



NOTIFICATION TO THE PARTIES

No. 2020/057

Geneva, 22 September 2020

CONCERNING:

Intersessional decisions of the Animals Committee

1. The Notification is issued at the request of the Chair of the Animals Committee.
2. Following the postponement of the 31st meeting of the Animals Committee, which was originally scheduled to take place from 13 to 17 July 2020, the Secretariat initiated a procedure for intersessional decision-making in accordance with Rule 19 [**Procedure for intersessional decision-making**] of the Rules of Procedure of the Animals Committee.
3. Through intersessional decision-making, the Animals Committee agreed to the following:
 - a) Mr. Mathias Lörtscher (Representative for the European region) and Mr. Hugh Robertson (Representative for the Oceanian region) are confirmed as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Animals Committee respectively;
 - b) The Animals Committee workplan for 2020-2022 (CoP18 to CoP19), as outlined in document [AC31 Doc. 7.2](#), is approved;
 - c) Ms. Cecilia Lougheed (alternate representative for the North American region) is nominated as the Animals Committee representative on the Standing Committee working group on capacity-building; and
 - d) The scope of the work on marine ornamental fishes, envisaged in Decisions 18.296 to 18.298, is confirmed to be as outlined in paragraph 3 of document AC31 Doc. 36, i.e. international trade in non-CITES listed live coral reef fishes, and those species (including sharks and rays) that are caught and traded for display in public or private aquariums.
4. The Animals Committee decided furthermore to establish six intersessional working groups as follows:
 - 1) **Definition of the term 'appropriate and acceptable destinations'**, (Chair: Mathias Lörtscher and Dagmar Zíková), with a mandate to:
 - a) prepare draft non-binding best practice guidance on how to determine whether “the trade would promote *in situ* conservation”, in line with the provisions of paragraph 2 b) of Resolution Conf. 11.20 (Rev. CoP18), in consultation with the Secretariat;
 - b) building on the existing non-binding guidance contained in document CoP18 Doc. 44.1, prepare more detailed species-specific guidance for living specimens of African elephants and southern white rhinoceros, in consultation with relevant experts (including species and zoological facility experts) and the Secretariat; and
 - c) report on the outcomes of their work at the next meeting of the Animals Committee.

- 2) **West African vultures (Accipitridae spp.)**, (Chair: Guy Appolinaire Mensah, Ashgar Mobaraki and Ngalié Maha), with a mandate to:

address key gaps in knowledge as it relates to the biological and trade issues highlighted in the Vulture Multispecies Action Plan (Vulture MsAP), with particular attention for the six species mentioned in Decision 18.188 and the West African region, and including but not limited to trade in vulture parts of belief-based use (Objective 4), sentinel poisoning by poachers (Objective 5), cross-cutting actions that contribute to addressing knowledge gaps (Objective 11), and contribute to effective implementation of the Vulture MsAP (Objective 12), by:

- a) reviewing the information on West African vultures (Accipitridae spp.) submitted under Notification No. 2020/034, and any additional relevant information submitted by the United Nations Environment Programme – World Conservation Monitoring Centre and the International Union for Conservation of Nature – Species Survival Commission Vulture Specialist Group;
 - b) conducting a detailed assessment on the scale and impact of legal and illegal trade in live birds, eggs, and vulture body parts across the range of the Vulture MsAP with the assistance of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and other relevant stakeholders; and
 - c) providing findings and recommendations to the Animals Committee for consideration at its next meeting.
- 3) **Precious corals (Order Antipatharia and family Coralliidae)**, (Chair: Ruslan Novitsky and Saeko Terada), with a mandate to:

- a) review the study by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), focusing on the following aspects:
 - i) verifying if the preliminary recommendations of the Animals Committee, adopted at AC30, are still valid, and updating them as appropriate;
 - ii) making recommendations on actions needed to enhance the conservation and sustainable harvest and use of all precious corals in international trade, where appropriate; and
 - iii) considering the possibility of additional CITES listings of precious corals in the family Coralliidae; and
 - b) report on the outcomes of its work at the next meeting of the Animals Committee.
- 4) **African lions (*Panthera leo*)**, (Chair: Guy Appolinaire Mensah, Panta Kasoma and Shirley Ramirez), with a mandate to:

- a) review the *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa*;
- b) review relevant information provided by the Secretariat regarding its implementation of Decision 18.244, paragraphs a), b) and c), and Decision 18.246, paragraphs a), c) and d); and
- c) draft recommendations directed to the Secretariat, the Standing Committee and African lion range States, as appropriate, for consideration by the Animals Committee at its next meeting.

- 5) **Zoological nomenclature**, (Chair: Peter Paul Van Dijk), with a mandate to:

taking into account document [AC31 Doc. 37](#) and its Annexes:

- a) review the findings of the report presented in [Annex 5](#) of document CoP18 Doc. 99 on Bird Nomenclature;

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- b) provide guidance to the Secretariat as to what further actions it could undertake to implement Decision 18.309 regarding time-specific versions of online databases, having considered the results of consultations to-date;
 - c) review the information to be provided concerning nomenclature and identification of corals;
 - d) review the proposed standard references for species newly included in the Appendices;
 - e) review and supplement the list of proposed updates to nomenclature of species listed in the Appendices;
 - f) consider options to update the higher taxonomy of lizards and snakes;
 - g) further consider the documents submitted separately with regard to Decision 18.313 on *Nomenclature of Appendix III listings* (document [AC31 Doc. 39/PC25 Doc. 33](#)) and Decision 18.315 on *Pangolins* (document [AC31 Doc. 38](#)); and
 - h) report on the outcomes of its work at the next meeting of the Animals Committee.
5. Through intersessional decision-making, the Animals and Plants Committees have also decided to establish a joint working group as follows:
- 6) Identification materials**, (Chair: Hugh Robertson), with a mandate to:
- a) review selected identification materials, including material compiled as per Decision 18.136 paragraph a), and assess the need for their revision and improvement, taking into account the materials that are being developed or have already been developed by Parties and materials requested in Decisions or Resolutions;
 - b) review Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16) on *Identification Manual*, taking into account the proposals of the Secretariat in paragraphs 6 and 7 of document AC31 [Doc. 15/PC25 Doc. 18](#), and the reviews outlined in paragraphs a) and c) of Decision 18.137;
 - c) consider ways to improve the accuracy and availability of identification materials on CITES-listed species; and
 - d) report on progress with these activities at the next meetings of the Animals and Plants Committees.
6. The Committee hereby invites those Parties and observer organizations that have been accredited to attend previous CITES meetings (see the [Annex](#) to Notification No. 2020.020) to indicate their interest in joining one or more of the intersessional working groups indicated in paragraphs 4 and 5 above. Observer organizations whose participation in AC31 had been approved by the AC Chair can also indicate their interest in joining the working groups. Such Parties and observers are requested to convey their interest by clicking on this link: <https://ac31-wgs.questionpro.com>, and taking the steps there indicated. The deadline for declaring an expression of interest through this online platform is **9 October 2020**.
7. After this deadline, the Chair of the Animals Committee will confirm the final membership of these intersessional working groups on the CITES website, ensuring respect for its rules of procedure concerning the balance of representation between Parties and observers, as indicated in Rule 17.1.