



NOTIFICATION TO THE PARTIES

No. 2019/061

Geneva, 1 November 2019

CONCERNING:

TOTOABA (*TOTOABA MACDONALDI*)

Implementation of Decision 18.292

1. At its 18th meeting (CoP18, Geneva 2019), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 18.292 to 18.295 on *Totoaba* (*Totoaba macdonaldi*), as contained in the Annex to this Notification, some aspects of which require urgent attention.
2. In Decision 18.292, Parties, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, are encouraged to:
 - a) communicate to the Secretariat and the CITES Authorities of relevant Parties information on seizures of specimens of totoaba, arrests of those engaged in illegal take and trade, results of any prosecutions, and actions taken to implement this Decision;
 - b) engage in awareness-raising activities on the illegal trade in totoaba, and its severe implications for the conservation of vaquita (*Phocoena sinus*), including demand reduction campaigns;
 - c) eliminate supply and demand for illegally-sourced specimens of totoaba, and strengthen national policies and law enforcement measures to prevent and address their illegal trade; and
 - d) support efforts related to the recovery and monitoring of wild populations of totoaba and vaquita;
 - e) support Mexico in the implementation of Decision 18.293, including support for gillnet retrieval programmes; and
 - f) provide financial and in-kind support for the implementation of the study called for in Decision 18.294, paragraph c) to be presented before the 73rd meeting of the Standing Committee.
3. The Secretariat hereby invites Parties and relevant stakeholders to provide relevant information related to the implementation of Decision 18.292 to the Secretariat by 28 February 2020 at tom.de-meulenaer@cites.org
4. The information provided in response to this Notification will be taken into consideration by the Secretariat in its implementation of Decision 18.294, paragraph a), and its reporting to the Standing Committee as per Decision 18.294, paragraph d).

ANNEX

DECISIONS 18.292 TO 18.295

Totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*)**Directed to Parties**

18.292 Parties, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, are encouraged to:

- a) communicate to the Secretariat and the CITES Authorities of relevant Parties information on seizures of specimens of totoaba, arrests of those engaged in illegal take and trade, results of any prosecutions, and actions taken to implement this Decision;
- b) engage in awareness-raising activities on the illegal trade in totoaba, and its severe implications for the conservation of vaquita (*Phocoena sinus*), including demand reduction campaigns;
- c) eliminate supply and demand for illegally-sourced specimens of totoaba, and strengthen national policies and law enforcement measures to prevent and address their illegal trade;
- d) support efforts related to the recovery and monitoring of wild populations of totoaba and vaquita;
- e) support Mexico in the implementation of Decision 18.293, including support for gillnet retrieval programmes; and
- f) provide financial and in-kind support for the implementation of the study called for in Decision 18.294, paragraph c) to be presented before the 73rd meeting of the Standing Committee.

Directed to Mexico

18.293 Mexico is urged to:

- a) take immediate and effective actions by 1 November 2019 in response to the threats to totoaba and vaquita posed by illegal trade by:
 - i) deploying governmental authorities with legal powers of seizure and arrest, together with the Navy, to effectively prevent fishers and vessels from entering the Vaquita Refuge area, and invite the Secretariat to assess the effectiveness and impact of these measures before the end of 2019;
 - ii) collecting and analysing information on organized crime groups involved in the illegal trade in totoaba, convening multi-disciplinary investigative teams to work in close collaboration with local authorities in key areas of concern, and undertaking intelligence-driven operations and investigations for addressing illegal trade in totoaba;
 - iii) providing regular (every six months) updates on these actions and their results to the Secretariat; and
 - iv) establishing and operationalizing, together with relevant Parties, the trilateral enforcement contact group called for in the outcomes of the 2017 "Trilateral Meeting China/United States/Mexico On The Combat Against Illegal Traffic Of Totoaba Fish (*Totoaba macdonaldi*) August 23-25, Ensenada, Mexico";

- b) intensify efforts and to secure resources to expand gillnet removal efforts to maintain the Vaquita Refuge area as a net-free zone, and take all necessary measures to protect net removal teams and destroy confiscated nets;
- c) adhere to the implementation of Decision 43 COM 7B.26, adopted at the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee (Baku, 2019); and
- d) submit a comprehensive report on the implementation of Decision 18.293, paragraphs a) to d) above, as well as the information required in Decision 18.292, paragraph a), to the Secretariat in time for it to convey this to the Standing Committee at its 73rd meeting, together with any recommendations it may have.

Directed to the Secretariat

18.294 The Secretariat shall:

- a) subject to external resources and measurable progress made in implementing actions identified in Decisions 18.292 and 18.293, consider convening before the end of 2019 a meeting of range, transit and consumer States of totoaba, and selected organizations and stakeholders, to evaluate progress made in combating illegal fishing of totoaba, eliminating supply and demand for illegally-sourced specimens of totoaba, and strengthening law enforcement measures to prevent and address their illegal trade;
- b) engage with partner agencies of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) in support of activities that could facilitate the initiation of targeted joint investigations and enforcement action from source to destination across the entire illegal trade chain;
- c) subject to the availability of external resources and in consultation with organizations with relevant expertise, undertake the study on vaquita and totoaba outlined in Annex 2 to document CoP18 Doc. 89 (Rev. 1); and
- d) report the information communicated by Parties and Mexico in accordance with Decisions 18.292 and 18.293, as well as the outcomes of the meeting convened in accordance with paragraph a) above, to the Standing Committee at its 73rd meeting together with any recommendations it may have.

Directed to the Standing Committee

18.295 The Standing Committee shall:

- a) review and assess any information and recommendations submitted by the Secretariat in accordance with Decision 18.294; and
- b) based on its assessment, and if not satisfied with timely progress in the implementation of Decisions 18.292 and 18.293, make any appropriate recommendations within the mandate of the Standing Committee in accordance with Resolution Conf. 14.3 (Rev. CoP18) on *CITES compliance procedures*.