

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

AFRICAN LIONS (*PANTHERA LEO*):
REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 18th meeting (CoP18, Geneva, 2019), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 18.244, 18.246 and 18.247 on *African lions* (*Panthera leo*) and the *CITES Big Cats Task Force* as follows:

Directed to the Secretariat

18.244 *Subject to external funding, the Secretariat shall, in collaboration with African lion range States, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and, as appropriate, taking into consideration the joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative and the Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa:*

- a) *support the implementation of activities in joint African lion conservation plans and strategies that relate to trade in African lion specimens and the implementation of CITES and, as needed, the review of such plans and strategies;*
- b) *jointly with the CMS Secretariat undertake a comparative study of African lion population trends and conservation and management practices, such as lion hunting, within and between countries, including the role, if any, of international trade;*
- c) *support capacity-building in African lion conservation and management including where appropriate, in the making of non-detriment findings by range States according to Resolution Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) on Non-detriment findings and the implementation of Resolution Conf. 17.9 on Trade in hunting trophies of species listed in Appendix I or II;*
- d) *assist in maintaining a joint CITES-CMS webportal on African lions, that also allows for the posting and sharing of information and guidance on the conservation and management of African lions;*
- e) *share the Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa and any relevant update with the Animals Committee for its review, as appropriate; and*
- f) *report on the implementation of the present Decision to the 32nd meeting of the Animals Committee and the 74th meeting of the Standing Committee and to the Conference of the Parties at its 19th meeting.*

18.246 *The Secretariat shall, subject to external resources:*

- a) *conduct further research and analysis on the legal and illegal trade in lions and other big cats to better understand trends, linkages between trade in different species, and the commodities in trade which contain, or claim to contain, such specimens;*
- b) *assess whether the trade in lion specimens reported under purpose code “H” follows the guidance in Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP18) on Permits and certificates, paragraph 3 h), and whether additional reporting specificities or descriptions are needed;*
- c) *develop guidance materials for the identification of lion and other big cat specimens in trade in consultation with relevant experts;*
- d) *develop and support, in consultation with relevant experts, the use of appropriate forensic-type techniques for identifying lions and other big cat species in trade;*
- e) *share relevant information generated through the implementation of this Decision with the CITES Big Cats Task Force; and*
- f) *report on the implementation of the present Decision to the 32nd meeting of the Animals and the 74th meeting of the Standing Committees as appropriate, and to the Conference of the Parties at its 19th meeting.*

18.247 Directed to the Animals Committee

The Animals Committee shall:

- a) *review the Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa and any relevant update, as appropriate;*
- b) *review the information reported by the Secretariat under Decisions 18.244 and 18.246, and submit recommendations to the Secretariat, the Standing Committee and African lion range States, as appropriate.*

3. As instructed in paragraph f) of Decision 18.244 and paragraph f) of Decision 18.246, the Secretariat reports to the Standing Committee on the implementation of these two Decisions in the present document, with references to progress with the implementation of Decision 18.247 by the Animals Committee. The Secretariat’s report on the implementation of Decision 18.245 on *African lions* (*Panthera leo*) and the *CITES Big Cats Task Force* can be found in document SC74 Doc. 69.

Implementation of Decision 18.244

4. The Secretariat secured external funding for the implementation of some activities indicated in Decision 18.244 (see Notification to the Parties No. 2021/049 on *Status of funding for the implementation of valid Decisions after CoP18 – as of 22 July 2021*) and is grateful for the contributions from the European Union, Switzerland and the United States of America.

Paragraph a): Implementation of activities in joint African lion conservation plans and strategies, and review of such plans and activities

5. The Secretariat, in collaboration with African lion range States, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), integrated joint African lion conservation plans and strategies into the Programme of Work (POW) of the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative. The Standing Committee reviewed the draft POW at its 73rd meeting (SC73; online, May 2021; see document SC73 Doc. 14) and approved it on 13 September 2021 through intersessional decision-making. The Standing Committee of CMS approved it at its 52nd meeting (online, September 2021). The final POW, as approved by both the CITES and CMS Standing Committees, is provided as an Annex to Notification to the Parties [No. 2021/054](#). The CITES Secretariat, through the CITES MIKES+ programme, secured partial funding for organizing the second African carnivore range States meeting in the course of 2022, where priority conservation actions for African lions are to be reviewed.

Paragraph b): Study of African lion population trends and conservation and management practices

6. To date, no external funding was secured to undertake the comparative study of African lion population trends and conservation and management practices called for in paragraph b) of Decision 18.244.

Paragraph c): Capacity-building in African lion conservation and management, including non-detriment findings

7. Regarding support for capacity-building in African lion conservation and management including, where appropriate, in the making of non-detriment findings (NDFs), the Secretariat received external support from the United States of America for undertaking this activity. The Secretariat intends to develop, in collaboration with range States, best practice guidance for the making of NDFs for trade in specimens of lions. The Secretariat plans to integrate this guidance in its implementation of Decisions 18.132 to 18.134 on *Non-detriment findings*, bring it to the attention of African Carnivores range States, and incorporate NDF guidance and best practices in the *Guidelines for the conservation of lions in Africa*.

Paragraph d): Joint CITES-CMS webportal on African lions

8. The joint CMS-CITES webportal on African lions, referred to in paragraph d) of Decision 18.244, has been established. It is hosted on the CMS domain and publicly accessible at: <https://www.cms.int/lions/en>. It allows for the posting and sharing of information and guidance on the conservation and management of African lions.

Paragraph e): Guidelines for the conservation of lions in Africa

9. As requested in paragraph e) of Decision 18.244, the Secretariat shared the *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa* with the Animals Committee in 2019 and 2020 for review. The Animals Committee decided to establish an intersessional working group on lions, which presented its preliminary considerations at the 31st meeting of the Animals Committee (AC31, online, June 2021) for further discussion (see documents [AC31 Doc. 28](#) and [addendums 1](#) and [2](#), and [AC31 Com. 6](#)).
10. In accordance with Decision 18.247, the Animals Committee adopted the following recommendations at AC31, addressed to the Secretariat, African lion range States and other stakeholders (noting that no recommendations were formulated for submission to the Standing Committee):
 - a) The Animals Committee invited the Secretariat to convey the comments and suggestions on the *Guidelines for the conservation of lions in Africa* generated by the Animals Committee's intersessional working group on lions to IUCN and the Secretariat of CMS, and to make the comments and suggestions available in an information document¹.
 - b) The Animals Committee requested IUCN, in collaboration with the CITES and CMS Secretariats, and in consultation with African lion range States, to develop the next version of the *Guidelines for the conservation of lions in Africa* in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Work for the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative (ACI), taking into consideration the comments and suggestions referred to in paragraph a) and recent scientific literature pertinent to the conservation of African lion.
 - c) The Animals Committee encouraged the ACI range States to consider the revised *Guidelines for the conservation of lions in Africa* referred to in paragraph b) at their next meeting, which is envisaged for 2022.
 - d) The Animals Committee encouraged the African lion range States to share experiences and best practice recommendations in using and implementing the *Guidelines for the conservation of lions in Africa* at the ACI range States' meetings and through the Joint CMS/CITES/IUCN web portal on African lions.
 - e) The Animals Committee agreed to submit the following draft decisions for consideration at the 19th meeting of the Conference of Parties:

¹ See information document AC31 Inf. 23 at <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac/31/Inf/E-AC31-Inf-23.pdf>

19.AA Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall inform the Animals Committee regarding the activities and outputs of the African Carnivore Initiative (ACI) that relate to the Committee's mandate and request advice from the Animals Committee, as appropriate.

19.BB Directed to the Animals Committee

The Animals Committee shall advise the Secretariat, as appropriate, on information that it provides regarding the activities and outputs of the ACI that are relevant to the Animals Committee's mandate.

The Animals Committee also recommended that the mandates in Decision 18.247, paragraphs a) and b), be extended beyond the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Implementation of Decision 18.246

Paragraph a): Research and analysis on legal and illegal trade in lions and other big cats

11. The Secretariat secured external funding for undertaking the research and analysis of the legal and illegal trade in lions and other big cats, called for in Decision 18.246, paragraph a), which is being implemented thanks to support from the Netherlands and a contribution from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Strategic Programme of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC).
12. The trade study is underway and an update on progress is expected to be submitted as an information document at the present meeting.

Paragraph b): Purpose code "H"

13. The Secretariat has not assessed whether the trade in lion specimens reported under purpose code "H" follows the guidance in Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP18) on *Permits and certificates*, or if additional reporting specificities are needed. It also has not received particular queries from Parties in this regard and is unaware of problems, if any, with the use of the purpose code.

Paragraphs c) and d): Guidance materials for the identification of lion and other big cat specimens; and forensic-type techniques for identifying lions and other big cat species in trade

14. No external resources were obtained by the Secretariat for undertaking the activities envisaged under paragraphs c) and d) of Decision 18.246. In 2021, however, the Secretariat was offered assistance from the University of Applied Sciences Van Hall Larenstein (Netherlands) to help advance their implementation. This involved the collation of guidance materials for the identification of lion and other big cat specimens, and targeted research on forensic-type techniques for identifying lions and other big cat species in trade by academics in the context of their final year dissertation. The studies are expected to be completed in January 2022. The main findings are to be collated and presented to the CITES Big Cats Task Force.

Paragraph e): Information for the CITES Big Cats Task Force

15. The Secretariat will share relevant information generated through the implementation of Decision 18.246 with the CITES Big Cats Task Force, which is expected to meet prior to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP19).

Reporting on the implementation of Decisions on African lions (*Panthera leo*) and the CITES Big Cats Task Force to CoP19

16. The Secretariat is instructed to report on the implementation of Decisions 18.244 and 18.246 to CoP19 and will include in its reporting recommendations as appropriate. The Secretariat will also provide an overview of the status of implementation of Decisions 18.245, 18.247, 18.249 and 18.250 in its report to CoP19.
17. The Standing Committee is instructed to report on its implementation of Decision 18.248 to CoP19, which it was expected to consider at two meetings, SC73 and SC74, *inter alia* taking account of the outcomes of Decision 18.245. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this has not been possible. The Standing

Committee was unable to discuss Decision 18.248 at SC73, and the timely implementation of Decisions 18.244 to 18.247 on *African lions* (*Panthera leo*) and the *CITES Big Cats Task Force* has been hampered by significant delays in activities and cancellations of meetings. While paragraph a) of Decision 18.248 is discussed at the present meeting (see agenda item 69), the Standing Committee may wish to propose in its report to CoP19 an extension or update of some or all of the other mandates in Decision 18.248. The Standing Committee may also wish to invite the Secretariat to assist the Chair of the Standing Committee in the production of this report for CoP19 to promote good coordination with its own reports on this matter required under Decisions 18.244 and 18.246.

Recommendations

18. The Secretariat invites the Standing Committee to take note of the present document and consider the Secretariat's suggestion in paragraph 17.