

# CITES Technical Work Group Report



## ***Report of the Nineteenth meeting of the CITES Conference of the Parties, 14-25 November 2022, Panama City, Panama***

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The CITES Technical Work Group (Team) including Buddy Baker (SEAFWA), Carolyn Caldwell (MAFWA), Stewart Liley (WAFWA), Scott Buchanan (NEAFWA), and Deb Hahn (AFWA) represented the state fish and wildlife agencies and where applicable the Provinces and Territories at the CITES 19th Conference of the Parties (CoP). AFWA International Relations Committee Co-chair Ryan Brown (Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources) served as the state representative on the U.S. Delegation.

### **SUMMARY:**

The CoP adopted 46 of the 52 proposals to increase or decrease controls on international trade, which added species of sharks, lizards, turtles, fish, birds, frogs, and plants to the CITES Appendices. In addition, more than 350 decisions that added new measures and policies on international trade were adopted. Issues included but were not limited to eel, paddlefish, turtle, and sea horse conservation; captive bred and ranched specimens; CITES role in reducing the risk of future pandemics; CITES adoption of the IPBES sustainable use assessment; rural communities and livelihoods; and aspects of the 2021-2030 CITES Strategic Vision. Over 2,500 Party delegates, observers, and journalists attended. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) represented a breadth of conservation values and positions from the Humane Society International to the Wildlife Conservation Society to Safari Club International. The Team caught up with many partners such as IUCN, CIC, FACE, SCI, WWF, IFF, WCS, International Association for Wildlife, Conservation Force, San Diego Zoo, AZA, Pet Trade Advocacy, Ornamental Fish International, UNEP-WCMC etc. The Team also engaged many Parties on key issues. In her opening remarks, the CITES Secretary-General Ivonne Higuero stated “We are at a crucial moment for our planet and for the Convention. CITES is about to turn 50 – this requires a deep reflection on its past and its future. Have we established the correct policies? Have we made effective investments of time and funding? Are we achieving what was expected when the Convention was ratified?”

### **KEY OUTCOMES:**

1. Numerous U.S. government species listing proposals were adopted that will either positively or negatively impact the conservation and management of species under the management authority of the state fish and wildlife agencies. Appendix II listings will require action over the next 90 days to ensure implementation.
  - The timber rattlesnake was not added to CITES Appendix II.
  - The Aleutian cackling goose, the short-tailed albatross, and the Puerto Rican boa were moved from Appendix I to Appendix II.
  - Alligator and common snapping turtles, five species of broad-headed map turtles, all mud turtles except for the two species already included in Appendix I, all musk turtles, and all U.S. soft-shelled turtles (*Apalone* species) were listed in Appendix II of CITES.
  - The horned lizards in North America were listed in Appendix II. While the U.S. government proposed the listing of the desert horned lizard in Appendix II an overarching proposal by Mexico to list all species of horned lizards (*Phrynosoma spp.*) in North America was instead adopted.
2. The 2021-2030 CITES Strategic Vision indicators were approved including indicators of success related to sustainable use and trade.
3. The final decisions approved to advance conversations about CITES role in reducing the risk of future pandemics will allow for future conversations and considerations in a Standing Committee working group, stayed within the CITES mandate, and were not duplicative other work on One Health and zoonotic diseases.
4. No decisions were agreed to that would impose new conservation or management requirements on the states, Provinces or Territories for American eel, corals, seahorses, or paddlefish conservation.

## Proposals to Amend the Appendices for U.S. Native Species:

- Aleutian Cackling Goose, *Branta canadensis leucopareia* (Proposal 7): The U.S. introduced the proposal for the transfer of the species from Appendix I to Appendix II based on the outcome of the Animal Committee's Periodic Review of the Appendices. The state agencies supported the downlisting. The proposal was accepted and approved by consensus.
- Short-tailed albatross, *Phoebastria albatrus* (Proposal 10): The U.S. introduced the proposal to transfer the species from Appendix I to Appendix II based on the outcome of the Animals Committee's Periodic Review of the Appendices. The state agencies supported the downlisting. The proposal was accepted and approved by consensus.
- Desert Horned Lizard, *Phrynosoma platyrhinos* (Proposal 17): The species was listed in CITES Appendix II through a proposal by Mexico to list all species of horned lizard of the genus *Phrynosoma*. Our position was neutral because no commercial trade is allowable by the state agencies.
- Puerto Rican Boa, *Epicrates inornatus* (Proposal 20): Ryan Brown introduced the proposal on behalf of the U.S. that recommended the species be transferred from Appendix I to Appendix II. The proposal was accepted and approved by consensus. The state agencies supported the proposal.
- Timber rattlesnake, *Crotalus horridus* (Proposal 21): The EU, UK, Israel, and Switzerland raised concerns about the proposal. It was noted that this was seen as a domestic issue that didn't require international regulation through CITES. The Team intervened in opposition to this proposal. After hearing the interventions, the U.S. withdrew the proposal.
- Alligator snapping turtle, *Macrochelys temminckii* (including common snapping turtle, *Chelydra serpentina*, as a lookalike species) (Proposal 23): For the common snapping turtle, the EU expressed concern and asked for the common snapping turtle to be removed from the proposal. The Team intervened opposing the inclusion of the common snapping turtle in the proposal. The proposal was adopted by a narrow 2/3 majority.
- Map Turtles, *Graptemys barbouri*, *Graptemys ernsti*, *Graptemys gibbonsi*, *Graptemys pearlensis*, and *Graptemys pulchra* (Proposal 24): The proposal received support except from the EU. It was accepted and approved by consensus. The Team had prepared an intervention in support of this proposal but were not able to read it due to time constraints.
- Musk Turtles, *Sternotherus* spp. (Proposal 31): The proposal was not debated because a lack of time. The chair asked for any opposition from Parties. No one raised opposition and the proposal was adopted. We had prepared an intervention in support of this proposal but were not able take the floor because of a lack of time.
- Softshell Turtles, Florida Softshell Turtle (*Apalone ferox*); Smooth Softshell Turtle (*Apalone mutica*); and Spiny Softshell Turtle (*Apalone spinifera*) (Proposal 32): The proposal was not debated because of a lack of time. The chair simply asked if any Parties were opposed. No Party raised opposition and the proposal was adopted. The Team was prepared to intervene in opposition of the proposal if needed, but observers were not given the opportunity to speak due to the lack of time to debate.
- Sea cucumber, *Thelenota rubralineata* and *Thelenota ananas* (Proposal 42): The two species of sea cucumber are found in the Northern Marianas Islands. The proposal was adopted, and the species are now listed in Appendix II.
- Rhodiola spp, *Rhodiola rosea* (Proposal 45): The U.S. introduced the proposal to list the species in Appendix II. The proposal was adopted.





# CITES Technical Work Group Report

**Eels** (CoP19 Doc. 61): The document adopted included no recommendations for non-CITES listed eels (e.g., American eel). The Team will continue to engage with the European Union and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission on American eel conservation and management.

**Labelling system for trade in caviar** (CoP19 Doc. 45): The document considered a study, *Identification of species, subspecies, source and origin of sturgeons and paddlefish species and specimens (Acipensiformes spp.) in trade*, and a report, *CITES guidelines for a universal labelling system for the trade in and identification of caviar*. The final decisions direct the Secretariat and the Standing Committee to continue considering practical challenges to implement a labeling system for caviar. The Team will continue to monitor this issue, keep paddlefish range states informed, and engage when needed.



**Conservation of Amphibians** (CoP19 Doc. 60): The final decisions (subject to external funding) recommend one or more interdisciplinary workshops for CITES Authorities and other relevant authorities and stakeholders about amphibian species in international trade with the intent to bring recommendations on related to amphibians in international trade to the next CoP. The Team will monitor this issue and engage when needed if U.S. or Canadian species are included in future discussion and recommendations.

**Songbird Trade and Conservation Management** (CoP19 Doc. 74): The final decisions are subject to external funding. The recommendation is to conduct a preliminary study on the scale and scope of international songbird trade to consider the management and conservation priorities of songbird taxa involved in such trade and a workshop to bring information to the Animals and Standing Committee to advance recommendations to the next CoP. The Team will monitor this issue and engage when needed if U.S. or Canadian species are included in future discussion and recommendations.



**IPBES Sustainable Use Assessment and CITES** (CoP19 Doc. 17.3): CITES Committee's shall review the scientific aspects of the IPBES thematic assessment of the sustainable use of wild species; consider their relevance to the implementation of the Convention; and provide the results of their review and any associated recommendations to next CoP.

**Engagement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) and Livelihoods** (CoP18 Docs. 13, 14, and 15): CITES Parties continue to struggle to find a path forward to engage rural, indigenous, and local communities in CITES. The final decisions included directing parties to engage IPLCs in CITES decision-making and implementation processes at the national level to better achieve the objectives of the Convention and share their experiences and lessons learned in engaging IPLCs in CITES processes with the Secretariat and other parties. They also directed Parties to collate or conduct new case studies that demonstrate how sustainable use of CITES-listed species contributes to the wellbeing and livelihoods of the IPLCs involved in such use, including trade, and to the conservation of the species. Related to engagement of rural communities in Doc 15, the proponents of the document can refer the matters to an intersessional working group to be established by the Standing Committee.

**World Wildlife Trade Report** (CoP19 Doc. 12): The pilot edition of World Wildlife Trade Report developed by global alliance of partners including UNEP, UNCTAD, WTO, UNEP\_WCMC, IUCN, TRAFFIC and the CITES Secretariat was presented. The final decision is to seek feedback and views on such a report and the potential utility and drawbacks of producing a report periodically. The information received will be used to inform discussions at future CITES meetings.

**Seahorse Conservation** (CoP19 Doc 69.1 and 69.2): The final decisions direct CITES to continue analyzing and reviewing illegal and unsustainable trade in seahorses with the aim to provide recommendations to the next CoP.

# CITES Technical Work Group Report

## Additional Meetings, Discussions, and Side Events of Note

- **Improving the Effectiveness of CITES:** This side event was hosted by the IUCN SSC/CEESP Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group. The discussion recognized existing CITES successes and then critically appraised how the Convention could be even more successful in the future. They presented a theory of change to improve outcomes in CITES
- **There were several side events on CITES impact on indigenous, rural and local communities and sustainable use:** They discussed the economic, social and cultural importance of some CITES-listed species to communities. They emphasized that the best protectors of wild flora and fauna are the local people and States and recognized that well-managed and sustainable trophy hunting contributes to species conservation and provides livelihood opportunities and incentives for rural communities for habitat conservation and creates benefits which can be invested for conservation purposes. Another side event, explored the question - How, why and by what means have multilateral environmental agreements and other international policy processes sought to ensure community voices are part of the decision-making process, and what lessons can inform a CITES approach? A final side event highlighted examples of community-based conservation efforts that include trade and support both species conservation and livelihoods. Examples included bighorn sheep in Mexico and American Ginseng in the US. More information and fact sheets are available [here](#).



- **Saving species and preventing pandemics through collaborations between the World Organization for Animal Health and CITES:** This side event provided an overview of the protection of the health and conservation of the species through rapid and effective response to wildlife outbreaks, global pandemic prevention through early and efficient diagnosis, and collaboration between the World Organization for Animal Health and CITES.
- **Turtle Proposals at CoP19:** This side event had presentations by Parties to highlight the threat of unsustainable trade to multiple freshwater turtle species proposed for inclusion on the Appendices or transfer from App II to I. As Asian turtle populations become depleted, trade has increasingly shifted to the turtles of the Americas, the subjects of most of the CoP19 proposals. The Team attended and raised questions concerning the need for an Appendix II listing for the common snapping turtle since it is already listed in Appendix III.
- **What is sustainable in the wildlife trade:** This side event was hosted by the China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Fund. Focused on identifying the characteristics of sustainable trade in wildlife, the event discussed the current status and limits of knowledge of a number of trade in a number of taxa. Good presentations delivered by Alice Hughes on the amphibian and reptiles pet trade and by Ian Redmond on economics, CITES, and sustainable use.
- **Tracing the marine turtle trade – New tools and action:** This side event was hosted by the World Wide Fund for Nature. It highlighted new genetics tools being developed to trace the origins of confiscated sea turtles and sea turtle products.

### CITES Technical Work Group:

Scott Buchanan: NEAFA CITES Representative  
Carolyn Caldwell: MAFWA CITES Representative  
Buddy Baker: SEAFWA CITES Representative  
Stewart Liley: WAFWA CITES Representative  
Staff: Deb Hahn: Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies  
Ryan Brown: U.S. CITES Delegate for State Fish & Wildlife Agencies



To learn more about the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, visit the CITES website at: <http://www.cites.org/>