

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

TORTOISES AND FRESHWATER TURTLES (TESTUDINES SPP.)

1. This document is submitted by the Standing Committee and the Secretariat.
2. At its 17th meeting (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 17.291 to 17.298 on *Tortoises and freshwater turtles (Testudines spp.)*, as follows:

Directed to the Secretariat

17.291 *The Secretariat shall, subject to available funding:*

- a) *in collaboration with Parties requiring assistance, and relevant experts, provide or develop guidance to CITES Scientific and Management Authorities concerning:*
 - i) *techniques to survey and monitor wild populations of tortoises and freshwater turtles, to assess impacts of offtake, and to implement adaptive management programmes in the context of the making of non-detriment findings; and*
 - ii) *the differentiation of specimens originating from the wild from those from captive or ranching production systems;*
- b) *contract consultants to develop, in collaboration with relevant Parties, experts and the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC), a guide on categories of turtle parts and derivatives in trade, for national agencies responsible for wildlife law enforcement, to raise their awareness of the trade in these types of specimens, to enable initial recognition of such specimens, and to provide guidance on further identification resources and expertise that can be consulted; and*
- c) *in collaboration with ICCWC, relevant Parties and experts, establish a secure rapid-response identification network to connect inspecting officials to a network of verified specialists on species identification, with an initial pilot phase focusing on tortoises and freshwater turtles, that could be extended to other species, if appropriate.*

17.292 *The Secretariat shall report at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the implementation of Decision 17.291.*

Directed to the Animals Committee

17.293 *The Animals Committee shall review the guidance provided or developed in accordance with Decision 17.291, paragraphs a) and b), and make recommendations for consideration by the Secretariat.*

Directed to the Secretariat

17.294 *The Secretariat shall engage the government of Madagascar and other relevant stakeholders to provide urgent assistance to combat illegal collection and trade in the Ploughshare tortoise (Astrochelys yniphora) or Angonoka.*

17.295 *The Secretariat shall:*

- a) *with funding already provided, establish and convene a CITES Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles Task Force (Task Force) to operate, as described in Decision 17.296. The members of the Task Force could include the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the members of the ICCWC, Madagascar and those Parties in Asia that are most affected by the illegal trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles and their parts and derivatives and other individuals who the Secretariat determines may contribute to the work of the Task Force;*
- b) *seek funding to support the work and additional meetings of the Task Force through the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties;*
- c) *work to establish a secure electronic communications platform for the Task Force (i.e. the CENComm Environet of the World Customs Organization);*
- d) *transmit the findings and recommendations of the Task Force, under Decision 17.296 c), to the 69th meeting of the Standing Committee for its consideration, and make its own recommendations as appropriate; and,*
- e) *transmit to the Standing Committee, for consideration at its 70th meeting, a progress report on the implementation of the Committee's recommendations by the Parties, as described in Decision 17.298 c).*

Directed to the Tortoise and Freshwater Turtles Task Force

17.296 *The Task Force shall:*

- a) *as it deems appropriate, exchange intelligence and other information on the illegal trade in tortoises and freshwater and terrestrial turtles;*
- b) *discuss enforcement and implementation issues related to the illegal trade in tortoises and freshwater and terrestrial turtles as outlined in document CoP17 Doc. 73 Annexes 1 – 4 and any other materials it deems relevant; and,*
- c) *deliver findings and recommendations, through the Secretariat, to the 69th meeting of Standing Committee to strengthen the enforcement and implementation of the Convention for these species by the Parties.*

Directed to the Parties

17.297 *The Parties shall:*

- a) *take steps to strengthen implementation and enforcement of the Convention for tortoises and freshwater and terrestrial turtles, especially the recommendations of the Standing Committee under Decision 17.298 a) and b); and*
- b) *report to 70th and 71st meetings of the Standing Committee, through the Secretariat, on steps taken to implement the Committee's recommendations, under Decision 17.298 a) and b).*

Directed to the Standing Committee

17.298 *The Standing Committee shall:*

- a) *at its 69th meeting, consider the findings and recommendations of the Secretariat and the Task Force, under Decisions 17.295 d) and 17.296 c) and recommend actions by the Parties, as it*

deems appropriate, to strengthen enforcement and implementation of the Convention for these species;

- b) at its 70th and 71st meetings, evaluate the reports of the Parties under Decision 17.297 b) and determine whether additional recommendations or measures are needed, including appropriate compliance measures in accordance with Resolution Conf. 14.3 on CITES compliance procedures; and*
- c) report on actions and progress achieved by the Committee, Task Force and the Parties at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

3. The reporting of the Standing Committee in accordance with the provisions of Decision 17.298, paragraph c), is presented in paragraphs 4 to 9 of the present document. The reporting of the Secretariat in accordance with the provisions of Decision 17.292, and additional reporting as appropriate, is presented in paragraphs 10 to 22 of the present document.

Implementation of Decisions 17.295, paragraphs a), b), d) and e), 17.296, 17.297, and 17.298

4. The Standing Committee, at its 69th meeting (SC69, Geneva, November 2017), as required by Decision 17.298, paragraph a), considered the findings and recommendations developed by participants to the CITES Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles Task Force meeting, which was convened by the Secretariat in close cooperation with its partners in the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC), in April 2017.¹ The meeting was convened thanks to generous funds provided by the United States of America, and co-hosted by the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore and Wildlife Reserves Singapore. The Committee subsequently agreed to the recommendations of the Task Force, including amendments suggested by the Secretariat. For ease of reference, the full set of recommendations from the CITES Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles Task Force meeting, as agreed by the Committee at SC69, is included in Annex 3 to the present document.
5. The Standing Committee at SC69 requested the Secretariat to prepare for consideration by the Committee at its 70th meeting (SC70, Sochi, October 2018), a draft revised version of Resolution Conf. 11.9 (Rev. CoP13) on *Conservation of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles*. The Secretariat was requested to incorporate into the Resolution, the revisions proposed in recommendation 4.d) i. to v., presented in Annex 3 to the present document. The Committee further requested the Secretariat to, as part of the revision, take into consideration the other recommendations developed by participants to the CITES Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles Task Force meeting agreed by the Committee, and the discussions at SC69.²
6. At SC70, the Standing Committee considered the draft revised version of Resolution Conf. 11.9 (Rev. CoP13) prepared by the Secretariat, and agreed to submit proposed amendments to the Resolution to the present meeting, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties.³ The amendments to the Resolution proposed by the Committee are presented in Annex 2 to the present document.
7. The Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties [No. 2018/030](#) of 26 March 2018 inviting Parties to submit their reports in accordance with Decision 17.297, paragraph b), for consideration by the Committee at SC70.
8. At SC70, the Committee noted the reports received from China, Thailand and the United States of America, and thanked these Parties for the reports submitted. The Committee further noted the low response rate from Parties to the Notification and requested other Parties, in particular those affected by illegal trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles, to provide reports as required by Decision 17.297, paragraph b) for consideration by the Committee at its 71st meeting.⁴ The Chair of the Standing Committee will provide an oral update to the Conference of the Parties on any additional recommendations to the Parties arising during the 71st meeting of the Committee.

¹ https://cites.org/eng/news/pr/cites-task-force-agrees-on-strategies-to-combat-illegal-trade-in-tortoises-and-freshwater-turtles_28042017

² <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/69/sum/E-SC69-Sum-09-R1.pdf>

³ <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/70/exsum/E-SC70-Sum-06-R1.pdf>

⁴ <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/70/exsum/E-SC70-Sum-06-R1.pdf>

9. Regarding recommendation 6.e) under *Species identification* in Annex 3 to the present document, the Secretariat at SC70 reported to the Committee that it requested the International Union for Conservation of Nature/Species Survival Commission (IUCN/SSC) Tortoise and Freshwater Turtles Specialist Group to develop guidance on how to photograph tortoise and freshwater turtle specimens for identification. Draft guidance developed by the Specialist Group was presented in Annex 6 to document [SC70 Doc. 61](#). The Secretariat reported to the Committee that the Specialist Group invites feedback on the draft guidance from Parties and observers to be used to improve and finalize the guidance. The Committee, therefore, agreed a recommendation encouraging Parties and observers to provide feedback to the Specialist Group, and for such feedback to be considered in the finalization of the guidance.

Techniques to survey and monitor wild populations of tortoises and freshwater turtles, and differentiation of specimens originating from the wild from those from captive or ranching production systems: Decision 17.291, paragraph a), 17.292 and 17.293

10. Concerning part i) of Decision 17.291, paragraph a), the Secretariat outlined the extensive work that had already been undertaken on guidance for the making of non-detriment findings for trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles (see document [AC29 Doc. 32](#)) at the 29th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC29, Geneva, July 2017). IUCN's study on "*Non-Detriment Findings and Trade Management for Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles - a guide for CITES Scientific and Management Authorities*" contained in Annex 2 of document [AC28 Doc. 15](#), had been welcomed by the Animals Committee at its 28th meeting (AC28, Tel Aviv, August 2015). The Secretariat, therefore, sought clarification on what, if any, further guidance was required for the implementation of Decision 17.291, paragraph a) i). The Animals Committee agreed that the existing non-detriment findings (NDF) guidance was adequate, but expressed a desire for additional guidance in two areas (1) techniques to survey and monitor wild populations of tortoises and freshwater turtles to assess the impacts of offtake and implement adaptive management techniques and (2) guidance on the age and size restrictions of specimens to be traded, as trading in younger aged specimens is considered to have a lesser effect on the overall conservation status of the species.
11. To implement the Animals Committee's request, the Secretariat examined the sections dealing with offtake effects on wild populations, and population survey methodology in the existing NDF guidance for tortoises and freshwater turtles to see how they might be expanded to incorporate additional features. Furthermore, the Secretariat carried out a literature review and reached out to experts and organizations working on tortoises and freshwater turtles. It asked for inputs on suitable survey methodologies, advice on restrictions in size and age of specimens collected for export, views on whether generic guidance on size and age restriction was possible or if species-specific guidance was required, and any other relevant information. The results of this review and consultation were presented at the 30th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC30, Geneva, July 2018) in document [AC30 Doc. 28](#). The document provided additional guidance on techniques to survey and monitor wild populations of tortoises and freshwater turtles; some suggestions on how to estimate the size and density of a population; useful references and conditions that could be used to assess the risk of over-exploitation; and criteria to indicate possible changes in abundance, in the absence of quantitative data on populations. The Secretariat highlighted that the development of generic guidance on size and age restrictions for tortoises and freshwater turtles is extremely difficult, if not impossible, and that if applied, size- and/or age-restrictions should be species-specific.
12. Concerning part ii) of Decision 17.291, paragraph a), the Secretariat contracted Species360 to develop guidance concerning the differentiation of specimens of tortoises and freshwater turtles (*Testudines* spp.) originating from the wild, from those from captive and ranching production systems. The guidance consists of 1) an inspection key; 2) criteria to determine wild-caught versus captive-produced origin; 3) an illustrated guide; and 4) advanced methods to determine wild-caught versus captive-produced origin. The guidance is also associated with a database of demographic traits for CITES-listed species of tortoises and freshwater turtles that can be accessed at <https://www.species360.org/serving-conservation/turtles-tortoises-cites>. The Animals Committee has reviewed and approved the guidance, and recommends Parties to make use of it. The guidance is available on the CITES website.⁵

Guide on categories of turtle parts and derivatives in trade: Decision 17.291, paragraph b), 17.292, and 17.293

13. Due to funding constraints, the Secretariat was not able to implement Decision 17.291, paragraph b), which called for the development of a guide on categories of turtle parts and derivatives in trade. The Secretariat

⁵ https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/prog/captive_breeding/SSFA_Species360_Insp_Manual_Final_red.pdf

recommends that Decisions 17.291, paragraph b), and 17.293 be deleted and replaced by draft decisions 18.CC and 18.FF as presented in Annex 1 to the present document.

Rapid-response identification network: Decision 17.291, paragraph c), and 17.292

14. Notification to the Parties [No. 2018/085](#) of 2 November 2018, informed all Parties that, in accordance with Decision 17.291, paragraph c), a tortoise and freshwater turtle rapid-response identification network has been established under the auspices of the IUCN/SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group. The purpose of the network is to, at short notice, assist authorities responsible for wildlife law enforcement with the identification of tortoise or freshwater turtle specimens seized or confiscated, using photographs of the seized or confiscated specimens.
15. The services of experts included in the rapid-response identification network are provided on a confidential basis and free of charge, and are accessible to authorities responsible for wildlife law enforcement only. Detailed information about the network and its services is available to the Closed User Group for the CITES Tortoise and Freshwater Turtles Task Force, established on the World Customs Organization (WCO) CENComm platform, and is reported upon in more detail in paragraph 21 below.
16. Parties are reminded that requests for access to the CITES Tortoise and Freshwater Turtles Closed User Group should be communicated to the Secretariat. They are encouraged, if they have not already done so, to communicate the establishment of the Closed User Group to their relevant national authorities and promote its use.

Illegal collection and trade in the Ploughshare tortoise (*Astrochelys yniphora*): Decision 17.294

17. The Secretariat received information from different sources since CoP17, suggesting that illegal trade in tortoises from Madagascar continues to take place at a significant scale. This is exemplified by the April 2018 seizure of nearly 10,000 live radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*) during a single incident in Madagascar,⁶ followed by a second seizure in October 2018 of over 7,000 live specimens of the same species, also in Madagascar.⁷
18. The Secretariat reported to the Standing Committee at SC69 and SC70 that it was in discussions with Madagascar and INTERPOL to deploy a Wildlife Incident Support Team (WIST) to Madagascar, in support of the implementation of Decision 17.294. Arrangements were put in place to deploy the WIST in April 2018 but, at the request of Madagascar's INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB), the entry point for all INTERPOL activities in Madagascar, the deployment was delayed. Arrangements were subsequently made to deploy the WIST in December 2018, but the arrangements were again cancelled by the NCB.
19. Feedback received from INTERPOL suggests that Madagascar is at present not receptive to external support on this matter. Although the seizures mentioned in paragraph 17 above demonstrate that authorities in Madagascar are taking action, they also give reason for concern. The Secretariat believes that it would be beneficial for Madagascar if there were a better understanding of the measures and activities being implemented to address this illegal trade, and their effectiveness. The Secretariat, therefore, prepared draft decisions 18.AA and 18.BB as presented in Annex 1 to the present document, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties.

Additional meetings of the Task Force: Decision 17.295, paragraph b)

20. The Secretariat notes that, pursuant to Decision 17.295, paragraph b), it reported to the Standing Committee at SC69 that an INTERPOL-led Regional Investigative and Analytical and Case (RIACM)⁸ meeting would provide an appropriate and operational platform to build upon the outcomes of the CITES Tortoise and Freshwater Turtles Task Force, by initiating targeted investigations and enforcement action. The Secretariat is grateful to the United States of America for their generous financial support for convening such a meeting.

⁶ <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2018/04/wildlife-watch-radiated-tortoises-poached-madagascar/>
<http://www.turtlesurvival.org/blog/1-blog/536-monumental-radiated-tortoise-seizure#.WtXWio9OLcu>

⁷ http://www.turtlesurvival.org/component/content/article/573/573?mc_cid=d2daebf293&mc_eid=99daca159c#.W9WxThNKgn0

⁸ A RIACM is a meeting convened by INTERPOL to support investigations and operational analytical work, in particular to follow-up on transnational investigations linking organized criminal networks through information exchange and the development of operational plans to target these networks.

In this regard, the Secretariat prepared a draft decision for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties, presented as draft decision 18.DD, in Annex 1 to the present document.

Secure electronic communications platform: Decisions 17.295, paragraph c)

21. At SC69, the Secretariat reported that, in collaboration with the WCO, it established a Closed User Group for the CITES Tortoise and Freshwater Turtles Task Force on the WCO CENComm platform. The Closed User Group includes members of the Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles Task Force (or their representatives) who requested access, including law enforcement agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations. All members of the Closed User Group are able to send messages and information to any other members of the Closed User Group. Closed User Group members also have access to a digital library of documents, which includes alerts and other relevant materials and information. The digital library also contains restricted-access folders, to which only members of the User Group representing customs, police and wildlife and forest authorities have access.
22. In document [SC70 Doc. 30.1](#), the Secretariat notes that the different closed user groups established at the request of Parties have not attracted significant use, and they seem to become dormant shortly after being established. This also seems to be the case for the Closed User Group for the CITES Tortoise and Freshwater Turtles Task Force. Parties affected by illegal trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles are encouraged to communicate the establishment of the Closed User Group to their relevant national authorities, and to promote its use. Requests for access to the Closed User Group should be communicated to the Secretariat.

Recommendations

23. The Standing Committee invites the Conference of the Parties to adopt the draft revised version of Resolution Conf. 11.9 (Rev. CoP13) on *Conservation of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles* in Annex 2 to the present document.
24. The Secretariat invites the Conference of the Parties to:
 - a) adopt the draft decisions in Annex 1 to the present document; and
 - b) agree to the deletion of Decisions 17.291 to 17.298 as they have been implemented and, where appropriate, incorporated in the proposed draft decisions.

Draft decisions on Tortoises and freshwater turtles (Testudines spp.)

Directed to Madagascar

18.AA Madagascar should:

- a) review its implementation of Resolution Conf. 11.9 (Rev. CoP18) on *Conservation of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles*; and
- b) report to the 73rd meeting of the Standing Committee on its implementation of Resolution Conf. 11.9 (Rev. CoP18), including in its report, information on any seizures, arrests, prosecutions and convictions secured as a result of activities implemented to address illegal trade in tortoises from Madagascar.

Directed to the Standing Committee

18.BB The Standing Committee shall review the report from Madagascar in accordance with Decision 18.AA, and any recommendations from the Secretariat, and consider if any further measures need to be implemented by Madagascar to address illegal trade in tortoises as it affects the Party.

Directed to the Secretariat

18.CC The Secretariat shall, subject to available funding, contract consultants to develop, in collaboration with relevant Parties, experts and the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC), a guide on categories of turtle parts and derivatives in trade, for national agencies responsible for wildlife law enforcement, to raise their awareness of the trade in these types of specimens, to enable initial recognition of such specimens, and to provide guidance on further identification resources and expertise that can be consulted.

18.DD The Secretariat shall, to build upon the outcomes of the CITES Tortoise and Freshwater Turtles Task Force and support the initiation of targeted investigations and enforcement action, work with INTERPOL to put in place arrangements for the convening of an INTERPOL Regional Investigative and Analytical Case Management (RIACM) meeting.

18.EE The Secretariat shall report at the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the implementation of Decisions 18.CC and 18.DD.

Directed to Animals Committee

18.FF The Animals Committee shall review the guide on categories of turtle parts and derivatives in trade, developed in accordance with Decision 18.CC and make recommendations for consideration by the Secretariat.

Conf. 11.9 (Rev. CoP13~~13~~18)* Conservation of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles

AWARE that the global international trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles involves millions of specimens each year;

RECOGNIZING that ~~nearly all Asian~~ many tortoise and freshwater turtle species are found in trade, and that a number of species are already included in Appendix I or II;

OBSERVING that the collection of tortoises and freshwater turtles is carried out through an extensive informal network of trappers, hunters and middlemen, and that collection efforts and trade volumes are considerable, ~~especially in Asia~~;

CONSIDERING that, in addition, wild populations of tortoises and freshwater turtles are generally vulnerable to overexploitation, because of biological characteristics such as late maturity, limited annual reproductive output, and high juvenile mortality, as well as habitat degradation and loss;

NOTING that there are two significant types of trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles: a high-volume trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles and parts thereof for consumption both as food and in traditional medicine; and a species-focused trade for pets;

AWARE that certain species of tortoises and freshwater turtles are bred in high numbers in and outside range States, *inter alia* to supply the demand for food and medicines, and that the conservation risks and benefits of large-scale commercial breeding of tortoises and freshwater turtles are not well known;

NOTING that the shipment of live tortoises and freshwater turtles is often not conducted in accordance with the provisions of Articles III, IV and V of the Convention, and in particular that transport of live tortoises and freshwater turtles by air is often not conducted in accordance with IATA regulations;

ACKNOWLEDGING that unregulated or unsustainable trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles poses a significant threat to wild populations, and that international cooperation is needed to address these threats urgently;

RECALLING the recommendations developed by participants of the CITES Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles Task Force meeting in Singapore, in 2017, as adopted by the Standing Committee and made available through Notification to Parties No. 2018/030 of 26 March 2018;

~~RECALLING that a technical workshop on Conservation of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles, held in Kunming, China, 25-28 March 2002, provided recommendations concerning conservation management, CITES implementation, enforcement and trade controls, and capacity building needs, as well as suggestions for amending Resolution Conf. 11.9, adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 11th meeting (Gigiri, 2000), which were reported by the Secretariat to the Animals Committee;~~

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

1. URGES:

a) all Parties to:

- i) collaborate on all aspects of conservation and management of, trade in, and implementation of the Convention for, tortoises and freshwater turtles;
- ii) assess current efforts to manage native tortoise and freshwater turtle populations, and to improve those efforts as necessary, for example by establishing quotas that take into consideration the particular biology of tortoises and freshwater turtles; and

* Amended at the 12th and 13th meetings of the Conference of the Parties, and corrected by the Secretariat following the 15th meeting.

- iii) develop and implement research programmes to identify the species involved in trade, to monitor and assess the impact of trade on wild populations, and to evaluate the conservation risks and benefits of large-scale commercial breeding of tortoises and freshwater turtles;
 - b) range States of tortoises and freshwater turtles to consider developing management strategies concerning CITES-listed tortoises and freshwater turtles, including regional action plans for the conservation of tortoises and freshwater turtles, in collaboration with the Secretariat, industry representatives, interested governmental and non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders as appropriate;
 - c) all Parties:
 - i) whose national legislation is not sufficient to control effectively the unsustainable harvest of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles, to enact legislation to protect and manage these species appropriately;
 - ii) all Parties, especially range States and exporting and importing States of Asian tortoises and freshwater turtles, to enhance and increase enforcement and prosecution efforts with regard to existing legislation as a matter of urgency; and
 - iii) all Parties, especially range States and exporting and importing States of Asian tortoise and freshwater turtles, to enhance cooperation concerning control of trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles, amongst wildlife-law enforcement agencies at national and international levels, concerning control of trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles, and between enforcement agencies and national CITES authorities, including by, when possible making use of INTERPOL's National Environmental Security Seminars (NESS) to promote inter-agency coordination and, as appropriate, cooperating through regional wildlife enforcement networks to facilitate collaborative action at international level;
 - ~~c) all Parties, especially range States of Asian tortoises and freshwater turtles, to assess current efforts to manage native tortoise and freshwater turtle populations, and to improve those efforts as necessary, e.g. by establishing quotas that take into consideration the particular biology of tortoises and freshwater turtles;~~
 - ~~d) all Parties to develop and implement research programmes to identify the species involved in trade, to monitor and assess the impact of trade on wild populations, and to evaluate the conservation risks and benefits of large-scale commercial breeding of tortoises and freshwater turtles;~~
 - ~~e) all Parties whose national legislation is not sufficient to control effectively the unsustainable harvest of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles to enact legislation to protect and manage these species appropriately;~~
 - d) all Parties affected by illegal trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles to:
 - i) undertake risk profiling, and to provide capacity-building interventions and detection equipment to enforcement officers at ports, to enable better targeting of known modes of transport used for trafficking in tortoises and freshwater turtles;
 - ii) scale up efforts to prevent, detect and address the illegal shipment of tortoises and freshwater turtles specimens through postal and courier services;
 - iii) where necessary facilitate the compilation, dissemination and translation into local languages, of information on tortoises and freshwater turtles, for use by enforcement officers, drawing on existing identification and enforcement guides, and focusing on identification, local names, distribution and illustrations;
 - iv) where necessary, develop supplementary identification guidance, tailored to the specific needs of the Party concerned, containing basic information on the characteristics used for tortoise and freshwater turtle identification, to support the accurate application of existing identification material; and
 - v) scale up efforts to address key locations in domestic markets associated with illegal international trade in these specimens;
 - e) all Parties to:

- ~~i) empower the general public by raising awareness about existing tools available to report illegal trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles and other wildlife crimes, for example mobile phone applications, hotline numbers, toll-free phone numbers, social media, and others;~~
 - ~~ii) encourage the general public to act as the eyes and ears of law enforcement through awareness raising initiatives and materials targeting for example public transport, roadside stops and restaurants, airports and other transport hubs, with a particular focus on illegal trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles;~~
 - ~~iiif) all Parties, especially in the Asian region, to increase public awareness of the threats posed to tortoises and freshwater turtles from unsustainable harvest and unregulated illegal trade, including by engaging online communities such as auction platforms and closed discussion groups, and as appropriate creating and implementing awareness tools that can engage target audiences and cultures, in particular young adults, through social and other digital media; and~~
 - ~~iv) to encourage non-governmental organizations to develop, produce and distribute posters and other educational and informative materials on this subject, and to facilitate, where necessary, the compilation, dissemination and translation into local languages of information on tortoises and freshwater turtles for their use by enforcement officers, drawing on existing identification and enforcement guides, and focusing on identification, local names, distribution and illustrations;~~
 - fg) all Parties and organizations to explore ways to enhance the participation of collectors, traders, exporters, importers and consumers in the conservation of and sustainable trade in tortoises and freshwater turtle species;
 - ~~h) all Parties, especially in the Asian region, to collaborate on all aspects of conservation and management of, trade in, and implementation of the Convention for, tortoises and freshwater turtles, taking into consideration the recommendations formulated at the technical workshop on Conservation of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles held in Kunming, China, 25-28 March 2002;~~
 - gi) all Parties, particularly those in the Asian region, to develop plans of action, in compliance with Resolution Conf. 17.8¹, that can be executed without delay in the event that live specimens of tortoises and freshwater turtles are confiscated;
 - ~~j) range States of tortoises and freshwater turtles to develop management strategies concerning CITES-listed tortoises and freshwater turtles, including regional action plans for the conservation of Asian tortoises and freshwater turtles, in collaboration with the Secretariat, industry representatives, interested governmental and non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders as appropriate;~~
 - hk) all Parties to ensure that all shipments of live tortoises and freshwater turtles are transported in compliance with relevant IATA guidelines; and
 - il) all Parties to facilitate the development of partnerships between interested non-governmental organizations or other bodies to develop and operate rescue centres for seized or confiscated tortoises and freshwater turtles, in cooperation with range States and relevant government agencies;
 - ~~m) range States of tortoises and freshwater turtles that authorize trade in these species to include in their periodic reporting under Article VIII, paragraph 7 (b), information on progress in implementing this Resolution; and~~
2. DIRECTS the Secretariat to provide assistance with securing financial resources from Parties, United Nations specialized agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, trade associations, industry and others as appropriate, for range States in need of and requesting financial support to develop and implement management and enforcement strategies and action plans concerning CITES-listed tortoises and freshwater turtles in accordance with this Resolution; and
 3. ENCOURAGES donors to increase funding initiatives to combat illegal trafficking in tortoises and freshwater turtles.

¹ Corrected by the Secretariat following the 15th and 17th meetings of the Conference of the Parties: originally referred to Resolution Conf. 10.7, replaced by Resolution Conf. 17.8.

Recommendations of the CITES Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles Task Force as adopted by the Standing Committee at its 69th meeting (SC69, Geneva, November 2017)

1. All Parties affected by illegal trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles should:

Targeting illegal trade

- a) Undertake risk profiling and provide capacity-building interventions and detection equipment to enforcement officers at ports to enable them to better target known modes of transport used for trafficking in tortoises and freshwater turtles;
- b) Scale up activities to address illegal trade in tortoise and freshwater turtle specimens being shipped through postal and courier services, and to address illegal trade at identified key locations in domestic markets;

Information and intelligence sharing

- c) Where possible, use platforms such as INTERPOL's Regional Investigative and Analytical Case Management (RIACM) meetings, and the Wildlife Inter-Regional Enforcement (WIRE) meetings of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for information sharing regarding trafficking in tortoises and freshwater turtles;
- d) Encourage national agencies responsible for wildlife law enforcement to engage with their INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB) to request that access to the INTERPOL I-24/7 global communications system and databases be extended to them;

Species identification

- e) Implement a three-step identification process for tortoises and freshwater turtles as follows:
 - i. Enforcement officers (including customs officers) use available identification materials to identify the most frequently traded tortoise and freshwater turtle species and their parts and products;
 - ii. Where doubt remains about identification after using available identification materials, enforcement officers should share photographs of traded animals with national identification experts, for specific identification or confirmation. National authorities are encouraged to designate a national facilitator for this purpose; and
 - iii. Where doubt continues to remain after consulting national identification experts, enforcement officers should share photographs and other information, through their national designated facilitator, with global identification experts, and draw upon forensic analysis, in particular molecular analysis, as may be needed; and
- f) Develop supplementary identification guidance containing basic information on the characteristics used for tortoise and freshwater turtle identification to support the accurate application of existing identification materials. This guidance should be tailored to the specific needs of each country.

2. All Parties should:

Illegal trade on the internet

- a) Engage online communities, e.g. auction platforms and closed discussion groups, to create awareness about all aspects of illegal trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles;

Cooperation

- b) When possible make use of INTERPOL's National Environmental Security Seminars (NESS)¹ to promote inter-agency coordination, pursuant to strengthening the implementation of paragraph 1 b) in Resolution Conf. 11.9 (Rev. CoP13) on *Conservation of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles*; and
- c) As appropriate, cooperate through regional wildlife enforcement networks for the better involvement of their member countries, pursuant to strengthening the implementation of paragraph 1 b) in Resolution Conf. 11.9 (Rev. CoP13) on *Conservation of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles*.

3. All Parties and organizations should:

Public awareness and empowerment

- a) As appropriate, create and implement awareness tools that can engage target audiences and cultures, in particular young adults, through social and other digital media, pursuant to strengthening the implementation of paragraph 1 f) and g) in Resolution Conf. 11.9 (Rev. CoP13) on *Conservation of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles*;
- b) As appropriate, highlight the plight of tortoises and freshwater turtles in their campaigns to address wildlife trafficking;
- c) Empower the general public by raising awareness about existing tools available to report illegal trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles and other wildlife crimes, e.g. mobile phone applications, hotline numbers, toll-free phone numbers, social media, etc.; and
- d) Encourage the general public to act as the eyes and ears of law enforcement through awareness raising initiatives and materials targeting for example public transport, roadside stops and restaurants, airports and other transport hubs, with a particular focus on illegal trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles.

4. The Standing Committee is invited to:

Targeting illegal trade

- a) Discuss the fact that in some countries non-native species of tortoises and freshwater turtles are not being covered in national legislation;

Illegal trade on the internet

- b) In its deliberations, consider the best way to fight the use of social media platforms as a form of e-commerce for illegal trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles;

Funding opportunities

- c) Encourage donors to increase funding initiatives to combat illegal trafficking in tortoises and freshwater turtles;

Resolutions

- d) Propose to the Conference of the Parties revisions to Resolution Conf. 11.9 (Rev.CoP13) on *Conservation of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles*, as follows²:
 - i. Removal of the word "Asian" in the Resolution unless specifically relevant for certain issues;

¹ <https://www.interpol.int/en/Media/Files/Crime-areas/Environmental-crime/Leaflets-brochures/National-Environmental-Security-Seminar-NESS/>.

² NB: Text proposed to be deleted is crossed out. Proposed new text is underlined.

- ii. (Para 1a) “all Parties, especially range States and exporting and importing States of Asian tortoises and freshwater turtles, to enhance and increase enforcement and prosecution efforts with regard to existing legislation as a matter of urgency”;
- iii. (Para 1b) “all Parties, ~~especially range States and exporting and importing States of Asian tortoise and freshwater turtles,~~ to enhance cooperation amongst wildlife-law enforcement agencies at national and international levels concerning control of trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles, and between enforcement agencies and national CITES authorities”;
- iv. (Para 1h) “all Parties, especially in the Asian region, to collaborate on all aspects of conservation and management of, trade in, and implementation of the Convention for, tortoises and freshwater turtles, ~~taking into consideration the recommendations formulated at the technical workshop on Conservation of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles held in Kunming, China, 25-28 March 2002~~”; and
- v. (Para 2): “DIRECTS the Secretariat to provide assistance with securing financial resources from Parties, United Nations specialized agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, trade associations, industry and others as appropriate, for range States in need of and requesting financial support to develop and implement management and enforcement strategies and action plans concerning CITES-listed tortoises and freshwater turtles in accordance with this Resolution”.

5. Members of the CITES Tortoise and Freshwater Turtles Task Force should:

Information and intelligence sharing

- a) Work towards the development of an enforcement alert on tortoises and freshwater turtles, including information on species trafficked, *modus operandi*, trafficking routes, concealment methods, and nationalities of offenders involved, to be updated on a rotational basis in accordance with a timeframe identified by Task Force members; and
- b) Each aim to, where possible, issue at least one INTERPOL Red Notice on known high priority offenders involved in illegal trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles, and consider the use of other INTERPOL Notices as appropriate.³

6. The CITES Secretariat should:

Targeting illegal trade

- a) Request the World Customs Organization (WCO) to develop a set of risk profiles and indicators focusing on illegal trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles;
- b) Request UNODC to use enforcement alerts on tortoises and freshwater turtles, and any risk indicators for these species developed by WCO, in its capacity-building activities on container profiling;

Information and intelligence sharing

- c) Encourage Parties to consult the CITES permit samples as available on the CITES Management Authorities Forum and in WCO’s ENVIRONET,⁴ if needed;

Seizures and disposal

- d) Post a list of tortoise and freshwater turtle rescue facilities on the CITES website;

³ <https://www.interpol.int/INTERPOL-expertise/Notices>

⁴ <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/notif/E-Notif-2015-039.pdf>

Species identification

- e) Request the IUCN/SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtles Specialist Group to develop guidance on how to photograph tortoise and freshwater turtle specimens for identification.

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 Secretariat proposes the following tentative budget and source of funding.

Implementation of the draft decisions presented in Annex 1 would have budgetary and workload implications for the Secretariat, as well as workload implications for the Animals Committee, as follows.

Decision 18.CC

Implementation of draft decision 18.CC would be subject to the provision of external funds of roughly USD 20,000 – 40,000 and would not require core funds. Supervision of the work and engagement with consultants, relevant Parties, experts and ICCWC partners would require some time from the Secretariat, but should be included as a core part of the Secretariat's work and accommodated within its regular work programme.

Decision 18.DD

External funds for the implementation of draft decision 18.DD has been secured and no further external funding is needed. Engaging INTERPOL to put in place arrangements for the meeting would require some time from the Secretariat, but should be included as a core part of the Secretariat's work and accommodated within its regular work programme.

Decision 18.FF

The tasks allocated to the Animals Committee in draft decision 18.FF 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.