

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



Eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties  
Colombo (Sri Lanka), 23 May – 3 June 2019

Species specific matters

DRAFT DECISIONS ON THE CONSERVATION OF AMPHIBIANS (AMPHIBIA)

1. This document has been submitted by Costa Rica.\*

COMMENTS OF THE SECRETARIAT

- A. The Secretariat acknowledges the value of the background information submitted by Costa Rica, which provides an overview of the conservation status and threats faced by amphibians. However, the Secretariat notes that many of the pressures mentioned in document CoP18 Doc. 62 that are threatening amphibians, such as disease, and habitat loss and degradation, are beyond the scope of the Convention, and recognizes that these concerns would have to be addressed in different fora. Furthermore, in the document and its recommendations, a clear distinction between CITES-listed and non-CITES listed amphibian species is not always made.
- B. Concerning the draft decisions proposed in Annex 1, the Secretariat is of the view that some may be redundant, and that the implementation of others could prove to be problematic.
  - i) Draft decisions 18.AA, 18.BB and 18.CC call for measures that seem duplicative of existing provisions and mechanisms of the Convention, such as permitting requirements for regulation of trade (Articles III to V); measures to be taken by Parties (Article VIII); international measures (Article XIII), and associated compliance mechanisms and guidance contained in *inter alia* Resolution Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) on *Non-detriment findings*, Resolution Conf. 12.8 (Rev. CoP17) on *Review of Significant Trade in specimens of Appendix-II species*, Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP17) on *Permits and certificates*, Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP17) on *Compliance and enforcement*, Resolution Conf. 17.7 on *Review of trade in animal specimens reported as produced in captivity*, and Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16) on *Identification manual*; and capacity building activities specified in resolutions and decisions (see document CoP18 Doc. 21.2), including on non-detriment findings (see proposed decisions in document CoP18 Doc. 45 on *Non-detriment findings*).
  - ii) Draft decisions 18.EE, 18.FF and 18.GG call for studies and workshops that cover all amphibian species, noting that most are not listed under CITES, and may not be in trade or threatened by trade (of the over 7,000<sup>1</sup> described species of amphibians, only 162<sup>2</sup> are currently included in the CITES

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\* 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.

<sup>1</sup> <https://amphibiaweb.org/declines/declines.html> (accessed 24-02-2018).

<sup>2</sup> CITES Appendices I, II and III (valid from 4 October 2017); <https://cites.org/eng/disc/species.php> (accessed 24-02-2018); 24 species are listed in Appendix I; 134 in Appendix II; and 4 in Appendix III.

Appendices). Safeguarding species' conservation in the context of threats unrelated to international trade, and particularly for species which are not in the Appendices, is beyond the scope of the Convention. The implementation of the proposed activities would require significant financial resources, which are not further discussed in the document.

iii) Concerning the amphibian species which are currently included in the Appendices, document CoP18 Doc. 62 does not explain why the implementation of the current listings of these species, and the species-specific CITES monitoring systems that are applicable to them (e.g. Review of Significant Trade and Review of animals reported as produced in captivity) would be insufficient to prevent international trade from further endangering the species' survival. The need for the adoption of the proposed decisions remains therefore unclear.

C. On the basis of the above, the Secretariat recommends that the decisions proposed in document CoP18 Doc. 62 not be adopted. The issues discussed in this document somewhat relate to those brought up in document CoP18 Doc. 87 on *Conservation of the Titicaca water frog (Telmatobius culeus)*. Costa Rica may therefore wish to liaise with the proponent of that document to exchange experiences on the trade in, and conservation management of, amphibian species, and perhaps consider bringing issues relating to trade in CITES-listed amphibians to the attention of the Animals or Standing Committees, as appropriate.

DRAFT DECISIONS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

18.AA to 18.GG Amphibians

18.AA ***Directed to Parties***

Parties trading in amphibians are recommended to:

- a) verify the origin of specimens traded between countries in the region; and
- b) ensure the appropriate use of source codes.

18.BB ***Directed to Parties***

Parties should eliminate the substantial amount of illegal and unreported trade in specimens of CITES-listed amphibian species, whether live specimens, or parts and derivatives thereof, by:

- a) ensuring that CITES permits and certificates are appropriately issued in the case of trade in these specimens;
- b) including information on trade in these specimens in their CITES annual reports;
- c) ensuring that their annual reports are in accordance with the most recent version of the Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual reports, as provided by Resolution Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP17) on National reports;
- d) examining their enforcement efforts regarding trade in these specimens to ensure that adequate steps are taken to deter and detect illegal and unreported trade;
- e) undertaking education and outreach activities targeting amphibian farms, buyers and sellers of live amphibians or parts and derivatives thereof, product manufacturers, shippers, brokers, and staff from government agencies involved in controlling and monitoring this trade, to ensure that amphibian trade complies with national laws and CITES provisions; and
- f) reporting to the Secretariat on their efforts in this regard, in time for a report to be submitted to the **XX meeting** of the Standing Committee.

18.CC ***Directed to the Animals Committee***

The Animals Committee shall continue its review of the guidance on non-detriment findings for the export of CITES-listed amphibian species, including any new information on the trade, sustainable use, and conservation of amphibians, and shall submit its recommendations to the Standing Committee, as appropriate.

18.DD ***Directed to the Standing Committee***

The Standing Committee shall:

- a) consider the reports and recommendations from the Animals Committee submitted in accordance with Decision (Animals Committee), and any other relevant information;
- b) make recommendations to the Parties, the Animals Committee, and the Secretariat, as appropriate; and
- c) report on the application of Decision (Animals Committee) at the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties, with recommendations for the consideration of the Parties.

18.EE ***Directed to the Secretariat***

The Secretariat shall make any relevant information on trade, sustainable use, and conservation of amphibians available to the Parties and the Animals Committee through the CITES website.

The CITES Secretariat shall, subject to external funding:

- a) conduct one or more interdisciplinary workshops for CITES authorities and other relevant authorities and stakeholders in the range States of amphibian species in international trade, including the following topics:
  - i) identifying amphibian species threatened by international trade;
  - ii) assessing whether existing legislation, protected areas, and current levels of trade are compatible with the conservation of these species in the wild;
  - iii) evaluating the possible listing of these species in CITES Appendices (including Appendix 3);
  - iv) compiling further data on harvesting levels (i.e., primary catch and bycatch) of amphibians subject to high volumes of international trade; and
  - v) the establishment of preventive management measures by exporting countries and other Parties, such as the designation of no-take zones or closed seasons, daily or seasonal harvest quotas, and improved national monitoring mechanisms and reporting on amphibians.

The workshop shall also include the following:

- vi) use of guidance for monitoring and controlling captive-breeding operations and other production systems;
- vii) use of guidance for making non-detriment findings and establishing export quotas for Appendix-II amphibian species in trade; and
- viii) a report on workshop outcomes and activities to the Animals Committee and the Standing Committee, as appropriate, before the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

18.FF ***Directed to the Secretariat***

The Secretariat shall:

- b) subject to external funding, prepare a report, in cooperation with relevant organizations and in consultation with range States and relevant States, at least two months before the XX meeting of the Standing Committee, to include the following:
  - i) conservation status of amphibian species at national and global levels;
  - ii) available information on levels of legal and illegal trade;
  - iii) relevant information on enforcement actions taken, including seizures, forensic analysis of seized specimens, arrests, prosecutions, and judgments relating to illegal amphibian trade, as well as disposal of seized specimens; and
  - iv) new developments in specific measures for demand management, education, and awareness-raising concerning amphibians.

18.GG ***Directed to the Secretariat***

The Secretariat shall distribute the draft report to range States and other relevant States for comment. The final report shall be made available to the Standing Committee at its **XX meeting**. On the basis of the report and the input received from the range States and States concerned, the Secretariat shall formulate recommendations for the consideration of the **XX meeting** of the Standing Committee, as well as draft decisions for consideration by the Standing Committee and the Conference of the Parties, as appropriate.

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.