

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



Seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Johannesburg (South Africa), 24 September – 5 October 2016

Species specific matters

ILLEGAL TRADE IN CHEETAHS (*ACINONYX JUBATUS*)

1. This document is submitted by the Standing Committee.*
2. At its 16th meeting (CoP16, Bangkok, 2013), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 16.71 to 16.75 on *Illegal trade in cheetahs (Acinonyx jubatus)*, as follows:

Directed to the Secretariat

16.71 *The Secretariat shall, subject to external funding, contract independent consultants to undertake a study of the legal and illegal trade in wild cheetahs, and to assess the impact of this trade on the species conservation in the wild. The study should aim to determine the source of cheetahs in illegal trade, and the transit routes of illegally trafficked cheetahs, and should document the measures taken by Parties to deal with or dispose of confiscated live specimens. All range States must be fully consulted as stakeholders. The Secretariat shall make the results of the study available to the Animals and Standing Committees for their consideration.*

Directed to the Animals Committee

16.72 *The Animals Committee should review the study undertaken in accordance with Decision 16.71 and make recommendations, as appropriate, to the Standing Committee.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

16.73 *The Standing Committee should consider the recommendations of the Animals Committee made in accordance with Decision 16.72, and make its own recommendations, as appropriate, for communication to the Parties or for consideration at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

Directed to Parties and donors

16.74 *All relevant Parties are urged to assist those commissioned to undertake the above-mentioned study in any way possible, including through the provision of necessary information about legal and illegal trade in wild cheetah specimens.*

16.75 *Parties and donors are encouraged to provide funding to the Secretariat to finance the study on cheetah trade.*

* *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.*

3. In accordance with Decision 16.71, and through generous funding support from the European Union, the CITES Secretariat contracted an independent consultant to undertake a study on the legal and illegal trade in wild cheetahs, and the impact of this trade on the conservation on wild cheetah populations.
4. On 24 January 2014, the Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties [No. 2014/007](#), inviting Parties to contribute information to the study. In response to the Notification, reports were received from Greece, Namibia, Poland, South Africa and Zimbabwe, while the Sudan and Uganda submitted information directly to the consultant. The World Customs Organization (WCO) provided data on seizures reported by WCO members since 2011, and several conservation organizations involved in research on the trade in cheetahs, or with experience of such trade, also contributed documentary material to the study.
5. The Secretariat made the results of the study available to the Animals Committee for its consideration at its 27th meeting (AC27, Veracruz, 2014; see document [AC27 Doc. 18](#)). The Animals Committee adopted recommendations that were presented to the Standing Committee at its 65th meeting [SC65, Geneva, July 2014; see Annex 3 to document [SC65 Doc. 39 \(Rev. 2\)](#)].
7. The Standing Committee, at SC65, established an intersessional working group on illegal trade in cheetahs, with Kuwait as Chair, and the following membership: Bahrain, Botswana, Kenya, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Zimbabwe, Chair of the Animals Committee, Born Free Foundation, Elephant Action League, International Fund for Animal Welfare, IUCN, Panthera, Species Survival Network, Wildlife Conservation Society, WWF and Zoological Society of London. After the formation of the intersessional Working Group, the Chair agreed to include the Endangered Wildlife Trust and Cheetah Conservation Fund as additional members of the working group. The terms of reference for the working group, as endorsed at SC65, were published in Annex 1 to Notification to the Parties No. 2014/060 of 10 December 2014.
8. The working group on illegal trade in cheetahs collaborated with the Secretariat in developing a questionnaire to assist Parties in compiling information on the status of the implementation and enforcement of CITES provisions relevant to the trade in cheetahs, and the challenges experienced by cheetah range, transit and consumer States. The Secretariat made the questionnaire available to Parties in Annex 2 to Notification to the Parties No. 2014/060.
9. In response to the Notification, the Secretariat received responses from 29 Parties: Austria, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Cyprus, Greece, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Malta, Mauritania, Namibia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Their reports were subsequently submitted to the Chair of the working group on illegal trade in cheetahs. Chad, Mali, Mozambique and Sudan submitted reports directly to the organizer of the workshop described below. All responses were included in an analysis prepared by the working group, as presented in the [Annex](#) to document SC66 Doc. 32.5 (in English only).
10. The working group arranged for the organization of a workshop of range States and Parties implicated in the illegal trade in cheetah, and other relevant experts and organizations. The workshop was convened in Kuwait City, Kuwait, from 3 to 5 November 2015. Its objectives were to review and exchange information on the illegal trade in cheetahs, and formulate targeted recommendations to combat it, including recommendations concerning the disposal of confiscated cheetahs. The workshop was generously hosted by the Environment Public Authority of Kuwait, with co-funding from the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW).
11. The workshop brought together representatives from CITES authorities and enforcement agencies from 13 Parties (Algeria, Bahrain, Botswana, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, United Arab Emirates and Zimbabwe), the Chair of the Animals Committee, and cheetah experts from international and non-governmental organizations (Born Free USA, Cheetah Conservation Fund, Endangered Wildlife Trust, Global Eye, International Fund for Animal Welfare, IUCN Cat Specialist Group, Kuwait Environment Protection Society, Panthera, Wildlife Conservation Society, World Association of Zoos and Aquariums and Zoological Society of London).
12. The workshop participants reviewed recent information on the conservation status of cheetahs, the recommendations from the study commissioned by the Secretariat in accordance with Decision 16.71, the recommendations of the Animals Committee, the results of the questionnaire described in paragraph 8 of this report, the challenges experienced and advances made by Party participants, and the perspectives of the non-governmental organizations attending the workshop.

13. The workshop developed recommendations for consideration at the 66th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC66, Geneva, January 2016), and draft decisions for the present meeting of the Conference of the Parties. These were presented in document [SC66 Doc. 32.5](#).
14. At SC66, the Committee adopted a set of recommendations regarding public awareness and education, enforcement, cooperation and information exchange, and disposal of confiscated live cheetahs. The Committee further agreed to submit to the Conference of the Parties at its 17th meeting, draft decisions 17.A to 17.G as presented in paragraph 15 of this document, for its consideration.

Recommendations

15. The Standing Committee recommends that the Conference of the Parties note this document and adopt the following draft decisions:

Directed to the Secretariat

- 17.A The Secretariat shall, pending the availability of external funding and in consultation with the Standing Committee and relevant experts, commission the development of a CITES cheetah trade resource kit that compiles relevant information and tools, and addresses *inter alia*: identification of live cheetahs and parts and derivatives thereof; monitoring and controlling trade in cheetahs; protocols to be followed in case of seizures (e.g. handling, DNA sampling, reporting for data collection such as studbooks); 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); lists of suitable housing facilities for live cheetahs; and other relevant materials.
- 17.B The Secretariat shall submit a draft CITES cheetah trade resource kit to the Standing Committee at its 69th or 70th meeting for its review and recommendations. The Secretariat shall make the final version of the kit available in relevant languages and various forms (e.g. hard copy, electronic, smart phone application, web-based), and regularly revise the web-based version to ensure that it remains accurate, up to date and reflecting best practice.
- 17.C Where appropriate, the CITES Secretariat is requested, subject to available resources, to engage with relevant social media platforms, search engines and e-commerce platforms to address illegal international trade in cheetah through these platforms, and raise awareness of the conservation plight of cheetahs.
- 17.D The Secretariat, subject to available resources, is invited to assess the feasibility of creating a forum on the CITES website for Parties, experts, NGOs and other stakeholders to exchange and share information on cheetahs.

Directed to the Standing Committee

- 17.E The Standing Committee shall review the draft CITES cheetah trade resource kit produced in compliance with Decision 17.B at its 69th or 70th meeting, and formulate comments and recommendations to the Secretariat for its finalization and dissemination.

Directed to the Secretariat

- 17.F The Secretariat shall report on the implementation of Decisions 17.A and 17.B, including its findings and recommendations, as appropriate, at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
- 17.G The Secretariat to report to the Standing Committee on progress on all of the recommendations, and progress in halting illegal trade in cheetahs.

COMMENTS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

- A. The Secretariat suggests that some slight revisions to the draft decisions proposed by the Standing Committee would make the intent clearer. The Secretariat has therefore prepared a revised version of draft decisions 17.A to G agreed by the Standing Committee at SC66, which is presented in the Annex to the present document.
- B. The Secretariat believes that some of the matters suggested to be addressed as part of the development of the CITES cheetah trade resource kit, as proposed in draft decision 17.A, might already be adequately addressed by existing mechanisms, or does not appear to fall within the mandate of the Convention. For example, “monitoring and controlling trade in cheetahs” is addressed at international level through CITES, and recorded in the CITES trade database. At national level, such trade falls outside the mandate of CITES. Also “Reporting for data collection such as studbooks” falls outside the mandate of CITES reporting requirements. The Secretariat believes that slight revision to draft decision 17.A could make the intent clearer, as proposed in the Annex to the present document.
- C. In order to ensure that the activities envisaged under draft decision 17.B can be fully implemented in a timely manner, the Secretariat offers the proposed amendments in the Annex to the present document.
- D. With regard to draft decision 17.C, it should be noted that, in the early months of 2016, the Secretariat received a number of reports about advertisements of CITES listed species, in particular exotic pets, illegally offered for sale on social media and e-commerce platforms. For this reason, the Secretariat recommends that draft Decision 17.C be broadened to include all CITES-listed species, as proposed in the Annex to the present document.

Should the Conference of the Parties agree to the changes proposed to draft decision 17.C, it would seem sensible for the Secretariat to report on the implementation of this decision under the agenda item on *Enforcement matters* to the Standing Committee at its regular meetings.

- E. To provide clarity in the reporting requirements, the Secretariat suggests that draft decisions 17.F and 17.G be merged in a new draft decision (17.E) as proposed in the Annex to the present document.
- F. The recommended draft decisions will have budgetary and workload implications for the Secretariat, as well as workload implications for the Standing Committee.

– Decisions 17.A

Implementation of decision 17.A is subject to the provision of external funds and does not require core funds. Supervision of the work will require some time from the Secretariat, but should be a core part of the Secretariat’s work and accommodated within its regular work programme.

– Decision 17.B

To make the final version of the CITES cheetah trade resource kit available in relevant languages and formats, as suggested in draft Decision 17 B, will require external funding.

– Decisions 17.C

The task allocated to the Secretariat in draft decision 17.C can be accommodated within the regular work programme of the Secretariat.

– Decision 17.D

To conduct an assessment of the feasibility of creating a forum on the CITES website, as allocated to the Secretariat in draft decision 17.D, can be accommodated within the regular work programme of the Secretariat. However, if that would be feasible, to create such forum might require external funding.

– Decision 17.E

The task allocated to the Standing Committee in draft decision 17.E might require intersessional work by the Committee and time during its meetings. However, the Secretariat believes that the work can

be accommodated within the regular work programme of the Committee and without additional funding.

– Decision 17.F and 17.G

The reporting requirements allocated to the Secretariat in draft decisions 17.F and 17.G can be accommodated within the regular work programme of the Secretariat.

- G. The Secretariat suggests an additional draft decision directed to Parties and donors, and a draft text is contained in the Annex to the present document.
- H. Decisions 16.71, 16.72, 16.73, 16.74 and 16.75 have been implemented, and the Secretariat recommends that they be deleted.

DRAFT DECISIONS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
ON ILLEGAL TRADE IN CHEETAHS (*ACINONYX JUBATUS*)

(changes proposed by the Secretariat to the versions agreed by the Standing Committee at its 66th meeting are shown in strikethrough [deleted text] or underlined [proposed new text])

The Conference of the Parties is invited to adopt the draft decisions as follows:

Directed to the Secretariat

- 17.A The Secretariat shall, ~~pending the availability of~~ subject to external funding, and in consultation with ~~the Standing Committee and~~ 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; monitoring and controlling trade in cheetahs; advice on procedures protocols to be followed in case of seizures, including (e.g. handling, DNA sampling, reporting for data collection such as studbooks); 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.B 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, electronic, smart phone application, web-based), to the Standing Committee ~~at its 69th or 70th meeting~~ for its consideration review and recommendations. The Secretariat shall, subject to external funding, make the final version of the kit available in relevant the languages and various formats agreed by the Standing Committee (e.g. hard copy, electronic, smart phone application, web-based), and subject to available resources, regularly revise it as may be necessary to ensure that it remains accurate, up to date and reflecting best practice.
- 17.C ~~Where appropriate,~~ the CITES Secretariat is requested, subject to available resources and where appropriate, to engage with relevant social media platforms, search engines and e-commerce platforms to address illegal international trade in ~~cheetah~~ CITES-listed species through these platforms, and raise awareness of the conservation plight of ~~cheetahs~~ CITES-listed species affected by illegal trade, in particular cheetah, when appropriate.
- 17.D The Secretariat, subject to available resources, is invited to assess the feasibility of creating a forum on the CITES website for Parties, experts, NGOs and other stakeholders to exchange and share information on cheetahs.

Directed to the Secretariat

- ~~17.F The Secretariat shall report on the implementation of Decisions 17.A and 17.B, including its findings and recommendations, as appropriate, at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.~~
- ~~17.G The Secretariat to report to the Standing Committee on progress on all of the recommendations, and progress in halting illegal trade in cheetahs.~~
- 17.E The Secretariat shall keep the Standing Committee informed about its actions to implement Decisions 17 A - G and report on their implementation and its efforts to halt illegal trade in cheetahs at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Directed to the Standing Committee

- 17.EE The Standing Committee shall review the draft CITES cheetah trade resource kit produced in compliance with Decision 17.B ~~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.G Parties and potential donors are encouraged to provide funding support to the Secretariat for the implementation of the Decisions regarding illegal trade in cheetahs, where needed.