

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

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Seventy-fourth meeting of the Standing Committee  
Lyon (France), 7-11 March 2022

Interpretation and implementation matters

Regulation of trade

DISPOSAL OF CONFISCATED SPECIMENS:  
REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Introduction

2. At its 18th meeting (CoP18, Geneva, 2019), the Conference of the Parties adopted the following Decisions:

***Directed to the Secretariat***

**18.159** *The Secretariat shall collect information on existing networks and resources on the management of seized and confiscated live animals and make it available to Parties.*

**18.160** *Subject to external funding, the Secretariat shall make available materials that may assist Parties in implementing Annex 3 to Resolution Conf. 17.8 on Disposal of illegally traded and confiscated specimens of CITES-listed species, as needed.*

**18.161** *The Secretariat shall report to the Standing Committee on the implementation of Decisions 18.159 and 18.160.*

**18.162** ***Directed to Parties***

*Parties are encouraged to make use of the information and materials made available by the Secretariat under Decisions 18.159 and 18.160 and to include it in capacity-building activities.*

**18.163** ***Directed to the Standing Committee***

*The Standing Committee shall consider the report submitted by the Secretariat under Decision 18.161 and make recommendations, as appropriate.*

**18.164** ***Directed to Parties and other entities***

*Parties, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other entities are invited to provide financial and/or technical assistance, as relevant, for the implementation of decisions 18.160 and 18.162.*

#### Implementation of Decisions 18.159 to 18.161 and 18.164

3. On 20 January 2021, the Secretariat issued [Notification No. 2021/008](#) inviting Parties and relevant stakeholders to share information on existing networks and resources on the management of seized and confiscated live animals in place in their country, including action plans, protocols, regulatory measures, standard operating procedures developed to coordinate actions among public authorities, and guidelines for the management of specific species or genera.
4. Responses were submitted by Management Authorities, enforcement focal points, rescue centres, and national and international non-governmental organizations. The Secretariat would like to express its sincere appreciation to the Parties and other respondents who took the time to respond to this Notification.
5. Based on the information received through that Notification and the questionnaire developed by the Secretariat *to review the use and usefulness of the CITES guidelines and to assess current practices in the disposal of confiscated live specimens* (see document [SC69 Doc. 34.1](#)), as well as a search on the Internet for publicly accessible documents, the Secretariat has developed a dedicate [webpage](#) compiling existing resources and information on networks on the management of seized and confiscated live animals.
6. On this [webpage](#), Parties and other stakeholders can access general international or national guidelines on the management of seized and confiscated live animals, such as those of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Cambodia, Colombia, Nicaragua and Peru. More specific guidelines on the three management options presented in Resolution Conf. 17.8 on *Disposal of illegally traded and confiscated specimens of CITES-listed species*, namely captivity, return of specimens to the country of export for release into the wild, and euthanasia are also available. Finally, the webpage features a few species-specific protocols for cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*), pangolins (*Manis* spp.) and barbary macaques (*Macaca sylvanus*).
7. The webpage also includes references to relevant networks that may assist with managing confiscated live animals. Such networks include the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) which contains the names and contacts of 140 specialists organized by taxon, and members of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) organized by country, who can be contacted for support with the immediate care of seized/confiscated live specimens. The webpage also contains links to the European Union Trade in Wildlife Information exchange (EU-TWIX) developed and managed by TRAFFIC to assist national law enforcement agencies, including CITES Management Authorities and prosecutors, in their task of detecting, analyzing and monitoring illegal activities related to trade in fauna and flora covered by the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations. Accessible only to EU members States, the database is designed to centralize their data on seizures and offences. It also includes a section with technical and scientific information to facilitate the identification, evaluation and disposal of seized or confiscated specimens. AFRICA-TWIX and SADC-TWIX have been developed along the same lines for African countries. In addition, some Parties (e.g. the United States of America) and organizations have joined forces and created a specific network to develop a process to better support law enforcement, including with species identification, medical triage, and both short and long-term holding for confiscated wildlife (e.g. the Southern California Wildlife Confiscations Network).
8. The webpage also refers to the EARS Rescue Database of the European Alliance Rescue Centres and Sanctuaries which allows registered members to quickly search and contact rescue centres and sanctuaries in Europe that provide care for wild animals in need of housing.
9. The Secretariat recalls that the Conference of the Parties in Resolution Conf. 17.8 urges Management Authorities, in consultation with Scientific Authorities and other bodies concerned, to develop action plans to deal with seized and confiscated live specimens consistent with the guidelines set out in Annex 3 of the Resolution. Such action plans enable authorities to act without delay in the event of seizure and confiscation of live specimens, by identifying in advance the institutions empowered to make decisions regarding such specimens, a list of experts who can assist in species identification, and holding facilities capable of handling such specimens immediately after seizure.
10. A survey on disposal of confiscated live specimens conducted in 2017 showed that only 28 out of 58 responding Parties have established a decision-making procedure/plan of action to be followed for the disposal of a confiscated live specimen as recommended by Annex 3 of Resolution Conf. 17.8 (SC69 Doc. 34.1). In the responses to Notification No. 2021/008, the Secretariat has received very few action plans from Parties, which have requested that these documents remain confidential.

11. In light of the above, the Secretariat considers that more work is required to assist Parties in the management and disposal of confiscated live animals. Therefore, subject to the availability of external funding, the Secretariat intends to develop and make available additional materials, including further guidance for developing national action plans to manage seized and confiscated live specimens, to assist Parties in developing action plans in accordance with Annex 3 of Resolution Conf. 17.8. The Secretariat has therefore prepared a new set of draft decisions for the consideration of the Standing Committee and subsequent submission to the Conference of the Parties.

#### Recommendations

12. The Secretariat invites the Standing Committee to note the progress on the implementation of Decisions 18.159 to 18.161 and 18.164. The Secretariat further invites the Standing Committee to consider the draft decisions presented in the Annex to the present document for submission to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

DRAFT DECISIONS ON DISPOSAL OF CONFISCATED SPECIMENS

**19.AA Directed to the Secretariat**

The Secretariat shall:

- a) continue to collect information on existing networks and resources on the management of seized and confiscated live animals and make it available to Parties on the CITES website;
- b) subject to the availability external funding, develop and make available materials that may assist Parties in implementing Annex 3 to Resolution Conf. 17.8 on *Disposal of illegally traded and confiscated specimens of CITES-listed species*, as needed; and
- c) report to the Standing Committee on the implementation of this Decision.

**19.BB Directed to Parties**

Parties are encouraged to make use of the information and materials made available by the Secretariat on the CITES webpage dedicated to the disposal of illegally traded and confiscated specimens.

***Directed to Parties and relevant stakeholders***

**19.CC** Parties and relevant stakeholders that have not already done so are invited to share with the Secretariat information on existing networks and resources on the management of seized and confiscated live animals in place in their country, including any action plans, protocols, regulatory measures, standard operating procedures developed to coordinate actions among public authorities, and guidelines for the management of specific species or genera.

**19.DD** Parties, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other entities are invited to provide financial and/or technical assistance, as relevant, for the implementation of Decision 19.AA, paragraph b).

**19.EE Directed to the Standing Committee**

The Standing Committee shall consider the report submitted by the Secretariat under Decision 19.AA and make recommendations, as appropriate.