. Utilize user-friendly leaflets or flyers with highlights that should be easily found on the trade kit web pages for downloading and printing. These could be translated into the languages relevant to the countries most affected by cheetah trafficking (Amharic, Arabic, English and Somali). Thus, they can be easily printed and carried or displayed at checkpoints or police stations. This leaflet or leaflets should include the most crucial things to consider for a confiscation.

Concern 2: Key parts of the trade kit are not user friendly or easy to navigate.

### Proposals

1. Change the formatting and content of the first page: "how to use this manual." This section should be the most user-friendly of them all. This is the first page the reader sees, and it is supposed to be succinct, clear, and more graphic. Using clear visuals is key. This section should also display links to the leaflet (if approved) as well as to the most important sections and forms for easy download.
2. Utilize more images, e.g., sections such as the table on page 42, "Is it a real cheetah skin," can be formatted so that the pictures that follow it accompany the words, thereby providing clarity and allowing for less verbal description.
3. It is crucial to include more information and images relevant to very small cubs as most confiscations at source and transit countries involve cubs between 6 and 12 weeks. Cheetah Conservation Fund can provide its protocols for cheetah care under 12 weeks and over 12 weeks' old.

Concern 3: The Trade Kit seems to be designed for different end-users with different areas of knowledge and expertise: qualified vets, cheetah facilities/keepers and enforcement officials.

## Proposals

1. Use less jargon or technical terms that can be confusing for someone who is not familiar with wildlife or has not scientific background. E.g., terms such as melanism (page 29) or tartar (page 29) are not easy to understand and are probably not needed by a confiscator.
2. Even when in some countries one person can be both a vet and a wildlife enforcement official, generally he or she would not know high-level veterinary medicine. In most cases, confiscators will not have a veterinary or scientific background. The trade kit could separate basic and advanced instructions and avoid using jargon when addressing enforcement officials. As such, it would be beneficial to cut down sections that are too detailed and create simplified versions (for determining the age, the necropsy, DNA sampling, body scoring, feeding requirements and DNA sampling guidelines for example) and add the rest as a separate manual or at the end of this whole manual. More important sections, such as “what not to feed” currently in page 120, should be moved up.
3. All sections could be re-organized in such a way that they are easily accessible by the relevant people, i.e., confiscators/government officials, veterinarians, and facilities and cheetah keepers. Some suggestions include:
  - a. Group and move up the following sections into a larger section for confiscators/government officials:
    - i. section 7 (Care Guide for Seized Live Cheetahs) - It is important to make sure that the animal survives before filing reports. Additionally, this entire section would benefit from more pictures or illustrations of giving emergency care and simplifying the health checklist;
    - ii. section 2 (identification guides);
    - iii. section 4 (Reporting a Seizure); however, move sub-section on necropsies to topics for veterinarians; and
    - iv. section 9 (List of Captive Facilities); however, re-name to Resources as it also includes national and regional cheetah coordinators and Cat Specialist Group members.
  - b. Topics and actions that require specialized knowledge, such as DNA sampling, necropsies and veterinary care could be part of a section dedicated to veterinarians.
  - c. The section relevant to long-term captive care could be part of a section dedicated to facilities and cheetah keepers.
  - d. Sections that offer less practical information, such as section 2 (cheetah biology, threats, conservation, trafficking and references) could be included as annexes that can be consulted by anyone interested.

Concern 4: There is no contact information for wildlife rescue centers or cheetah experts.

## Proposals

1. It is important for confiscators and anyone having to care for seized cheetahs to have access to cheetah experts where wildlife veterinarians are not available. It is recommended to include as part of the trade kit, a list of cheetah experts with their names, affiliation, contact information and geographical location that can be easily printed. These experts could be members of the IUCN Cat Specialist Group with expertise in cheetah health and care, as well as other known veterinarians and experts. It is also recommendable to include a list of cheetah rescue facilities with contact information.
2. Wherever it says, “seek immediate veterinary advice” add: “or contact an expert.”
3. Sub-section 9.1 (Captive Facilities) should list the facilities rather than linking to another web site.
4. Regarding sub-section 9.3 (IUCN Cat Specialist Group), it would be helpful to confiscators/government officials to have contact information, as well as information on the specific cat species that each member of this group specializes in.

Concern 5: Alternatives are not offered in cases when certain supplies are not available in certain countries where resources, infrastructure and expertise are lacking and where most cheetah confiscations take place.

## Proposals

1. Offer a variety of options in cases where the trade kit recommends certain things, e.g., kitten milk or electrolytes are generally not available in certain countries, but replacements exist that could be included as alternatives.
2. While transport cages are not always available, it would be advisable to provide measurements under “suggested design for a cheetah transportation case.” Furthermore, most transfers following a confiscation take place by land, it is recommended to provide alternatives to the IATA recommendations for adult animals, such as wooden crates for adults or pet carriers for cubs, which can also be used for other small animals (i.e. animals that are commonly confiscated, e.g., caracals, birds of prey).

Concern 6: Reporting can be onerous, especially for officers on the field, and the suggested procedures on the trade kit might not comply with national regulations. Furthermore, reporting procedures may vary from country to country.

#### Proposals

1. The section on reporting procedures could be modified to suit everyone in the chain of command. A confiscator would not be the person reporting to CITES or INTERPOL, but to his or her local wildlife crime authorities, who in turn would report to a national authority/CITES. The national authority would report to INTERPOL when pertinent. The leaflet on Annex 1, as it is targeted to confiscators, does not include anything other than reporting to their national wildlife/crime authorities and to make sure they keep track of evidence (chain of custody).
2. Emphasize the importance of keeping track of evidence. Confiscators start recording evidence using the Chain of Custody form, which in turn will have to be completed at each step of the process as the evidence moves through the channels.
3. Confiscators would benefit from a simple form to report on the seizure itself as well as the animals' health.
4. The INTERPOL web site does not appear to have a link to the Ecomessage. It would be useful to provide a working link or specific instructions to report to INTERPOL.

Also, it is important to clarify what information can be included if seizures are to be reported to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as RWCP (page 75). There should be a protocol specifying what type of information can be shared, especially regarding sensitive information, or what type of safeguards are necessary to protect the information chain of custody. It is also suggested that, in addition to RWCP, it would be appropriate to add the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) as the keeper of worldwide cheetah trafficking incidents, both dark figures and official data.

Concern 7: Confiscators are likely to encounter multiple animals from different species. It is highly unlikely that the official would pick up this manual and sift through it for information. This might not be the case, especially when they confiscate hard-to-identify parts for instance.

#### Proposals

Add to the "how to use this manual" section the option for officials to print each section separately so that they can later group them in their offices by task vs. by species (for instance, they could have all the "how to ID" chapters for cheetahs, tigers, lions, etc. together, similar to the identification guide for pangolins<sup>1</sup>. It is important to emphasize the practical use when encountering other species in their line of work.

Concern 8: If the seized animal is not a cheetah, the kit could still offer assistance, even though the seized animal might be a CITES-listed species.

#### Proposal

It would be helpful for confiscators to know that the same basic advice (water, shade, etc.) applies to other mammals he or she might seize, until the animal is placed in a rescue facility.

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<sup>1</sup> See [https://www.usaidwildlifeasia.org/resources/pangolin-species-identification-guide/pangolin-id-guide-medium-res-final-11nov2017.pdf/@download/file/Pangolin%20ID%20Guide%20English\\_17Dec2018.pdf](https://www.usaidwildlifeasia.org/resources/pangolin-species-identification-guide/pangolin-id-guide-medium-res-final-11nov2017.pdf/@download/file/Pangolin%20ID%20Guide%20English_17Dec2018.pdf)

**Cheetah Trade Resource Kit  
Flyer for Confiscators**

**Did you find one of these?**

**Cheetah**

**King Cheetah**

**Lion**

**Leopard**

**Serval**

**Caracal**

**Black-footed cat**

**Genet**

**African Wild Cat**

**Civet**

**No Permit/fake permit?**

**Confiscate!**

Appendix 1	
Appendix 1	
1	2
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9	10
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13	14
15	16
17	18
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71	72
73	74
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79	80
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93	94
95	96
97	98
99	100

# You're confiscating - Now what?

**Do not release unless advised by an expert.**

## 1. Be Safe!



ENSURE CAGE IS SECURE



WHEN HANDLING CAGE: WEAR GLOVES;  
WATCH FINGERS

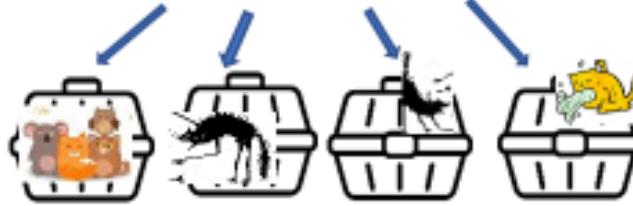
## 2. Prepare for Transport



If cubs/family together,  
keep together



If some are sick or fighting,  
separate those out



KEEP NOISE DOWN



CAREFULLY MOVE TO TRANSPORT CAGE, IF AVAILABLE

## 3. Collect Maximum Information at the Scene for reporting to authorities (see back)



TAKE PHOTOS:  
People, animals,  
cages, location.



ASK QUESTIONS:  
Where found, when (date, time),  
water/food given, other animals  
taken? Was mother seen? Death?  
Alive? How long in captivity?



RECORD EVERYTHING:  
Date, location, species, # of  
animals, people involved,  
conditions found, etc.

# Care for the animals!

- **Call a specialist:**

*Placeholder*

*\*\*Here we list emails, phone numbers (regular and WhatsApp) of specialist that are always monitored/answered – to be agreed upon by the working group\*\**

- **Find a sanctuary / animal hospital – ask if needed**

- **Always, provide basic needs to the animal:**

**Animals need quiet and safety**




KEEP QUIET  ISOLATE FROM PEOPLE  REMOVE ROPES, if safe 

**Animals need food and water**




NO MILK!  GIVE CLEAN WATER  GIVE FOOD: GROUND MEAT BIRD OR GOAT - NO BONES! 

- **If needed, try to help + ask a specialist/veterinarian for advice:**




**Too cold: (hypothermia)**

animal shivering  → protect from wind  give hay/blanket 




**Too hot: (overheating)**

animal panting  → move to cool shade  give cool water 

**Too thirsty: (dehydrated)**

animal weak, eyes sunken in  → give fluids (if possible subcutaneous)  1x water & 1x water + sugar & salt 

**Wounds:**

 → if safe  clean with water,  apply pressure if bleeding



## Taking wild animals is illegal!!



### File Report to Inform Authorities

(for more detail: [CITES Cheetah Trade Resource Kit](#)):

Report to national law enforcement/wildlife crime authority or your national CITES Authority:

<https://www.cites.org/eng/cms/index.php/component/cp>

placeholder: consider adding different contact info for different Parties' authority (if we create country-specific versions)

The evidence you collected during confiscation (photos, information) will be required by national law enforcement/wildlife crime authority.

### Record every time evidence is handed over with name of person receiving!

Fill Chain of Custody Record (for evidence collected):  
[CITES Cheetah Trade Resource Kit](#), pp. 72-73



This pamphlet was developed by Patricia Tricorache, Anne Schmidt-Küntzel and Shira Yashphe, Cheetah Conservation Fund, in cooperation with the CITES Secretariat and the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group