



NOTIFICATION TO THE PARTIES

No. 2021/061

Geneva, 11 October 2021

CONCERNING:

Forensic capacity for identification and traceability
of sturgeons and paddlefish (*Acipenseriformes* spp.)

1. At its 18th meeting (CoP18, Geneva, 2019), the Conference of the Parties adopted, *inter alia*, Decisions 16.136 (Rev. CoP18) and 16.137 (Rev. CoP18) on *Identification and traceability of sturgeons and paddlefish (*Acipenseriformes* spp.)* as follows:

16.136 (Rev. CoP18) Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall:

- a) *subject to external funding and in consultation with the Animals Committee, organize a study to:*
 - i) *provide an overview of molecular, DNA-based and other forensic methods that could assist in identifying the species and populations of *Acipenseriformes* specimens in trade, determining the origin or age of specimens, and differentiating wild from captive-bred or aquacultured specimens;*
 - ii) *review relevant developments in this area, including the availability and reliability of uniform identification systems;*
 - iii) *evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the different methods (including practicality, costs, time-efficiency, reliability, technical requirements, etc.); and*
 - iv) *formulate relevant guidance for CITES Parties, enforcement agencies, the private sector and other stakeholders;*
- b) *ensure consultation with Parties that authorize trade in specimens of sturgeons and paddlefish, appropriate experts, institutions and organizations, and the private sector in the conduct of the study;*
- c) *make the results of the study available to the Animals Committee for its consideration; and*
- d) *disseminate the recommendations formulated by the Standing Committee pursuant to Decision 16.138 (Rev. CoP18) in a Notification to the Parties.*

16.137 (Rev. CoP18) Directed to the Animals Committee

The Animals Committee shall assist the Secretariat in determining the specifications for the study referred to in Decision 16.136 (Rev. CoP18) and monitoring its conduct. It shall review the report of the study and make recommendations as appropriate for consideration by the Standing Committee.

2. Pursuant to Decision 16.136 (Rev. CoP18), the results of the study *Identification of species and hybrids, source and geographical origin of sturgeon and paddlefish (Acipenseriformes spp.) specimens and products in trade (AC31 Doc. 16 Add.)* was made available to the Animals Committee at its 31st meeting (AC31, online, June 2021) for its consideration.
3. The Committee requested the Secretariat to publish a Notification that asks Parties to reach out to laboratories within their country and inform the Secretariat about capacities to conduct forensic analysis such as “fatty acid profiling” and “stable isotope analysis”, as well as to collect information on readiness to analyse samples and then publish this list on the secure part of the CITES webpage.
4. The Secretariat hereby invites Parties to consult laboratories within their countries and:
 - a) identify laboratories with capacities to conduct forensic analysis such as “fatty acid profiling” and “stable isotope analysis” for sturgeon identification;
 - b) establish if the laboratory is willing to analyse samples of sturgeon specimens and parts and derivatives and willing to be included in the list to be shared with CITES authorities; and
 - c) communicate the following information for each laboratory to the Secretariat:
 - i) Laboratory name and location
 - ii) Country, CITES region
 - iii) QA standard
 - iv) Types of analysis conducted (e.g. fatty acid profiling, stable isotope analysis, etc.)
 - v) Contact name and email address
5. Parties are invited to communicate the information by **30 November 2021** to info@cites.org and hyeon-jeong.kim@cites.org. Any subsequent additional updates can be provided by Parties at any time for inclusion on the list.