

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 THE HELMETED HORNBILL (*RHINOPLAX VIGIL*)

1. This document has been submitted by Indonesia.\*

Background

2. The Helmeted Hornbill (*Rhinoplax vigil*) has been listed on Appendix I since 01/07/1975. It is native to Sundaic lowland forest habitats in Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore and Thailand. The species is now extinct in Singapore. In Indonesia, all hornbill species is totally protected. Indeed, it is protected under domestic legislation in China, either in Malaysia, the species is totally protected in Peninsular Malaysia and Sarawak. Especially in Sabah, the species is protected, but limited hunting is allowed under licence.
3. Helmeted Hornbills are the largest hornbills in Asia, and the only members of the hornbill family (Bucerotidae) to have a largely solid, as opposed to hollow casque on the bill. The front section of the casque is solid keratin, long known and traded as 'hornbill ivory'. It is softer than elephant ivory and can be finely carved.
4. Conservation efforts, including ex situ and in situ breeding efforts for this species (using nest boxes in the latter case) have met with little success. In addition to the current poaching crisis, the conversion of the Helmeted Hornbill's lowland forest habitat for oil palm plantations and other uses continues to threaten the species' long-term survival.
5. Helmeted Hornbills are protected by Indonesian regulation No. 5 year 1990 and Government Regulation No. 7 year 1999. The offenders will be sentenced for maximum 5 years prison and fine for IDR 100 millions for poaching, killing, trading, and transporting the hornbills, its parts and products.
6. The Indonesian government effort to conduct law enforcement actions to address Helmeted Hornbills trade including the arrest of more than 20 poachers, local dealers, and smugglers across Indonesia. Most of them are sentenced. A total of 1,032 casques were seized from those cases. Authorities in conservation areas conducted regular patrols whereas the species occurred.
7. Despite Indonesia Government conducted great efforts to stop the threats to Helmeted hornbills, the massive demand of Helmeted Hornbills casques in International market led to uncontrolled poaching of this species.
8. A draft Action Plan for the Conservation of Helmeted Hornbill, been prepared by a Working Group set up under the auspices of the IUCN Species Survival Commission through the Asia Species Action Partnership (ASAP), has called for urgent action to save the species, including encouraging CITES Management Authorities to step up their vigilance in range countries;

---

\* 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.

## Recommendation

9. To raise international support, establish and increase trans-boundary law enforcement collaboration between Helmeted Hornbills range countries and end market countries to reduce the poaching and smuggling of hornbills.
10. To increase the efforts of preventive actions including systematic patrols, entry points/exit points inspections, intelligences works to identify the poachers, dealers, smugglers and their networks at helmeted hornbills range countries.
11. To create systematic stockpile management to avoid laundering of casques, for scientific purposes, and to support the government action to destroy the casques from law enforcement actions.
12. It is recommended that the Conference of the Parties adopt the proposed Resolution contained in Annexes 1 to the present document.

## COMMENTS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

- A. The challenges regarding illegal trade in specimens of helmeted hornbill, as described in the document, have much in common with those observed for other CITES listed species. There are a number of existing Resolutions and Decisions, and draft resolutions and decisions proposed to the present meeting, which address these challenges through broad and holistic measures that strengthen the overall capacities of Parties and their CITES authorities (for example documents CoP17 Doc. 14.2 on the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime, CoP17 Doc. 23 on CITES compliance matters, and CoP17 Doc. 25 on enforcement matters).
- B. The Secretariat recognizes however the particular challenges placed upon the six Southeast Asian range States of *Rhinoplax vigil* to conserve and restore this species, and prevent poaching and illegal trade. While the Secretariat does not consider that a resolution on this issue, as proposed in the Annex to the document is necessary, it suggests that the Conference of the Parties consider adopting decisions that are based on the operational part of the draft resolution, and that are directed to the Secretariat and the Standing Committee.

### ***Directed to the Secretariat***

17.XX(1) Subject to the availability of funding, the Secretariat shall:

- a. consult the range States of the helmeted hornbill concerning their measures to conserve and protect this species, including relevant conservation actions, legal and regulatory measures, outreach and education activities, cross-border cooperation and actions to combat poaching and illegal trade;
- b. assist Parties to develop and implement measures, including legislative and enforcement measures and regional and sub-regional initiatives, to halt or reduce and ultimately eliminate illegal trade in Helmeted Hornbills;
- c. work closely with ICCWC partners to support the implementation of this Decision and
- d. report to the Standing Committee on the implementation of this Decision.

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

17.XX(2) The Standing Committee shall review the implementation of this Decision on the basis of the Secretariat's reports and report at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the implementation of this Decision, with any recommendations for further action.

- C. Should the Conference of the Parties adopt the draft resolution contained in Annex 1, the Secretariat would recommend reporting only once during each intersessional period and to allow some flexibility in the timing of the reporting. This could be reflected in paragraph h) under URGES as follows:
- h) report to the CITES Secretariat on the implementation of this Resolution, including information on seizures, confiscations, arrests and prosecutions, ~~on an annual basis.~~

DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

*CONSERVATION OF AND CONTROL OF TRADE IN THE HELMETED HORNBILL*

RECALLING that the Helmeted Hornbill (*Rhinoplax vigil*) is included in Appendix I of the Convention, and that all commercial international trade in its parts and derivatives has been regulated by the Convention since 1975;

RECOGNIZING that the Helmeted Hornbill is of cultural and symbolic significance to local communities in Southeast Asia;

AWARE that the Helmeted Hornbill is highly vulnerable to overexploitation due to its extensive habitat requirements, naturally low population densities, relatively low reproductive rate, and habit of flocking at fruiting trees where it may be easily shot by hunters;

NOTING WITH CONCERN that the wild population of the Helmeted Hornbill in Indonesia has been increasingly threatened since 2011 by poaching to supply demand for raw and carved casques, the source of 'hornbill ivory' or 'red ivory';

NOTING ALSO that this increase in poaching has been paralleled by an increase in demand for, and in the black market price of, hornbill ivory as a luxury collectable item in China and among Chinese consumers in Southeast Asia;

NOTING that, in response to recent large-scale poaching, the threat status of the species was formally upgraded in 2015 from Near Threatened to Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List;

AWARE that, as populations become depleted in Indonesia, poachers are likely to shift their attention to other range States;

NOTING IN ADDITION that a draft Action Plan for the Conservation of Helmeted Hornbill has been prepared by a Working Group set up under the auspices of the IUCN Species Survival Commission through the Asia Species Action Partnership (ASAP);

CONCERNED that without urgent, coordinated efforts on the part of both consumer and range states, the species may be in imminent danger of extinction;

CONSCIOUS that effective enforcement, raising awareness of the issue, education and demand reduction, and cooperation with local communities are critically important complements to effective in-situ conservation of the species, including control of large-scale poaching;

COMMENDING the initiatives by Indonesia to facilitate cooperation in conservation of the Helmeted Hornbill and to address illegal hunting of the species.

RECOGNIZING, HOWEVER, that strengthened technical cooperation among all relevant Parties, including range and actual or potential consumer States, as well as financial support, would contribute to more effective conservation of the Helmeted Hornbill;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

URGES all Parties, especially consumer and range States, to:

- a) adopt comprehensive legislation and enforcement controls as a matter of urgency, with the aim of eliminating poaching of Helmeted Hornbill and commercial trade in its parts and derivatives;
- b) prohibit the display, domestic sale and acquisition of Helmeted Hornbill specimens, to eliminate online forums and marketplace, including parts and derivatives, except for bona fide purposes of conservation, scientific research, education or forensic investigation;

- c) designate highest legal protection status for the Helmeted Hornbill and, in relation to a) to c) above, increase current enforcement efforts and prosecutions and address legislative and enforcement gaps;
- d) cross-border cooperation between neighbouring range States for the management of contiguous habitat, strengthen enforcement controls, including anti-poaching measures in Helmeted Hornbill range States, collate and share information among law enforcement agencies and INTERPOL related to incidents poaching, trafficking and illegal sale (including online sale), of Helmeted Hornbills and their parts and derivatives;
- e) monitor the impact of hunting pressure on hornbill populations;
- f) undertake public education campaigns aimed at reducing demand for Helmeted Hornbill specimens, including parts and derivatives, and at promoting awareness of applicable laws, particularly within the carving industry;
- g) take any other steps necessary for Helmeted Hornbills state countries to develop and implement the Conservation Action Plan for Helmeted Hornbill;
- h) report to the CITES Secretariat on the implementation of this Resolution, including information on seizures, confiscations, arrests and prosecutions, on an annual basis;

DIRECTS the Secretariat in cooperation with the chairs of the Animals and Standing Committees and subject to the availability of funding, to:

- a) work closely with Parties to develop and implement measures, including legislative and enforcement measures and regional and sub-regional initiatives, to halt or reduce and ultimately eliminate illegal trade in Helmeted Hornbills;
- b) work closely with ICCWC partners to support the implementation of this Resolution; and
- c) report to the Standing Committee on the implementation of this Resolution at each of its regular meetings;

DIRECTS the Standing Committee to:

- a) review the implementation of this Resolution at each of its regular meetings on the basis of the Secretariat's reports;
- b) report at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the implementation of this Resolution, with any recommendations for further action;

CALLS UPON all governments, donor and funding organizations, and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as a matter of urgency, to support efforts to eliminate poaching and illegal trade in Helmeted Hornbill, including:

- a) the provision of funding to relevant Parties and, for the purposes of this resolution, to the CITES Secretariat and other relevant ICCWC partners;
- b) assistance with enforcement, training, capacity building and education;
- c) population monitoring, and the gathering and exchange of scientific, technical and legal information and expertise.

TENTATIVE BUDGET AND SOURCE OF FUNDING  
FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS OR DECISIONS

According to Resolution Conf. 4.6 (Rev. CoP16) on *Submission of draft resolutions, draft decisions and other documents for meetings of the Conference of the Parties*, the Conference of the Parties decided that any draft resolutions or decisions submitted for consideration at a meeting of the Conference of the Parties that have budgetary and workload implications for the Secretariat or permanent committees must contain or be accompanied by a budget for the work involved and an indication of the source of funding. The authors of this document have not prepared a budget, but propose that any tasks to be carried out under the proposed draft resolution and decision by the Secretariat or permanent committees be subject to the availability of funding.