

CONVENTION SUR LE COMMERCE INTERNATIONAL DES ESPECES
DE FAUNE ET DE FLORE SAUVAGES MENACEES D'EXTINCTION



Soixante-dixième session du Comité permanent
Rosa Khutor, Sotchi (Fédération de Russie), 1 – 5 octobre 2018

Questions spécifiques aux espèces

TORTUES TERRESTRES ET TORTUES D'EAU DOUCE (TESTUDINES spp.):
RAPPORT DU SECRÉTARIAT

1. Le présent document a été préparé par le Secrétariat.
2. À sa 17^e session (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016), la Conférence des Parties a adopté *inter alia* les décisions 17.294 à 17.296 et 17.298, *Tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce (Testudines spp.)*, comme suit:

À l'adresse du Secrétariat

17.294 *Le Secrétariat engage le Gouvernement de Madagascar et les autres acteurs intéressés à fournir de toute urgence une assistance pour combattre le prélèvement et le commerce illégaux de la tortue à éperon (Astrochelysyniphora) ou Angonoka.*

17.295 *Le Secrétariat:*

- a) *avec un financement déjà garanti, établit et réunit une équipe spéciale CITES sur les tortues terrestres et les tortues d'eau douce (équipe spéciale) qui œuvrera comme décrit dans la décision 17.296. Les membres de l'équipe spéciale pourraient comprendre l'Association des nations de l'Asie du Sud-Est (ASEAN) de lutte contre la fraude concernant les espèces sauvages, les membres de l'ICCWC, Madagascar et les Parties d'Asie les plus touchées par le commerce illégal de tortues terrestres et de tortues d'eau douce, ainsi que de leurs parties et produits, et d'autres personnes qui, selon le Secrétariat, pourraient contribuer aux travaux de l'équipe spéciale;*
- b) *cherche un financement pour soutenir les travaux et organiser d'autres réunions de l'équipe spéciale d'ici à la 18^e session de la Conférence des Parties;*
- c) *fait en sorte de créer une plate-forme de communication électronique sécurisée pour l'équipe spéciale [par exemple l'application Environet du CENComm de l'Organisation mondiale des douanes (OMD)];*
- d) *transmet les avis et recommandations de l'équipe spéciale, conformément à la décision 17.296 c), pour examen à la 69^e session du Comité permanent, et fait toute recommandation qu'il juge appropriée;*
- e) *transmet au Comité permanent, pour examen à sa 70^e session, un rapport d'activités sur la mise en œuvre par les Parties des recommandations du Comité, conformément à la décision 17.298 c).*

À l'adresse de l'équipe spéciale sur les tortues terrestres et les tortues d'eau douce

17.296 L'équipe spéciale:

- a) *si elle le juge approprié, échange des renseignements et autres informations sur le commerce illégal des tortues terrestres et des tortues d'eau douce;*
- b) *discute des problèmes de lutte contre la fraude et de mise en œuvre liés au commerce illégal des tortues terrestres et des tortues d'eau douce, comme indiqué dans les annexes 1-4 du document CoP17 Doc. 73, et de tout autre sujet jugé pertinent;*
- c) *fait part de ses avis et de ses recommandations, par l'intermédiaire du Secrétariat, à la 69^e session du Comité permanent afin de renforcer la mise en application et le respect de la Convention par les Parties pour ces espèces.*

À l'adresse du Comité permanent

17.298 Le Comité permanent:

- a) *à sa 69^e session, examine les avis et les recommandations du Secrétariat et de l'équipe spéciale, conformément aux décisions 17.295 d) et 17.296 c), et recommande aux Parties les mesures qu'il juge appropriées pour renforcer la mise en application et le respect de la Convention pour ces espèces;*
- b) *à ses 70^e et 71^e sessions, évalue les rapports des Parties conformément à la décision 17.297 b), et détermine si des recommandations ou des mesures supplémentaires sont nécessaires, notamment des mesures appropriées relatives au respect de la Convention, conformément à la résolution Conf. 14.3, Procédures CITES pour le respect de la Convention; et*
- c) *fait rapport sur les mesures prises et les progrès réalisés par le Comité, l'équipe spéciale et les Parties à la 18^e session de la Conférence des Parties.*

Application de la décision 17.294

3. Le Secrétariat a reçu depuis la 69^e session du Comité permanent (SC69, Genève, novembre 2017) des informations émanant de sources diverses qui laissent penser que le commerce illégal des tortues terrestres de Madagascar se poursuit à grande échelle. La saisie de près de 10 000 tortues étoilées (*Astrochelys radiata*) vivantes, en avril 2018, au cours d'une seule opération menée à Madagascar, en est l'illustration¹.
4. Le Secrétariat a indiqué à la SC69 qu'il était en pourparlers avec le gouvernement malgache et avec INTERPOL en vue du déploiement à Madagascar d'une équipe de soutien en cas d'incident affectant des espèces sauvages (WIST) pour faciliter l'application de la décision 17.294. Des dispositions ont été prises, mais à la demande de Madagascar, le déploiement de la WIST a dû être retardé. À ce jour, il est prévu que le déploiement de la WIST se fasse avant la fin septembre 2018. Le Secrétariat fera le point oralement sur la question à la présente session.

Application des décisions 17.295, paragraphe e), 17.297, paragraphes a) et b), 17.298, paragraphe b), et des recommandations 1. a)-f), 2. a)-c), et 3. a)-d), formulées à la réunion de l'équipe spéciale CITES sur les tortues terrestres et les tortues d'eau douce, et approuvées par le Comité permanent

5. À la SC69, le Comité permanent a approuvé les recommandations élaborées par les participants à la réunion de l'équipe spéciale CITES sur les tortues terrestres et les tortues d'eau douce, y compris les amendements proposés par le Secrétariat². Pour plus de commodité, toutes les recommandations de la réunion de l'équipe spéciale CITES approuvées à la SC69 figurent à l'annexe 1 du présent document.

¹ <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>

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

6. Pour faciliter l'application du paragraphe e) de la décision 17.295, le Secrétariat a invité les Parties dans la notification N° 2018/030 du 26 mars 2018³, à soumettre au Secrétariat leurs rapports élaborés en vertu des dispositions du paragraphe b) de la décision 17.297 sur l'application des recommandations 1. a) à f), 2. a) à c), et 3. a) à d), présentées à l'annexe 1 du présent document, afin que ces rapports puissent être examinés par le Comité permanent à la présente session, conformément aux dispositions du paragraphe b) de la décision 17.298. En réponse à la notification, le Secrétariat a reçu les rapports de la Chine, de la Thaïlande et des États-Unis d'Amérique. Vu le petit nombre de réponses, le Secrétariat souhaite remercier ces trois Parties pour leurs rapports qui figurent aux annexes 2 à 4 du présent document (dans leur langue d'origine).
7. Les trois Parties ont décrit les diverses actions et mesures mises en place pour lutter contre le commerce illégal des tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce, dont l'identification des espèces, le partage de données et de renseignements, la lutte contre le commerce illégal sur Internet, et la sensibilisation. La Chine a indiqué, entre autres, qu'elle utilise un matériel de détection ciblant spécifiquement le commerce illégal des espèces sauvages, dont le commerce illégal des tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce, et que plus d'une trentaine d'ateliers de renforcement des capacités sont organisés tous les ans en Chine à l'intention des agents de la lutte contre la fraude sur le commerce illégal des espèces sauvages en général. La Chine indique également que les principaux réseaux sociaux et les principales plateformes de commerce électronique du pays participent activement à la lutte contre le commerce illégal des espèces sauvages (voir également le document SC70 Doc. 30.3.2 sur la *Lutte contre la cybercriminalité liée aux espèces sauvages*).
8. La Thaïlande a déclaré, entre autres, qu'elle organise tous les mois des opérations de lutte contre la fraude dans des régions à haut risque du trafic de tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce, qu'elle utilise des pratiques de gestion des risques pour lutter contre le commerce illégal des espèces sauvages et une approche pluridisciplinaire impliquant différents organismes. La Partie précise qu'elle a procédé dans le pays, ces cinq dernières années, à 33 saisies et arrestations liées au trafic de tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce. La Thaïlande indique également qu'elle a publié un guide d'identification des espèces fréquemment commercialisées en Asie du Sud-Est, dont les tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce.
9. Les États-Unis d'Amérique rendent compte d'un certain nombre d'opérations réussies de lutte contre la fraude, dont l'opération « Herpsaspetz », opération internationale pluri-juridictionnelle d'une durée de deux ans, au cours de laquelle les agents ont enquêté sur le commerce illégal des tortues des bois d'Amérique du Nord qui passait par les services postaux des États-Unis. Des mandats de perquisition ont été exécutés, des saisies d'argent liquide réalisées, et une livraison surveillée réalisée en collaboration avec les autorités douanières de la Région administrative spéciale de Hong Kong (Chine). L'opération « Herpsaspetz », a abouti à plusieurs arrestations suivies de poursuites judiciaires, et à ce jour le total cumulé des peines prononcées s'élèvent à 25 ans de probation et 51 000 USD d'amendes. Les États-Unis rapportent également qu'ils ont réussi à intercepter des tortues vivantes grâce au programme des chiens détecteurs de la Fish and Wildlife Service. Le rapport met en lumière l'appui fourni aux diverses Parties par le biais du Programme des attachés de l'Office de la lutte contre la fraude du *Fish and Wildlife Service*, dont l'appui aux autorités de lutte contre la fraude de Madagascar dans le cadre de l'enquête ayant abouti à l'importante saisie de tortues étoilées mentionnée au paragraphe 3 ci-dessus.
10. Nous saluons les mesures et actions rapportées par la Chine, la Thaïlande et les États-Unis d'Amérique. Les Parties concernées par le commerce illégal des tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce sont encouragées à prendre exemple sur ces rapports pour identifier les mesures et actions qu'elles pourraient envisager de déployer au plan national pour lutter contre le commerce illégal, là où ces mesures ne sont pas déjà en place. Le Secrétariat saisit l'occasion pour rappeler aux Parties que le Comité permanent a relevé, à la SC69, le succès de l'opération « Save Kurma » initiée par l'Inde⁴, et encouragé les Parties concernées par des niveaux particulièrement élevés de commerce illégal de tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce à envisager de lancer des opérations de ce genre à l'avenir.

Application des décisions 17.295, paragraphe e), et des recommandations 4 a)-d), 5. a)-b) et 6. a)-e) formulées à la réunion de l'équipe spéciale CITES sur les tortues terrestres et les tortues d'eau douce et approuvées par le Comité permanent

11. Concernant les recommandations 4.a) et b) figurant à l'annexe 1 au présent document, le Comité pourrait souhaiter examiner ces questions au cours des délibérations à la présente session.

³ <https://www.cites.org/sites/default/files/notif/E-Notif-2018-030.pdf>

⁴https://www.cites.org/eng/news/pr/Indian_law_enforcement_operation_seizes_16000_tortoises_turtles_arrests_55_CITES_SG_Certificate_Commandation_30112017

12. Concernant la recommandation 4.c) figurant dans l'annexe 1 au présent document, le Secrétariat souhaite saisir l'occasion pour attirer l'attention sur cette recommandation et encourager les donateurs à accroître leur participation au financement des initiatives de lutte contre le trafic de tortues terrestres et de tortues d'eau douce.
13. À la SC69, le Comité permanent a prié le Secrétariat de préparer pour examen à la présente session, un projet de version révisée de la résolution Conf. 11.9 (Rev. CoP13) sur *Conservation et commerce des tortues d'eau douce et des tortues terrestres*, en y incluant les révisions proposées dans la recommandation 4.d) i. à v. qui figure à l'annexe 1 au présent document. Le Comité a par ailleurs prié le Secrétariat de prendre en compte dans cette révision les autres recommandations formulées par les participants à la réunion de l'équipe spéciale CITES sur les tortues terrestres et les tortues d'eau douce approuvées par le Comité à la SC69, ainsi que le contenu des discussions à la SC69. Le Secrétariat a préparé un projet de version révisée de la résolution Conf. 11.9 (Rev. CoP13) pour examen par le Comité, puis soumission pour examen à la 18^e session de la Conférence des Parties (CoP18, Colombo, 2019). Le projet de version révisée de la résolution Conf. 11.9 (Rev. CoP13) préparé par le Secrétariat figure à l'annexe 5 du présent document.
14. Concernant la recommandation 5.a), au paragraphe *Partage des données et renseignements*, qui figure à l'annexe 1 du présent document, le Comité a demandé aux membres de l'équipe spéciale CITES sur les tortues terrestres et les tortues d'eau douce d'élaborer un dispositif d'alerte pour les tortues terrestres et les tortues d'eau douce. Singapour a aimablement accepté de diriger les travaux sur la première alerte et à ce jour le Secrétariat œuvre avec Singapour à l'élaboration de l'alerte. Celle-ci devrait prendre la forme d'un document confidentiel à diffusion restreinte destiné uniquement aux autorités en charge de la lutte contre la criminalité liée aux espèces sauvages. Lorsque le document d'alerte sera terminé, il sera distribué aux organes gouvernementaux de lutte contre la fraude concernés, par les canaux de communication fournis par les partenaires de l'ICCWC et le groupe d'utilisateurs fermé de l'équipe spéciale CITES pour les tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce dont il est question aux paragraphes 22 à 24 du présent document.
15. Concernant la recommandation 5.b), au paragraphe *Partage des données et renseignements*, le Secrétariat a attiré l'attention aux paragraphes 30 à 32 du document CoP16 Doc. 29 (Rev. 1)⁵ sur le système des notices d'INTERPOL⁶. Ces notices sont des demandes internationales de coopération ou d'alertes permettant à la police des pays membres d'INTERPOL de partager des informations importantes en lien avec la criminalité. Le Secrétariat pense que les Parties pourraient encore accroître leur utilisation de cet excellent outil mis à disposition par INTERPOL. Il est toutefois encourageant de constater que certaines Parties utilisent de plus en plus les notices d'INTERPOL pour traiter des affaires de trafic illégal des espèces sauvages et que ces efforts ont porté leurs fruits en plusieurs occasions. Le Secrétariat a noté avec plaisir, par exemple, que l'Inde a récemment utilisé les notices d'INTERPOL pour procéder à l'arrestation d'un important trafiquant international de tortues d'eau douce qui commerçait avec la Chine, y compris la RAS de Hong Kong, l'Inde, Madagascar, la Malaisie, Singapour et la Thaïlande⁷. Le Secrétariat est d'avis que l'utilisation des notices d'INTERPOL peuvent contribuer notablement à la lutte contre le commerce illégal des spécimens de tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce, et encourage toutes les Parties concernées par ce commerce illégal à les utiliser en tant que de besoin.
16. Concernant la recommandation 6.a), au paragraphe *Cibler le commerce illégal*, qui figure à l'annexe 1 du présent document, le Secrétariat a demandé à l'Organisation mondiale des douanes (OMD) d'élaborer une série de profils et indicateurs de risque axés sur le commerce illégal des tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce. À ce jour, l'OMD met en place divers dispositifs, dont le recrutement de spécialistes de la gestion des risques liés aux questions douanières⁸ qui devront élaborer, entre autres, ces profils et indicateurs de risques. Concernant la recommandation 6.b), le Secrétariat prendra contact avec l'Office des Nations Unies contre la drogue et le crime (ONUDC) dès que le dispositif d'alerte sur les tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce et les profils et indicateurs de risques auront été mis au point et publiés.
17. Concernant la recommandation 6.c), au paragraphe *Partage des données et renseignements* qui figure à l'annexe 1 du présent document, le Secrétariat a rappelé aux Parties, dans la notification N° 2018/030 du 26 mars 2018, qu'elles peuvent demander l'accès à ENVIRONET de l'OMD ainsi qu'il a été indiqué dans la

⁵ <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/16/doc/E-CoP16-29.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.interpol.int/INTERPOL-expertise/Notices>

⁷ <https://www.hindustantimes.com/bhopal/interpol-sends-intelligence-inputs-on-turtle-smuggler-s-crimes/story-j4L3zyBmW13X1K9tm5PN2J.html>

⁸ <http://www.wcoomd.org/en/about-us/vacancies.aspx>

notification aux Parties N° 2015/039 du 25 juin 2015⁹. Dans cette notification, le Secrétariat rappelait aux Partie qu'elles pouvaient, si besoin était, consulter le forum des organes de gestion de la CITES.

18. Concernant la recommandation 6.d), au paragraphe *Saisies et utilisation* qui figure à l'annexe 1 du présent document, le Secrétariat a pris contact avec le groupe des spécialistes des tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce de la Commission UICN de sauvegarde des espèces (UICN/CSE) qui prépare actuellement une liste des centres de sauvetage pour tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce. Pour éviter toute utilisation abusive des informations contenues dans la liste, le Secrétariat la postera dès qu'elle sera terminée sur le groupe d'utilisateurs fermé de l'équipe spéciale CITES sur les tortues terrestres et les tortues d'eau douce hébergé sur la plateforme CENComm de l'OMD¹⁰.
19. Concernant la recommandation 6.e), au paragraphe *Identification des espèces* qui figure à l'annexe 1 du présent document, le Secrétariat a demandé au groupe des spécialistes des tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce de l'UICN/CSE d'élaborer un guide sur la façon de photographier les spécimens de tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce pour identification. Le projet de guide élaboré par le groupe des spécialistes figure à l'annexe 6 du présent document (uniquement en anglais). Le groupe des spécialistes invite les Parties et les observateurs à formuler leurs commentaires sur ce projet de guide. Ces commentaires serviront à améliorer et finaliser le guide. Le Secrétariat souhaite saisir cette occasion pour remercier le groupe des spécialistes des tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce de l'UICN/CSE pour ses travaux relatifs à l'application des recommandations 6.d) et e), lesquelles figurent à l'annexe 1 du présent document. Le Secrétariat n'a pas été en mesure de se procurer des financements pour ces travaux et le groupe des spécialistes a accepté de les réaliser bénévolement.
20. Le Secrétariat continuera, le cas échéant, à tenir les Parties au courant des derniers développements concernant l'application et la finalisation des activités décrites aux paragraphes 14 à 19 ci-dessus.

Application de la décision 17.295, paragraphe b)

21. À la SC69, le Secrétariat a indiqué que des réunions RIACM (*Regional Investigative and Analytical Case Management*) organisées par INTERPOL, allaient fournir une plateforme opérationnelle permettant de s'inspirer des résultats de l'équipe spéciale CITES sur les tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce en lançant des enquêtes et actions ciblées de lutte contre la fraude. Le Secrétariat souhaite saisir cette occasion pour remercier les États-Unis d'Amérique pour les financements accordés au Secrétariat qui sont destinés à appuyer l'application des dispositions du paragraphe b) de la décision 17.295. À ce jour, le Secrétariat est en pourparlers avec INTERPOL pour mettre en place un dispositif permettant d'organiser des réunions RIACM de suivi qui s'appuieront sur les travaux déjà réalisés par l'équipe spéciale. Le Secrétariat fera le point sur ces travaux dans son rapport sur les *Tortues terrestres et les tortues d'eau douce* (Testudines spp.) à la CoP18.

Application des décisions 17.295, paragraphe c), et 17.291, paragraphe c)

22. À la SC69, le Secrétariat a indiqué qu'il avait créé, en collaboration avec l'OMD, un groupe d'utilisateurs fermé pour l'équipe spéciale CITES sur les tortues terrestres et les tortues d'eau douce, groupe hébergé sur la plateforme CENComm de l'OMD. Le groupe d'utilisateurs fermé comprendra des membres de l'équipe spéciale sur les tortues terrestres et les tortues d'eau douce (ou leurs représentants) qui en auront demandé l'accès, y compris des organes de lutte contre la fraude et des organisations intergouvernementales et non-gouvernementales. Tous membre du groupe d'utilisateurs fermé peut, à son gré, envoyer des messages et des données à tout autre membre du groupe. Les membres du groupe d'utilisateurs fermé ont également accès à une bibliothèque numérique, dont les alertes et autres documents et données pertinents. La bibliothèque numérique est toutefois une plateforme à accès limité et seuls les membres du groupe représentant les douanes, la police et les autorités en charge des espèces sauvages et de la forêt y ont accès.
23. Dans le document SC70 Doc. 30.1, le Secrétariat note que les divers groupes d'utilisateurs fermés créés à la demande des Parties n'ont pas attiré beaucoup d'utilisateurs et qu'ils semblent devenir inactifs peu de temps après leur création. Il semble que ce soit également le cas du groupe d'utilisateurs fermé pour l'équipe spéciale CITES sur les tortues terrestres et les tortues d'eau douce. Les Parties concernées par le commerce illégal des tortues terrestres et des tortues d'eau douce sont encouragées à communiquer la

⁹ <https://www.cites.org/sites/default/files/notif/E-Notif-2015-039.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/enforcement-and-compliance/instruments-and-tools/cen-suite/cencomm.aspx>

création de ce groupe d'utilisateurs fermé à leurs autorités nationales compétentes et à en encourager l'utilisation. Les demandes d'accès au groupe d'utilisateurs fermé doivent être adressées au Secrétariat.

24. Pour appuyer l'application du paragraphe c) de la décision 17.291, le Secrétariat travaille actuellement avec le groupe des spécialistes des tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce de l'IUCN/CSE à la création d'un groupe de contact qui pourrait faciliter l'identification rapide des tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce en reliant les agents d'inspection à un réseau de spécialistes vérifiés. Le document, y compris la liste des spécialistes de l'identification des tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce, sera un document confidentiel à diffusion limitée destiné uniquement aux autorités en charge de la lutte contre la criminalité liée aux espèces sauvage et qui sera communiqué aux Parties par le biais du groupe d'utilisateurs fermé pour les tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce. Le Secrétariat fera le point sur ces travaux dans son rapport sur les *Tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce* (Testudines spp.) à la CoP18.

Recommandations

25. Le Comité permanent est invité à :
- a) s'agissant de l'application de la décision 17.298, paragraphe b) :
 - i) prendre bonne note des rapports de la Chine, de la Thaïlande et des États-Unis d'Amérique, et à en remercier ces Parties ; et
 - ii) noter le faible taux de retour des Parties et demander aux autres Parties, plus particulièrement celles qui sont concernées par le commerce illégal des tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce, de fournir leur rapport pour examen par le Comité à sa 71^e session ;
 - b) examiner les amendements proposés à la résolution Conf. 11.9 (Rev. CoP13) sur *Conservation et commerce des tortues d'eau douce et des tortues terrestres* présentés à l'annexe 5 du présent document, et communiquer la proposition de révision de la résolution pour examen à la 18^e session de la Conférence des Parties.
 - c) encourager les Parties et les observateurs à communiquer au groupe des spécialistes des tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce de l'IUCN/CSE leurs commentaires sur le guide sur la façon de photographier les spécimens de tortues terrestres et tortues d'eau douce à des fins d'identification, tel qu'il figure à l'annexe 6 du présent document, pour que ces commentaires puissent servir à élaborer la mouture finale du guide.

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:

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.

- i. Removal of the word “Asian” in the Resolution unless specifically relevant for certain issues;
- 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;

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

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

Seizures and disposal

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

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.



**The Endangered Species Import and Export
Management Office of the People's Republic of China**

Ref: 2018-AL-009

May 30th, 2018

To:

Mr. David Morgan
CITES Secretariat
Geneva, Switzerland
Fax: +41-(0)22-797-34-17
Email: info@cites.org

**Subject: Implementation of Decision 17.297 on Tortoises and freshwater turtles
(Testudines spp.)**

Dear Mr. David Morgan,

First of all, I would like to extend my gratitude for your continuous support to the implementation of CITES in China.

In response to the notification (No. 2018/030) on implementation of Decision 17.297, I would like to provide you with the following information.

Targeting illegal trade

X-ray machines, container scanning and other specialized detection equipment are equipped by Chinese Customs, and more than 30 specialized capacity-building workshops about cracking down illegal trade in wildlife are organized by governments for enforcement officers each year. Specialized official documents are issued by government to empower the enforcement officers by raising attention about wildlife trade through postal and courier services.

Species identification

In China, customs officers at ports can identify initially the most frequently traded tortoise and freshwater turtle species and their parts and products after many specialized training courses/workshops. Many national universities and research institutions with judicial identification qualification can identify all tortoise and freshwater turtle species listed in CITES Appendix II. In addition, WeChat groups of enforcement officers and experts are established to identify species as needed in any time.

Illegal trade via internet

The major social network and e-commerce platforms in China are all actively engaged in cracking down on illegal trade, handling illegal trade accounts and reporting to public security agencies.

Add: State Forestry Administration, 18 Hepinglou Dongjie, Beijing, 100714, P. R. China

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**The Endangered Species Import and Export
Management Office of the People's Republic of China**

Public awareness and empowerment

Various public education activities such as public service ads and billboard in public places are carried out in the World Wildlife Day to encourage general public to engage in law enforcement.

If any further information is needed, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Mr. Meng Xianlin
Executive Director General,
CITES Management Authority of China
Tel: +86-10-8423 9003
Fax: +86-10-8423 8897



(English only / seulement en anglais / únicamente en inglés)



No. 0902.3/ 2541

CITES Management Authority
 Department of National Parks,
 Wildlife and Plant Conservation
 61 Paholyothin Rd., Chatuchak,
 Bangkok 10900, THAILAND
 Tel./Fax. (66)2 940 6449

31 May B.E. 2561 (2018)

Dear CITES Secretariat,

Subject : Implementation of Decision 17.297 on Tortoises and freshwater turtles (*Testudines* spp.)

Reference is made to Notification to the Parties no. 2018/030 dated 26 March 2018. Please find the attachment for the report in accordance with the provisions of Decision 17.297 on Tortoises and freshwater turtles (*Testudines* spp.).

Your continued assistance is, as always, highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Suraphong".

(Mr. Suraphong Chawepak)

Forestry Technical Officer, Senior Professional Level
 Acting Director of CITES Management Authority of Thailand
 Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation

CITES Secretariat
 International Environment House
 11 Chemin des Anémones
 CH-1219 Châtelaine, Geneva, Switzerland
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Report of the implementation of Decision 17.297 on Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles
(Testudines spp.)

Topic	Action Plans	Note
1. Smuggling Targets	<p>(NRECD) Assigned risk groups/risk area for Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles trafficking with a placed emphasis on traders, both major and minor traders. Monthly enforcement sweep of the area for land turtle and freshwater turtle traders in accordance with the criteria set by the Natural Resources And Environmental Crime Division.</p> <p>(Customs)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Risk management, adjust and improve on risk conditions by creating risk profiles to regulate the import and export of products with risks and evaluate the risk management system while targeting subjects with risks of wrongdoings. The Customs Department will cooperate with other related departments in increasing the efficiency in establishing the usage of Local Profile for Customs Offices and Customs Checkpoints. 2. For marine enforcement operations, the Customs has assigned two Investigation and Suppression Bureaus in operating against trafficking via maritime border and areas of southern Thailand. The bureaus will also act as the focal point with the Thailand - Maritime Enforcement Coordinating Center (Thai - MECC) which has the role of assisting maritime victims, safeguarding the interests of the nation within the Thailand's territorial 	Monthly Enforcement Sweep Plan

Topic	Action Plans	Note
	<p>waters, and lend assistances to the populace as per Customs' assignment. Customs assigns patrol boats of varying sizes in accordance to the suitability of the operation. Starting from 30 feet to 100 feet in length, the Customs department has gradually improved the specifications of the patrol boats over the past 10 years. The new additions are as followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customs Patrol Boat, Hull Length 80 feet, 3 boats. The boats are named “Customs Patrol Boat 804”, “Customs Patrol Boat 805” and, “Customs Patrol Boat 806”. - Customs Patrol Boat, Hull Length of 30 feet, 4 boats. The boats are named “Customs Patrol Boat 378”, “Customs Patrol Boat 379”, “Customs Patrol Boat 380”, and “Customs Patrol Boat 381”. <p>3. Improved technological implementation, with the implementation of the e-Lock system for products crossing borders. Customs has enacted action plans to find up-to-date technologies to assist in Customs in directing and tracking shipping containers passing areas of illegal activities. Presently the e-Lock system has been implemented for testing in the field. Currently numbering at 3 installations at 2 locations, the Laemchabang Port (Entrance and Exit) and the Mukdahan Customs Checkpoint, the Customs are ready to fully implement its Tracking System</p> <p>4. Cooperation on Border Security Project.</p>	

Topic	Action Plans	Note
2. Information and Intelligence Sharing	<p>(DNP) In relation to law enforcements, there have been 33 cases of arrests and seizures of tortoises and freshwater turtles traffickers during the past 5 years. These operations have been done in cooperation with various departments concerning law enforcement, including Customs.</p> <p>(NRECD) There has been mutual exchanges in information and intelligence in local areas between officials of NRECD, DNP, and Fisheries on the traders and area of trafficking risks (tortoises and freshwater turtles). Meanwhile, there have also been exchanges between the NRECD and Interpol for moving forward in analyzing the connections of international trafficking groups.</p> <p>(Customs)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thai Customs has come into cooperation with the Thailand - Maritime Enforcement Coordinating Center (Thai - MECC) with the main task forces consisting of the Royal Thai Navy, the Marine police, Customs, the Marine Department, the Department of Fisheries, the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources, and 17 more departments. Currently there have been constant efforts to improve on the Comprehensive Maritime Domain Awareness (CMDA) as well as the surveillance of information in and between departments in the Thai – MECC. 2. Cooperation on Information Exchange in Customs-related Projects. 	Inter-agency conferences within the country and between other countries.

Topic	Action Plans	Note
3. Species Recognitions	<p>(DNP)</p> <p>1. Published a guidebook on how to identify species that are popular to trade in the South Eastern Asia region while also including the species of tortoises and fresh water turtles that are being regularly trafficked inside the book. Distribute the book to enforcement officials to ensure that they will be able to identify the species of tortoises and fresh water turtles during their inspections and take further actions accordingly.</p> <p>2. In the case of officials being unsure on the species of the tortoises and fresh water turtle, there will be a forensic science official specializing in wildlife to identify and confirm the tortoises and fresh water turtle's species. On-site will also be a location for safekeeping confiscated animals and officials specializing in tortoises and fresh water turtles as caretaker.</p> <p>(NRECD) In the case of a seizure of tortoises and freshwater turtles, there will be a representative to work with officials of the DNP and Fisheries to identify and confirm the species of the seized specimens.</p> <p>(Customs) Examination of shipping containers and travelling suitcases with X-ray/CCTV machines. The X-ray/CCTV machine is used by the Customs for examination and sort passengers for the Advance Passenger Processing</p>	

Topic	Action Plans	Note
	System (APPS) in international airports.	
4. Online Trafficking	<p>(DNP) Assigned WILDHAWK wildlife Task force to provide surveillances for illegal actions on online social media such as the ‘Facebook’ application and the ‘Line’ application as well as receive call on illegal wildlife trafficking through the hotline 1362.</p> <p>(NRECD) Assigned undercover agents into tortoises and freshwater turtles trafficking groups in online social media such as the ‘Facebook’ application and the ‘Line’ application to investigate for news and arrest illegal traders.</p> <p>(DOF) Disseminated information via the Fish Inspector and Quarantine Group internet website (www4.fisheries.go.th/fishinspector) concerning the laws, regulations, and announcement on how officials operate with legal litigation and violators. This includes information on marine species such as how to identify the protected species for further legal actions against the violators. (www4.fisheries.go.th/fishinspector)</p> <p>(Customs) Projects concerning International Cyber Crimes</p>	
5. Cooperation and Public Awareness	<p>(DNP) Installation of public relation signs in various checkpoints as well as the distribution of documents and brochures enforcing against illegal wildlife trafficking, with information on the penalties for violators inside.</p> <p>(NRECD) Launched a campaign to oppose against the buying, hunting, trading, consuming, or supporting products made from wildlife</p>	Projects and other endorsements

Topic	Action Plans	Note
	<p>,carcasses and their derivatives which includes the tortoises and freshwater turtles. This to spread public awareness as well as increase channels in which the public are able to contribute in combating tortoises and freshwater turtles trafficking.</p> <p><u>(Customs)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="509 653 1140 1468">1. Disseminated the laws and Customs regulation to foreign entrepreneurs. The Customs department hosted a seminar to ensure the widespread acknowledgement of regulations, imports-exports, and the positive public of the Customs department. The seminar invited various executives, directors, officials from Customs departments in Bangkok as well as other officials from departments such as the Department of Trade Negotiations, Department of European Affairs, Department of American and South Pacific Affairs, and many foreign entrepreneurs to attend, inquire, and investigate the satisfaction level. <li data-bbox="509 1491 1140 2037">2. Customs has developed an information database management system for its department. They also increased their efficiency in providing for entrepreneurs and importer-exporters via the Thai Customs Electronic System (TCES). Lastly they also developed the information database for Customs officials to implement in their various operations such as the examination of cargoes, usage of tax privileges, post-clearance 	

Topic	Action Plans	Note
	<p>audit for enforcement data, and etc.</p> <p>3. Dedicated Help Desk and Call Center lines for government and businesses with relation to import-export for services in accommodating for potential problems or inquiries about the National Single Window (NSW) and ASEAN Single Window system.</p>	



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

International Affairs

5275 Leesburg Pike, MS: IA
Falls Church, VA 22041-3803

IN REPLY REFER TO:
FWS/DMA/TRE 1-12 d.

MAY 31 2018

CITES Secretariat
International Environment House
11 Chemin des Anémones
CH-1219 Châtelaine-Geneve
Switzerland

VIA EMAIL: info@cites.org

Dear Sir or Madam:

This letter provides the U.S. response to Notification to the Parties No. 2018/030 concerning *Implementation of Decision 17.297 on Tortoises and freshwater turtles (Testudines spp.)*. This Notification directs Parties to report to the 70th meeting of the Standing Committee, through the Secretariat, on steps taken to implement the Committee's recommendations, under Decision 17.298 a) and b) to strengthen implementation and enforcement of the Convention for tortoises and freshwater and terrestrial turtles.

Targeting illegal trade

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) participated in a multi-agency, weeklong, inspection operation at the U.S. Postal Service's International Mail Facility at John F. Kennedy International Airport. This activity targeted exports destined for China and Hong Kong as well as shipments imported from China, Great Britain, and Thailand. In total, 30 wildlife shipments were seized, 48 additional shipments imported or exported in violation of the Endangered Species Act were identified, and over 300 shipments were referred to partner agencies for being imported in violation of U.S. laws and regulations. Seized wildlife products included live CITES-listed U.S. native turtles and Appendix-I listed exotic turtles. Officers from the following agencies participated in this operation: U.S. Food & Drug Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, USFWS special agents, USFWS wildlife inspectors, and five USFWS K-9 teams.

The undercover Operation Herpsaspetz was based in the USFWS's Southeast Region and was a two-year, multi-jurisdictional, international effort that involved investigations into the illegal take, sale, and smuggling of North American wood turtles from the United States through the

U.S. Postal Service. USFWS special agents targeted a conspiracy to smuggle \$345,000 of illegally collected turtles from Pennsylvania, through Louisiana and California, to Hong Kong. Over the course of the investigation, special agents executed 10 search warrants, seized \$134,000 in cash, and indicted seven subjects. Two co-conspirators were arrested during a controlled delivery by Hong Kong customs. All subjects have been sentenced except for one who resides in Hong Kong. To date, total combined sentences include 25 years of probation and \$51,000 in fines.

A USFWS OLE investigation, with the United States Postal Inspection Service and Homeland Security Investigations, resulted in the sentencing of a Pennsylvania man to two years in prison for turtle smuggling. The subject admitted to the unlawful collection of North American wood turtles from their native protected habitat in Pennsylvania, shipped them to an intermediary in Louisiana, who then exported them to Hong Kong. The subject previously pleaded guilty to conspiracy to smuggle turtles from the U.S. as well as using a fictitious name and address in the mailing of turtles through the U.S. Postal Service.

A multi-year USFWS OLE investigation that focused on domestic reptile collection and trafficking in Pennsylvania and neighboring states, resulted in the conviction of 15 defendants on federal and state charges including both misdemeanor and felony violations of the Lacey Act. The defendants admitted to the unlawful collection, transportation, sale, and receipt of reptiles and amphibians collected from the wild in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and New Jersey for the commercial market. Species in this investigation included Eastern box turtles, North American wood turtles, Gulf Coast box turtles, three-toed box turtles, ornate box turtles, Florida box turtles, spotted turtles, mud turtles, musk turtles, a desert tortoise, copperhead snakes, tiger salamanders, and marbled salamanders. The total combined sentences include 30 days in prison, \$45,596 in fines, six years of probation, and 150 hours of community service.

An international investigation by USFWS OLE, with assistance from Environment and Climate Change Canada, apprehended a Canadian citizen smuggling turtles. He was carrying 51 turtles taped to his legs and groin area and another 1,000 turtles concealed in socks, boots, and cereal boxes hidden within checked luggage destined for China. He was sentenced to five years in prison and fined \$17,000 in restitution. This restitution will be used to reimburse the organizations that provided care for the seized turtles.

Since its inception in 2013, the USFWS Wildlife Detector Dog program has been very successful and produced multiple interceptions of live turtles. Currently, USFWS OLE has seven wildlife detector dog teams working in major cargo ports across the United States. These wildlife inspector and K-9 teams have successfully interdicted an array of CITES-listed wildlife products including live turtles. Examples include a K-9 alerting to 22 shipments that resulted in the seizure of over 200 live turtles, the seizure of 16 live spotted turtles (discovered in an export bin at the international mail facility) that were wrapped in socks, hidden inside cardboard ice tea containers, and labeled as "snack chips," and the seizure of 12 live turtles at the Los Angeles International Airport mail facility which were transported inside socks and concealed in a box labeled "toys."

USFWS OLE at the Miami, Florida International Airport refused the exportation of a shipment

containing 18 boxes of live reptiles (over 300 animals), including CITES Appendix-II listed species. CITES violations included non-compliance with the transport conditions required by the International Air Transport Association Live Animals Regulations.

A multi-year USFWS OLE investigation working with Homeland Security Investigations and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service resulted in two California women being sentenced for felony smuggling and misprision of a felony charge for their roles in smuggling illegally collected North American wood turtles in violation of the Lacey Act and Endangered Species Act. The investigation discovered that the two women poached turtles in Pennsylvania and shipped them to Louisiana. From Louisiana, the turtles were transported to California, where the women sold the turtles and then smuggled them to Hong Kong via the U.S. Postal Service. The turtles were shipped in parcels falsely declared as toys, clothes, and books. Both defendants received five years of probation. One defendant was fined \$5,000 for the smuggling offense and the other was fined \$2,000 for misprision of a felony.

Information and Intelligence Sharing

During the period of January 31 – February 19, 2017, the United States participated in a global wildlife enforcement operation called Operation Thunderbird, organized by the International Consortium to Combat Wildlife Crime (ICCWC). This operation, facilitated by the INTERPOL Wildlife Crime Working Group (WCWG), the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the CITES Secretariat provided a snapshot view of wildlife trafficking globally and established a platform for information sharing between CITES and WCWG partner nations. The operation involved participation of CITES law enforcement authorities from over 60 countries. Two significant tortoise seizures were produced by this operation: one large shipment was re-exported to the country of origin and the other resulted in prosecution of turtle dealer in New York. In the Federal District Court in Brooklyn, New York, a man pleaded guilty to trafficking protected turtles that included Indian roofed turtles, Chinese big-headed turtles, yellow-margined Chinese box turtles, and black-breasted turtles. Execution of a residential search warrant revealed an additional 135 protected turtles and shipping labels marked as “snacks” that were used to illegally transport these turtles.

Building upon the success of Operation Thunderbird, Operation Thunderstorm was executed during the period of May 1 – May 31, 2018. This global wildlife enforcement operation was again organized through the auspices of the ICCWC and facilitated by the INTERPOL Wildlife Crime Working Group (WCWG), the World Customs Organization (WCO), and the CITES Secretariat. The aim was to counter wildlife trafficking and establish a platform for the sharing of information between CITES and WCWG partner nations to help initiate joint investigative efforts to combat transnational wildlife crime. The operation involved participation of CITES law enforcement authorities from over 60 countries. At the time of this report, it is too early to release results of the operation.

The USFWS OLE attaché assigned to the South African region assisted Madagascar law enforcement with an investigation that involved endangered radiated tortoises. Officers seized 10,000 radiated tortoises from a holding house. This incredible volume of animals had an approximate market value of \$15 million. As a result of this investigation, the owner of the house was arrested, in addition to two Chinese nationals.

The USFWS OLE attaché assigned to Thailand assisted the government of Nepal with several anti-trafficking issues including one counter wildlife trafficking outreach effort. This effort resulted in the seizure of 150 rare tortoises from Madagascar and highlighted the role of Nepal as an alternate transit point for illicit wildlife trade in India.

Public Awareness and Empowerment

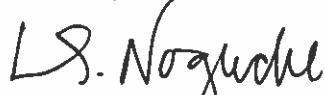
Since CITES CoP17, the USFWS has periodically posted content on social media channels across the agency to provide information about trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles. Many of these posts have focused on improving the American public's awareness of the threats to these animals posed by poaching and illegal trade. An analysis of our Headquarters and International Affairs Social Media accounts showed that following CoP17 we have published a total of 13 posts on Twitter and Facebook that present this issue and discuss how we are working to strengthen protection of these species through law enforcement, educational efforts, and recovery programs. These posts were shared or retweeted 1734 times and reached 424,399 people.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and WildAid launched a U.S. demand reduction campaign that targeted "live reptiles", including freshwater turtles and tortoises, as a priority for curbing illegal wildlife trade. The materials produced for this campaign, which are featured in partner zoos and aquariums, as well as a number of additional outlets, can be viewed at www.stopwildlifetrafficking.org.

An Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the USFWS OLE Southwest Region spoke about the plight of freshwater turtles at a press conference, which was held by the U.S. Attorney's Office. This press event highlighted Operation Snap that brought four alligator snapping turtle traffickers to prosecution.

If you have any questions concerning the information we have provided, please feel free to contact me at email: laura_noguchi@fws.gov.

Sincerely,



Laura Noguchi, Acting Chief
Division of Management Authority

cc: Office of Law Enforcement

Conf. 11.9(Rev. CoP1318)* 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
- 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

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

conservation risks and benefits of large-scale commercial breeding of tortoises and freshwater turtles;

- b) 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 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;
- e) 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;
 - iii) 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;
 - ji) 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;
 - jl) 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; and
 - mm) 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.

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.

3. ENCOURAGES donors to increase funding initiatives to combat illegal trafficking in tortoises and freshwater turtles.

Guide To Photographing Live Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles for Identification

(English only / seulement en anglais / únicamente en inglés)

Tortoises and freshwater turtles are widely traded but the identification of specimens in trade can be challenging. When there is uncertainty about the species identity of specimens at the point of inspection, it is advisable to seek specialist assistance with identification. Most turtle species can be identified reliably from photographs, provided that the photographs are correctly focused, exposed, and show the critical features for identification. This guide aims to show how a turtle specimen should be pictures with just a few images taken with a cellphone, so that the images can be sent to specialists located elsewhere who can provide or confirm identification.

This guide demonstrates how to take useful pictures of a turtle specimen. For simplicity, and to match real-world conditions, and animal welfare considerations, most of the sample photos were taken of a plastic toy turtle using a standard cellphone camera.

For the great majority of tortoise and freshwater turtle species,
3 pictures of good quality are sufficient for reliable identification:



View of the whole animal
more or less from the side

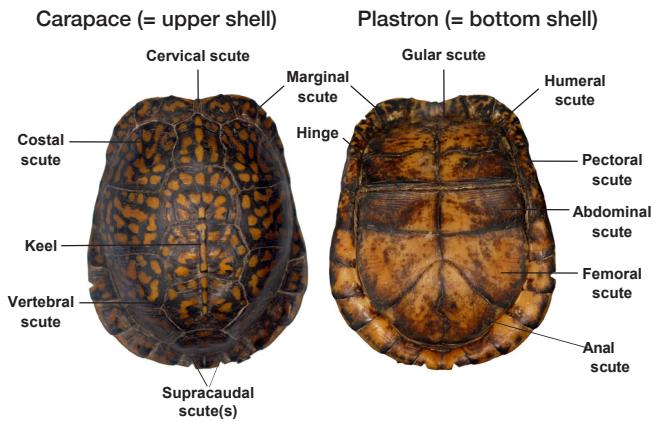


Close-up of the head



View of the plastron
(underside of the shell)

Diagram of the names for parts of a turtle shell:



Helpful hints when photographing turtles:

- Focus on the eye of the animal
- Place a ruler or other scale in the picture for reference
- Use a uniform, medium-brightness background; this reduces the chance that the turtle shows too dark (bright background) or washed-out (dark background) in the pictures
- Fill the picture with the subject

This guidance was prepared for CITES by the IUCN SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group (Peter Paul van Dijk, Ernie Cooper, Bruce Weissgold) with support from Global Wildlife Conservation, the Turtle Conservancy, and Cooper Consulting. Please report corrections and suggestions to the CITES Secretariat and/or ppvandijk@globalwildlife.org.



For a few groups of turtles, more photos of **specific details** may be needed:

- **Mud Turtles of the genus *Kinosternon*:** a picture of the marginal scutes above the hind legs, and a picture of the inside of the hind leg (to show presence or absence of rough scale patch in males) is desirable.
- **Tortoises (Family Testudinidae):** a picture of the cervical (or nuchal) scute (or its absence) at the front of the shell above the neck, and a picture of the suprapygal scute(s) above the tail, are helpful.
- **Soft-shelled Turtles (Family Trionychidae):** A clear picture of the front edge of the shell (where it connects to the soft skin of the neck) is very helpful.
- **Sea turtles (Family Cheloniidae):** include a clear picture of the whole carapace (upper shell) from straight above, to illustrate all carapace scutes, and a picture of the forehead to show the head scales between the eye and nose. A plastron picture is rarely necessary so don't turn the animal over unnecessarily.

How to measure the **size** of a turtle:



Tortoises and freshwater turtles are measured in a straight-line distance, normally the maximum front-to-back length of the carapace parallel to its midline. *Straight Carapace Length, SCL*

Sea Turtles are measured using a flexible tape across the curve of the carapace *Curved Carapace Length, CCL*

If possible, **avoid** the following common problems when photographing turtles for identification:



Turtle does not show head or legs

Possible solutions: Wait and be patient; gently tickle the back of the animal.



Turtle is badly out of focus

Possible solutions: On a smartphone screen, point at a part of the picture that you want to focus on; use the focus ring of a normal camera; increase the distance between turtle and camera.



Unusual objects used for scale

Possible solutions: find and include a measuring tape or ruler.



Picture under- or over- exposed

Possible solutions: Use the camera's flash; point at a part of the picture that you want the phone to use to determine exposure settings; use a different background.



Distracting reflections or shadows

Possible solutions: Dry the animal; change position relative to the light source; use (or don't use) the camera flash.



NOTE: If a turtle is active, it can be put on a mug, shotglass or other tall smooth stable object to raise its legs far enough off the ground to stop it from running away.