

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

BLACK SEA BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN  
(*TURSIOPS TRUNCATUS PONTICUS*)

1. This document has been submitted by the Animals Committee.\*
2. At its 17th meeting (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 17.299 to 17.301 on *Black Sea bottlenose dolphin* (*Tursiops truncatus ponticus*) as follows:

***Directed to range States for the Black Sea bottlenose dolphin (Tursiops truncatus ponticus)***

17.299 *Parties are encouraged to:*

- a) *use genetic analysis to confirm the subspecies of the specimen of Tursiops truncatus and its origin prior to the issuance of an export permit;*
- b) *establish, on a national or regional basis, repositories where relevant genetic identification data are stored and to make these accessible on-line; and*
- c) *report to the Animals Committee on exports of Tursiops truncatus ponticus and their origins.*

***Directed to the Animals Committee***

17.300 *The Animals Committee shall consider at its 30th meeting the information submitted by the Parties pursuant to Decision 17.299 to evaluate the effectiveness of the zero annual export quota for Tursiops truncatus ponticus from the wild for primarily commercial purposes, and if necessary make recommendations to the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

***Directed to the Secretariat***

17.301 *The Secretariat shall, subject to available resources, cooperate with the Secretariats of the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), the Bern Convention, and the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (Bucharest Convention), in order to coordinate efforts and to avoid duplication regarding conservation of, and trade in Tursiops truncatus ponticus.*

---

\* *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.*

### Implementation of Decision 17.299

3. In support of the implementation of Decision 17.299, the Secretariat sent letters in March 2018 to the range States of *Tursiops truncatus ponticus* (Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine), inviting them to submit any relevant information pertinent to elements a), b) and c) of Decision 17.299 for presentation to the Animals Committee. By May 2018, the Secretariat had received responses by Bulgaria, Georgia and Turkey, which are attached in the Annex of document AC30 Doc. 23. After the deadline, additional responses were received by Ukraine ([AC30 Inf.8](#)) and the Russian Federation ([AC30 Inf.30](#)).
4. All five range States reported that they had not issued export permits for *Tursiops truncatus ponticus* since CoP17. In the case of Georgia and Turkey, this was stated to be also due to a general prohibition of take of specimens of this species from the wild. The Russian Federation reported that take is only allowed in exceptional circumstances for scientific research.
5. With regards to genetic analyses:
  - a) Bulgaria reported that it had not carried out any genetic analyses of the species/sub-species, but that the ACCOBAMS Secretariat may be able to provide information on the availability of a regional, online accessible repository of relevant genetic identification data.
  - b) Ukraine shared with the Secretariat a genetic study of two specimens of *Tursiops truncatus ponticus*, which is part of information document [AC30 Inf.8](#) and may be an example pertinent to Decision 17.299, paragraph b).
  - c) The Russian Federation reported that the Academy of Sciences of the Russian Federation acts as a national repository for genetic identification data. The data are partly analysed within 'barcoding' programmes, and have to be accessible online.

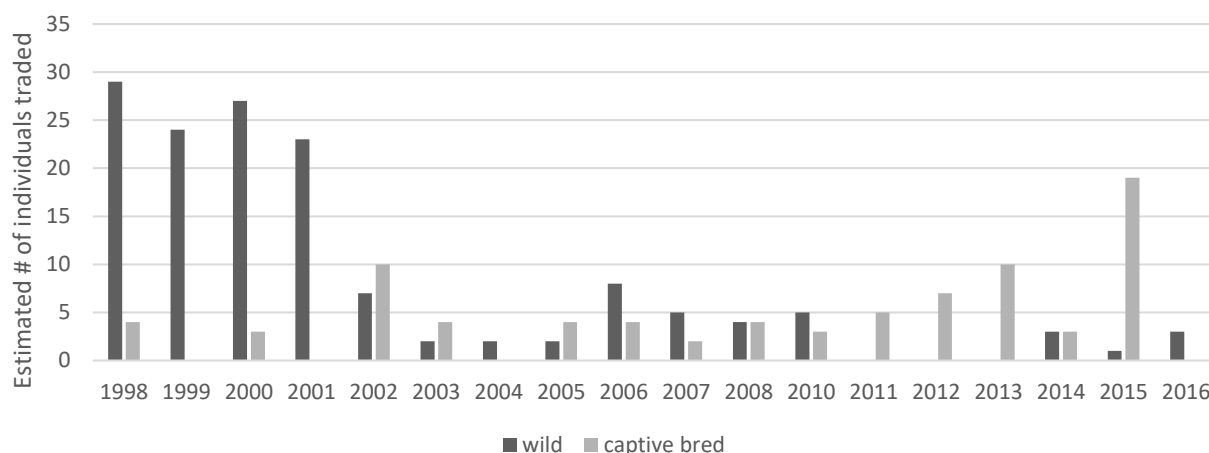
### Implementation of Decision 17.300

6. The Secretariat reported on Black Sea bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus ponticus*) to the Animals Committee at its 29th and 30th meetings in documents [AC29 Doc. 27](#) and [AC30 Doc. 23](#). In addition to the responses by range States outlined above, the Secretariat also included an analysis of recent trade data from the CITES trade database.
7. In comparison to information presented in document [CoP17 Doc. 41](#), which had formed the basis for Decisions 17.299 to 17.302, the Secretariat noted that very low levels of trade in live specimens of *Tursiops truncatus* from Black Sea range States had been reported during the last decade, with a decreasing trend for specimens traded with source code "W" over time, and some increase of specimens traded with source code "C" or "F", starting in 2012 (see figure 1 below)<sup>1</sup>. The very few trade transactions of specimens with source code "W" are mostly for the purposes of zoos (purpose code: "Q") or travelling circuses and exhibitions (purpose code: "Z").

---

<sup>1</sup> For a full explanation of the purpose and source codes used in the CITES trade database, please refer to the "[Guide to using the CITES trade database](#)" available under [trade.cites.org](http://trade.cites.org)

**Global CITES trade transactions of live *Tursiops truncatus*  
from Black Sea range States  
1998-2016**



8. In its report, the Secretariat also noted trade records for 2014, showing the commercial export of three live specimens of *Tursiops truncatus* from the wild from Ukraine to Thailand, for which it was not clear if the specimens concerned were of the sub-species *Tursiops truncatus ponticus*. In its oral report to AC30, the Secretariat then provided an update that Ukraine had confirmed that the specimens were not of the subspecies *ponticus*, but despite being reported as “export” they were re-exports of specimens of *Tursiops truncatus* originating from Japan.
9. The Committee noted document AC30 Doc. 23 and agreed to submit the draft decision contained in Annex 1 of this document to the Conference of the Parties at its 18th meeting (CoP18).

#### Implementation of Decision 17.301

10. As reported to the Animals Committee in document [AC29 Doc. 27](#), the Secretariat informed in April 2017 the organizations specified in Decision 17.301 about the Decisions adopted at CoP17. No written responses were received, but an oral update was given by CMS on behalf of ACCOBAMS.
11. The CMS Secretariat drew attention to the fact that ACCOBAMS entered into force in 2001 and is now binding on 24 States. ACCOBAMS’ objective is to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for cetaceans. To this end, ACCOBAMS explicitly places an obligation on its Parties to, *inter alia*, “prohibit and take all necessary measures to eliminate, where it is not already done, any deliberate taking of cetaceans” (Art. II, para. 1). All activities which are intended to hunt, capture or harass cetaceans are banned from the ACCOBAMS area.
12. The item “bottlenose dolphins kept in the captivity” was included into the draft Black Sea Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Program (BSIMAP 2016-2020). The Fifth Meeting of ACCOBAMS Parties (Monaco, November 2016) adopted Resolution 5.14, entitled “Live Removals of Bottlenose Dolphins in the Black Sea (*Tursiops truncatus*)”, and encouraged Parties to implement the CITES Decisions based on the draft resolution prepared by ACCOBAMS on the identification of origin of cetaceans bred or kept in captivity. Upon request of some Black Sea Member States, the ACCOBAMS Permanent Secretariat approached relevant international experts to address the issue of a protocol or methodology to apply for genetic analysis for cetacean specimens to be followed by relevant authorities. CMS on behalf of ACCOBAMS further noted that as the genetic identification of origin was a highly technical issue that would not be resolved at AC30, there is a need to maintain the zero annual export quota for specimens from the wild, while it will continue to seek advice on the development of a genetic registry for Black Sea bottlenose dolphins, potentially to be developed by CITES, in collaboration with ACCOBAMS.

#### Recommendations

13. The Conference of the Parties is invited to adopt the draft decision contained in Annex 1 to this document, and agree that Decisions 17.299 to 17.301 can be deleted.

## COMMENTS OF THE SECRETARIAT

- A. The Secretariat notes that the bottlenose dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* is a species listed in Appendix II that is classified as 'Least concern' in the IUCN Red List, of which the sub-species *Tursiops truncatus ponticus* is classified as 'Endangered'. The Secretariat further notes that the data presented in paragraph 7 above suggest that an already low volume of international trade in *Tursiops truncatus ponticus* has continued to decline since 1998. The current main threats to *Tursiops truncatus ponticus* are thought to be incidental mortality in fishing gear, decreases in food sources and land-based pollution, which fall outside the mandate of CITES (see also Comments of the Secretariat in document [CoP17 Doc. 41](#)).
- B. The Secretariat nevertheless concurs with the Animals Committee that CITES can continue to contribute to the conservation efforts for *Tursiops truncatus ponticus* by cooperating with biodiversity-related Conventions such as CMS and the ACCOBAMS Agreement established under its auspices, whose mandates are better suited to tackle the main threats facing this sub-species.
- C. The Secretariat recommends that the draft decision proposed by the Animals Committee be adopted.
- D. The Secretariat's assessment of the budget implications for adopting the draft decision are shown in Annex 2.

**Draft decision on Black Sea bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus ponticus*)**

**18.xx Directed to the Secretariat**

The Secretariat shall continue its collaboration with the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area (ACCOBAMS) for effective conservation of CITES-listed species of cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea, in the context of, and in accordance with, Resolution Conf. 13.3 on *Cooperation and Synergy with the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)*.

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.

The proposed decision will have no direct financial cost, but will have workload implications for the Secretariat.