

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



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

Species specific matters

WEST AFRICAN VULTURES (ACCIPITRIDAE SPP.):
REPORT OF THE ANIMALS COMMITTEE

1. This document has been submitted by the Animals Committee.*
2. At its 18th meeting (CoP18, Geneva, 2019), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 18.186 to 18.192 on *West African vultures (Accipitridae spp.)*, as shown in Annex 1 to this document.

Decisions 18.186 to 18.189

3. The Secretariat reported on the implementation of Decisions 18.186 to 18.189 in document AC31 Doc. 20 and its addendum 2.

Decisions 18.190 and 18.191

4. Following the postponement, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, of the 31st meeting of the Animals Committee meeting, scheduled to take place from 13 to 17 July 2020, the Animals Committee took a number of intersessional decisions (see Notification No. 2020/057 of 22 September 2020), including the establishment of an intersessional working group on West African vultures (*Accipitridae spp.*), as per Decision 18.190.
5. At its 31st meeting (AC31, online, June 2021), the Animals Committee considered document AC31 Doc. 20 by the Secretariat; its addendum 1 by the co-chairs of the intersessional working group, presenting the working group's mandate, composition and recommendations; and addendum 2 by the Secretariat with revised recommendations, including draft decisions.
6. The Animals Committee took note of document AC31 Doc. 20 and its addenda 1 and 2 [see AC31 Sum. 1 (Rev.1)].
7. The Animals Committee agreed that Decision 18.190 had been implemented [see AC31 Sum. 1 (Rev.1)].
8. Concerning Decision 18.191, the Animals Committee requested the Secretariat (i) to inform the range States of West African vultures that in the context of the implementation of Decisions 18.132 to 18.134 on non-detriment findings (NDF), improved NDF guidance is expected to be developed; and (ii) to share relevant new NDF materials with the range States when available [see AC31 Sum. 1 (Rev.1)].

* *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.*

9. At AC31, the Animals Committee established an in-session working group with the mandate to comment and review the draft recommendations in addendum 1 and review the draft decisions in the Annex to addendum 2. Based on the working group's report (see document AC31 Com. 5), the Animals Committee adopted the draft decisions presented in Annex 2 to the present document (see AC31 Sum 3).

Decision 18.192

10. The recommendations of the Animals Committee, as agreed at AC31, are presented in paragraphs 7 and 8 above, and in Annex 2 of this document in the form of six draft decisions.
11. Regarding additional information relating to illegal trade in vulture body parts, the Animals Committee refers to the study "*West African vultures – a review of trade and sentinel poisoning*" (2021), which was used in its deliberations (see information document AC31 Inf. 10). This study was compiled by the United Nations Environment Programme-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) and commissioned by the European Union, and the CITES and CMS Secretariats, with funding from UNEP.

Recommendations

12. The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - a) in accordance with Decision 18.192, paragraph a), consider the information and recommendations of the Animals Committee, and the draft decisions in Annex 2 to the present document for submission, as appropriate, to the Conference of the Parties at its 19th meeting (CoP19); and
 - b) agree on a process for reporting on the implementation of Decisions 18.186 to 18.191 to CoP19 in consultation with the Secretariat, as instructed in Decision 18.192, paragraph b).

DECISIONS ON WEST AFRICAN VULTURES (ACCIPITRIDAE SPP.)
ADOPTED AT THE 18TH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Directed to the Secretariat

- 18.186** The Secretariat shall liaise with the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) to assist in the implementation of the trade-related aspects of the Vulture Multispecies Action Plan, subject to the availability of resources, including sharing information based on the work of the Animals Committee.
- 18.187** The Secretariat is encouraged to include vultures as a case study for the possible Non-Detriment Findings workshop.
- 18.188** The Secretariat shall issue a Notification to the Parties requesting the following information concerning trade in and conservation of Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), white-headed vulture (*Trigonoceps occipitalis*), hooded vulture (*Necrosyrtes monachus*), whitebacked vulture (*Gyps africanus*), Rüppell's vulture (*Gyps rueppelli*) and lappet-faced vulture (*Torgos tracheliotos*) in West Africa:
- a) biological data on West African vultures, including population size, breeding productivity, distribution, and trends across the range of the species;
 - b) available information about harvest and levels of legal and illegal trade of vultures and their parts;
 - c) information on threats to these species, in particular belief-based use and sentinel poisoning, and other trade-related threats;
 - d) information on enforcement actions taken, including seizures, forensic analysis of seized specimens, arrests, prosecutions and judgments relating to illegal trade in vultures as well as disposal of seized specimens; and
 - e) new developments regarding management, education and awareness-raising measures concerning vultures.
- 18.189** The Secretariat shall compile responses from the Parties and provide these responses to the Animals Committee's working group to inform its work.

18.190 *Directed to the Animals Committee*

The Animals Committee shall establish a working group to address key gaps in knowledge as it relates to the biological and trade issues highlighted in the Vulture Multispecies Action Plan (Vulture MsAP), with particular attention for the six species mentioned in Decision 18.188 and the West African region, and including but not limited to trade in vulture parts of belief-based use (Objective 4), sentinel poisoning by poachers (Objective 5), cross-cutting actions that contribute to addressing knowledge gaps (Objective 11), and contribute to effective implementation of the Vulture MsAP (Objective 12).

The working group shall:

- a) review the information submitted under the Notification;
- b) conduct a detailed assessment on the scale and impact of legal and illegal trade in live birds, eggs, and vulture body parts across the range of the Vulture MsAP; and
- c) provide findings and recommendations to the Animals Committee.

18.191 The Animals Committee shall provide guidance to range States on how to factor in all known threats to the species when making non-detriment findings for these species, and make recommendations, as appropriate, for consideration by the Standing Committee.

18.192 *Directed to the Standing Committee*

The Standing Committee shall:

- a) consider the recommendations from the Animals Committee, as appropriate, and information relating to illegal trade in vulture body parts for traditional/belief-based use, and adopt recommendations as appropriate for consideration by the Parties concerned; and
- b) in consultation with the Secretariat, report on the implementation of Decisions 18.186 to 18.191 to the Conference of the Parties at its 19th meeting.

DRAFT DECISIONS ON WEST AFRICAN VULTURES (ACCIPITRIDAE SPP.) AGREED
BY THE ANIMALS COMMITTEE AT ITS 31ST MEETING (AC31, ONLINE, JUNE 2021)

19.AA Directed to West African range States (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo)

West African range States for *Gyps africanus* (Whitebacked vulture), *Gyps fulvus* (Griffon vulture), *Gyps rueppelli* (Rüppell's vulture), *Necrosyrtes monachus* (Hooded vulture), *Neophron percnopterus* (Egyptian vulture), *Torgos tracheliotos* (Lappet-faced vulture), and *Trigonoceps occipitalis* (White-headed vulture) are urged to:

- a) integrate illegal vulture trade considerations into their implementation of the West Africa Strategy on Combatting Wildlife Crime (WASCWC) and any decisions relating to Wildlife crime enforcement support in West and Central Africa adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 19th meeting;
- b) ensure that national laws to protect vultures and control trade in vulture parts and derivatives are effectively implemented, and ensure that penalties for non-compliance are sufficient to deter illegal trade;
- c) ensure that any international trade in West African vultures is not allowed except in accordance with CITES requirements, and if international trade is found not to be in accordance with CITES requirements, consider implementing a zero export quota;
- d) follow Resolution Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) on Non-detriment findings, and, in cases where there is an interest in exporting globally threatened vulture species, consider submitting non-detriment findings for the export of vulture specimens to the Secretariat for inclusion on the CITES website and review by the Animals Committee;
- e) identify any trade-related issues associated with the implementation of the Vulture Multispecies Action Plan of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS);
- f) work with relevant experts and organizations for implementing demand reduction strategies for vultures and their parts and derivatives including for belief-based use and consumption and, where appropriate, expand the implementation of strategies that have been successful;
- g) work with relevant organizations to initiate wide-scale public awareness campaigns at regional, national and local levels about the impacts of trade in these species, including the importance of vulture species to ecology and human health, the negative impacts of belief-based use of vulture body parts, and existing national and international legislation that protects vultures; and
- h) provide information to the Secretariat on the implementation of this Decision to assist it in reporting to the Animals Committee and Standing Committee, as appropriate.

19.BB Directed to Parties, West African range States and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

Parties, West African range States and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are encouraged, subject to resources, to:

- a) collaborate in the conservation and restoration of West African vultures and support the implementation of the Vulture Multispecies Action Plan of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) to conserve African-Eurasian Vultures; and
- b) gather and exchange scientific knowledge and expertise on West African vultures, with a particular focus on:

- i) documenting the scale of vulture trade by surveying markets in and outside West Africa, and identifying inter-regional and international trade routes;
- ii) characterizing links between poisoning and trade in vultures, and contributing to the African Wildlife Poison Database; and
- iii) updating the conservation and population status information of West African vultures, and *Gyps africanus* (white-backed vultures), *Gyps rueppellii* (Rüppell's vultures) and *Torgos tracheliotus* (lappet-faced vultures) in particular.

19.CC Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall:

- a) cooperate with the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) partner organizations, regional and subregional wildlife enforcement networks, and competent national authorities, where relevant and feasible, to consider vultures in the context of ICCWC's enforcement and capacity-building efforts in West Africa;
- b) subject to external funding, support the production of identification materials focusing on parts and derivatives of vulture species for use by law enforcement officials;
- c) liaise with the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) to assist in the implementation of the trade-related aspects of the Vulture Multispecies Action Plan (MsAP) subject to external funding, and share information based on the work of the Animals Committee;
- d) subject to external funding, support the implementation of capacity-building activities aimed at providing support to the West African range States in implementing the trade-related aspects of the Vulture MsAP;
- e) in collaboration with the CMS Secretariat, consider available trade data and conservation status information from the whole geographic range of the vulture species concerned for inclusion in its reporting to the Animals and Standing Committees; and
- f) collect information from West African vulture range States on their implementation of Decision 19.AA, and report as appropriate this and other information on the implementation of Decisions 19.AA to 19.CC a), b), c), d) and e) to the Animals Committee and Standing Committee, at their first regular meetings following the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties with conclusions and recommendations for their consideration.

19.DD Directed to the Animals Committee

The Animals Committee shall:

- a) encourage West African range States to undertake a Periodic Review of the vulture species referred to in Decision 19.AA pursuant to Resolution Conf. 14.8 (Rev. CoP17) on Periodic Review of species included in Appendices I and II, taking note of the offer of the Vulture Specialist Group of the International Union for Conservation of Nature to assist range States in such an effort;
- b) consider any reports or requests for advice submitted by Parties with respect to the making of non-detriment findings for trade in CITES-listed West African vulture species;
- c) consider the reports and recommendations of the Secretariat submitted in accordance with Decision 19.CC, paragraph e): and
- d) make recommendations as appropriate for consideration by range States, Parties, the Standing Committee and the Secretariat.

19.EE *Directed to the Standing Committee*

The Standing Committee shall review the implementation of Decisions 19.AA to 19.DD and make recommendations as appropriate to West African vulture range States, Parties and the Secretariat, and for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its 20th meeting.

19.FF *Directed to Parties, donor organizations and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations*

Donor Parties and other relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to provide support for implementing Decisions 19.AA to 19.CC and ensuring the survival of West African vultures.