

CITES CoP19 recommendations



ifaw

convention on international trade in
endangered species of wild fauna and flora



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19th meeting of the
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About IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare) - IFAW is a global non-profit helping animal and people thrive together. We are experts and everyday people, working across seas, oceans and in more than 40 countries around the world. We rescue, rehabilitate and release animals, and we restore and protect their natural habitats. The problems we're up against are urgent and complicated. To solve them, we match fresh thinking with bold action. We partner with local communities, governments, non-governmental organizations and businesses. Together, we pioneer new and innovative ways to help all species flourish. See how at [ifaw.org](https://www.ifaw.org)

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◀ An endangered green sea turtle of the Hawaiian subpopulation cruises in the warm waters of the Pacific Ocean in Hawaii.

Cover photo: © Shane Gross
Gray reef shark swimming underwater on Father's Reef,
Papua New Guinea.



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ifaw recommendations: 19th meeting of the Conference of Parties (CoP19) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

This briefing outlines recommendations from IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare) on selected working documents and proposals under consideration at CITES CoP19. The numbering corresponds to the relevant agenda item. The name of the document proponent is given in parentheses.

▲ Closeup of a jaguar in Brazil.

◀ Zebras, elephants and wildebeests in Amboseli, Kenya. Healthy populations of herbivores are key to maintaining the savanna ecosystem.



Photo: © Brian Gratwicke

summary recommendations - working documents

The table below summarizes IFAW's recommendations. For some agenda items, further detail is provided later in this document.

document number and title	ifaw recommendation
<p>4.2 Proposed amendment to Rule 26</p> <p>(Botswana and Zimbabwe)</p>	<p>Oppose</p> <p>This document proposes that Parties' votes on proposals are weighted by the proportion of an animal or plant population present within their borders. Such a proposal is against the principle established in international treaty law of one Party, one vote and would be near-impossible to implement from a practical perspective.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>

▲ White spotted Cochran glass frog (*Sachatamia albomaculata*) on leaf.



Photo: © 2021 Ilan Elgrably / Shutterstock

document number and title	ifaw recommendation
<p>12. World Wildlife Trade Report</p> <p>(South Africa)</p>	<p>Oppose</p> <p>This document proposes the development of a report between each CoP on a range of aspects surrounding international trade in CITES-listed species. While the content of the report may be useful for some policy-makers, it does not serve a CITES-specific purpose and, given limited funding, duplicating work already being done and/or doing work that is related but not necessary to implement the CITES agenda is of low priority. The proposed reporting also seems to overemphasize the monetary value of products in trade, yet the value of products is not a clear indicator of either the sustainability or legality of trade, which are the primary concerns of CITES.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>
<p>18. United Nations World Wildlife Day</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>This document summarizes activities around World Wildlife Day, including the IFAW-sponsored Youth Art Contest. IFAW looks forward to continuing this partnership in future years.</p>
<p>23.2 One Health and CITES: human and animal health risks from wildlife trade</p> <p>(Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, The Gambia, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal)</p>	<p>Tentative support with amendments</p> <p>IFAW supports the general intent of Document 23.2, which recommends Parties act with greater urgency to address disease transmission risks in wildlife trade. However, IFAW does not support the establishment of a CITES One Health Expert Panel, but rather recommends Parties are directed to other similar external sources to ensure they are addressing risks appropriately. IFAW has suggested amendments to the proposed Resolution and Decisions to this effect.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>

▲ A dusky shark (*Carcharhinus obscurus*) swims in the Mediterranean Sea.



Photo: © Jiri Prochazka - stock.adobe.com

document number and title	ifaw recommendation
<p>37. Wildlife crime linked to the internet</p> <p>(Secretariat)</p>	<p>Support in part</p> <p>Combating wildlife crime linked to the internet, a concerning and growing source of illegal wildlife trade, should continue to be prioritized by CITES Parties. IFAW supports Parties utilizing available resources to prioritize such efforts, and recommends the use of available information gathered by experts and NGOs, rather than tasking the Secretariat to use limited resources to research similar information.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>
<p>43.2 Making non-detriment findings for specimens of Appendix II species taken in the marine environment not under the jurisdiction of any State</p> <p>(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>The proposed actions in this document would assist in building capacity and closing a gap in the implementation of Appendix II listings for species taken from the high seas.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>
<p>47. Specimens produced through biotechnology</p> <p>(Standing Committee and Secretariat)</p>	<p>Support with amendments</p> <p>The document proposes amendments to Resolution 9.6 (Rev. CoP16) on Trade in Readily Recognizable Parts and Derivatives to clarify that any products, whether or not produced through biotechnology, should be regulated by the treaty if they meet the definition of “readily recognizable.” However, IFAW recommends Parties do not seek to define the term “biotechnology,” nor proceed with the proposed workshop.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>

▲ The tree pangolin (*Phataginus tricuspis*), also known as the white-bellied pangolin or three-cusped pangolin, the most common of the African forest pangolins.



Photo: © Vanessa Mignon

document number and title	ifaw recommendation
<p>48. Definition of the term “appropriate and acceptable destinations”</p> <p>(Standing Committee)</p>	<p>Support in part</p> <p>The Standing Committee asks Parties to approve the two non-binding guidances on appropriate and acceptable destinations and adopt several Decisions relating to collection and discussion of Party experiences using non-binding guidance on the same issue.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>
<p>50. Disposal of confiscated specimens</p> <p>(Standing Committee)</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>IFAW thanks the Secretariat for their work to identify the needs of Parties to better manage the treatment of live confiscated animals. In particular, IFAW notes that less than half of Parties surveyed have a decision-making procedure when live confiscations occur. To better address this, IFAW supports the recommendations put forth in this document for CoP19 approval.</p>
<p>65. Sharks and Rays</p> <p>(Standing Committee)</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>IFAW thanks Parties for the significant effort put into effective implementation of CITES shark and ray listings and successes to date. IFAW also recognizes the AC, SC and CITES Secretariat’s efforts to continue to provide support for Parties seeking to better implement these listings, as evidenced by the Decisions put forward in this document. There will always be room for improvement. It is particularly important for CITES to agree to proposed Decision 19.DD to conduct a study on the mismatch between the trade recorded in the CITES database and what should be expected based on catch levels.</p>

▲ Reef manta ray swimming in the ocean.



Photo: Paolo Torchio / © IFAW

document number and title	ifaw recommendation
<p>66.1 Implementation of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) on Trade in elephant specimens</p> <p>(Secretariat)</p>	<p>Support in part</p> <p>This document contains draft Decisions on: reporting on domestic ivory markets; analysis of information on mammoth ivory markets; actions to tackle illegal trade in Asian elephants (parts and live elephants); and reporting on ivory stockpile management. IFAW urges Parties to support the Decisions on mammoth ivory and Asian elephants. Regarding domestic ivory markets, IFAW urges Parties to adopt the variations on the Decisions proposed in Document 66.3. For ivory stockpiles, IFAW urges Parties to adopt the versions of the Decisions proposed in Document 66.2.1.</p>
<p>66.2.1 Ivory stockpiles: implementation of Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev CoP18)</p> <p>(Benin, Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Liberia, Niger, Senegal and Togo)</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>This document proposes additional Decisions and a new reporting form to enhance the reporting and security of ivory stockpiles with the goal of improving the responses to and compliance with Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) paragraph 7. IFAW supports these additions as important reminders of the need to report on ivory stockpile quantities as one means of mitigating leakage and entry into black markets.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>

document number and title	ifaw recommendation
<p>66.2.2 Establishing a fund accessible to range states upon non-commercial disposal of ivory stockpiles</p> <p>(Kenya)</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>Kenya proposes to have the Standing Committee establish a working group to set up a fund that would compensate elephant range states, both Asian and African as necessary, for disposing of ivory stockpiles in such a way that they no longer retain any commercial value, while receiving support for elephant conservation in return. Such a proposal offers an interesting pathway forward, and an opportunity to break the cycle of repetitive discussions at each CoP relating to ivory stockpile sales and elephant listings.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>
<p>66.3 Implementing aspects of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev CoP18) on the closure of domestic ivory markets</p> <p>(Benin, Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Liberia, Niger, Senegal and Togo)</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>This document proposes slight modifications to renew Decisions on domestic ivory markets, including the consideration of additional information beyond that provided by Parties. As such, it is an improvement on the draft Decisions proposed by the Secretariat in Document 66.1 Annex 1. Furthermore, it proposes a new Decision (19.DD) to ensure future ETIS reports include an analysis of ivory seizures connected to Parties with a legal domestic market. Such an analysis has so far not been produced despite requests from the Standing Committee to the MIKE/ETIS Technical Advisory Group (see Document 66.6, para.11).</p>
<p>66.4.1 International trade in live elephant specimens: proposed revision of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev CoP18)</p> <p>(Benin, Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Liberia, Niger, Senegal and Togo)</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>Benefits for <i>in situ</i> conservation of African elephants can only be achieved by keeping elephants in their natural range, where they can form productive parts of the ecosystems to which they belong. Inserting a clear statement of intent on this matter into Resolution Conf. 10.10 is a simple and logical step to capture the intent of Parties as expressed at CoP18.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>
<p>66.4.2. Clarifying the framework: Proposal of the European Union</p> <p>(European Union)</p>	<p>Reject</p> <p>The language proposed in Document 66.4.1 contains a simpler way of addressing the issue of live elephant trade in Resolution Conf. 10.10, and the Secretariat proposes a clearer way forward for addressing the issue of references to resolutions in annotations and reservations to annotations in Document 88. IFAW urges Parties to adopt these solutions instead; they address these issues at CoP19 rather than further delaying decisions, as proposed by the EU in this document.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>
<p>66.7 Review of the National Ivory Action Plan process</p> <p>(Malawi, Senegal and United States)</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>Document 66.7 proposes a review of the NIAP process, highlighting a number of issues that could benefit from a comprehensive review, including: a lack of reporting, reliance on self-assessment, lack of integration with other CITES processes and the ICCWC framework. A review would enable the NIAP process to maintain its important role in helping Parties tackle elephant poaching and ivory trafficking, while ensuring the process does not become a box-ticking exercise.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>

◀ African elephant with a bird on its back.



Photo: © Aaron - stock.adobe.com

document number and title	ifaw recommendation
<p>83. Identifying species at risk of extinction for CITES Parties</p> <p>(The Gambia, Liberia, Nigeria and Senegal)</p>	<p>Support with amendments</p> <p>Adoption of this document would create a system for Parties to be provided with regularly updated information on threatened and endangered species that potentially could benefit from CITES listings. IFAW suggests some small changes to the proposed Decision text to ensure the developed lists remain objective.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>
<p>87.1 Proposed amendments to Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev CoP17)</p> <p>(Eswatini)</p>	<p>Oppose</p> <p>This document proposes the amendment of CITES listing criteria to consider the impact of listings on livelihoods and food security. However, given the intent of CITES to regulate international trade and not local use, as well as the individual rights of Parties to determine how to tailor the implementation of CITES listings to national circumstances, the proposed changes to the CITES listing criteria in Document 87.1 is unlikely to result in tangible benefits to IPLCs. However, adding the proposed criteria would introduce further uncertainty into discussions on listing proposals and would likely limit the ability of Parties to take international action to stop commercial trade in highly endangered species at a time when swift action to ensure international trade does not contribute to biodiversity loss is a necessity.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>
<p>87.2 Aquatic species on the CITES Appendices—proposals for an updated approach for listing sharks and rays</p> <p>(Senegal)</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>This document outlines how the biological criteria for aquatic species does not effectively account for slow growing species such as sharks and rays when setting population decline thresholds for qualification for listing. The recommended changes to the footnote on aquatic species in the CITES listing criteria are scientifically sound and should be adopted by Parties at CoP19.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>

◀ Grey reef shark swimming over hard coral reef.



Photo: © IFAW

summary recommendations - species proposals

species proposals	ifaw recommendation
<p>2. Transfer the population of southern white rhinos in Namibia from Appendix I to Appendix II with the following annotation: for the exclusive purpose of allowing international trade in</p> <p>a) live animals for <i>in situ</i> conservation only; and</p> <p>b) hunting trophies.</p> <p>All other specimens shall be deemed to be specimens of species included in Appendix I and the trade in them shall be regulated accordingly.</p> <p>(Botswana and Namibia)</p>	<p>Oppose</p> <p>77% of the Namibian southern white rhino population is in private ownership and it is unclear whether exchange of genetic material occurs between the privately held rhinos and the rhinos in national parks, yet Namibia includes all privately-owned rhinos in its population estimate for wild rhinos. The remaining 285 rhinos that exist in national parks qualify as a very small population under CITES guidelines, meaning an Appendix I listing may remain justified.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>
<p>3. Remove the existing annotation for the Eswatini population of white rhinos</p> <p>(Eswatini)</p>	<p>Oppose</p> <p>Removal of the annotation would allow trade in rhino horn. As with ivory, any legal market for rhino horn creates enforcement problems by providing legal cover for the laundering of illegal products and potentially stimulates demand. The availability of rhino horn in the marketplace will significantly undermine years of demand reduction work and the strides consumer nations in Asia have taken to implement domestic bans on rhino horn trade.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>

▲ Two white rhinos in Namibia.



Photo: Julika Rieglar / © IFAW

species proposals	ifaw recommendation
<p>4. Amendment to Annotation 2 pertaining to the elephant populations of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe</p> <p>(Zimbabwe)</p>	<p>Oppose</p> <p>Amendment of the existing annotation for these elephant populations would allow ivory stockpile sales to approved trading partners at any point in the future. Previous “experimental” ivory stockpile sales did not satisfy market demand nor reduce poaching. There is no evidence that legal ivory trade can be adequately controlled, and any legal market in ivory presents opportunities for the laundering of illegal ivory. IFAW urges Parties to consider instead the approach outlined in Document 66.2.2 as a way of providing revenue for range states with ivory stockpiles needing support for elephant conservation without introducing a risk of renewed poaching. Such an approach represents an opportunity to break the cycle of continuous discussions at each CoP relating to ivory stockpile sales.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>
<p>5. Transfer the African elephant populations of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe from Appendix II to Appendix I</p> <p>(Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, Mali and Senegal)</p>	<p>Abstain</p> <p>While IFAW recognizes that African elephants at the continental level meet the Appendix I criteria given recent declines, an uplisting will not change the status quo regarding ivory trade, which is not allowed. If anything, an Appendix I listing will most likely inspire reservations to the uplisting, creating a situation where ivory trade could potentially take place outside of CITES control, which would be extremely dangerous for elephant conservation, much like stockpile sales.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>

▲ Elephants grazing by the water in Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe.



Photo: © Sista - stock.adobe.com

species proposals	ifaw recommendation
<p>23. Alligator snapping turtle and common snapping turtle as lookalike (<i>Macrochelys temminckii</i> and <i>Chelydra serpentina</i>) in Appendix II</p> <p>(United States)</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>An endemic species to the United States, the alligator snapping turtle is in high demand in international markets for its meat and is likely to be “quasi-extirpated” in the next 50 years without a sufficient change in its management. An Appendix II listing is highly warranted.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>
<p>34. Glass frogs (<i>Centrolenidae</i> spp.) in Appendix II</p> <p>(Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Gabon, Guinea, Niger, Panama, Peru, Togo and United States)</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>Currently, approximately 50% of all glass frog species evaluated by the IUCN Red List are threatened with extinction. Within the Centrolenidae family, 10 species are Critically Endangered, 28 are Endangered, and 21 are Vulnerable species. Popular in the international pet trade, an Appendix II listing is needed to prevent international trade contributing to further population declines.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>
<p>37. Requiem sharks (<i>Carcharinidae</i> spp.) in Appendix II</p> <p>(Panama, Bangladesh, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, European Union and its Member States, Gabon, Israel, Maldives, Senegal, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>The nineteen species of requiem shark proposed for Appendix II listing are all IUCN assessed as Critically Endangered or Endangered. The proposal also includes the rest of the Carcharinidae family as lookalikes because in their most commonly traded forms (as fin and meat), they are difficult to visually differentiate. Thus, a family-level listing is justified and will significantly simplify and aid enforcement efforts.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>

▲ Alligator snapping turtle with its mouth open wide.



Photo: © Avri Klapfer

species proposals	ifaw recommendation
<p>38. Small hammerhead sharks (<i>Sphyrnidae</i> spp.) in Appendix II</p> <p>(European Union, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Panama)</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>Both on the merit of the bonnethead’s Endangered status and with lookalike issues throughout the family, there is a clear case for adopting this listing. An Appendix II listing will help prevent continued declines of hammerhead species due to unregulated trade and will facilitate enforcement of existing CITES listings of other hammerhead species.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>
<p>40. Guitarfish (<i>Rhinobatidae</i> spp.) in Appendix II</p> <p>(Israel, Kenya, Panama and Senegal)</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>Six species of guitarfish are proposed for listing, with the rest of the Rhinobatidae family being proposed as lookalikes. Each of these species are suffering declines of 60–99%. The fins of shark-like rays, including guitarfish, are found in global trade, and considering their vulnerability to overexploitation in coastal fisheries, their slow life history, and the highly threatened status of the proposed species, they warrant the management that an Appendix II listing would provide.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>
<p>42. Thelenota (pineapple sea cucumber, giant sea cucumber, and red lined sea cucumber) in Appendix II</p> <p>(European Union, Seychelles and United States)</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>Global demand for sea cucumbers has increased dramatically over the last 25 years. Some of the most valuable species in trade are currently Thelenota. One of the Thelenota species is experiencing population declines of up to 90% in parts of its range, and the other two are considered so rare that all exploitation should be avoided. Without sufficient CITES management, species such as Thelenota will continue to experience population declines and an Appendix I listing may be warranted in the future.</p> <p>Additional information is provided later in this document.</p>

▲ School of scalloped hammerhead sharks.



Photo: © Rudi van Aarde

additional information - working documents

4.2 Proposed amendment to Rule 26

IFAW recommendation: [Oppose](#)

The principle of sovereign equality is a fundamental tenet of international relations. All States enjoy the right to sovereign equality, which means that all States are equal under the law and have equal rights and duties, regardless of their relative military might, stature, power, access to resources, or any other factor that might sway the dynamics of international relations. The idea is that each State is sovereign and thus cannot be subjugated to the sovereignty of another. As said by one scholar, “all States are equal in their non-subordination to each other.”

These principles comprise customary international law and have been enshrined and codified in both the UN Charter and the UN Friendly Relations Declaration. CITES voting aligns with these principles, and as described in Article XV and Article I (definition of “Party”) of the Convention, CITES assumes a one Party, one vote structure. To change this under CITES would be both unprecedented and out of line with basic principles that have held both this and other international treaties together since inception, except in extraordinary circumstances negotiated during the adoption of certain agreements.

Furthermore, such a proposal would be nearly impossible to implement properly and could potentially lead to incredibly high numbers of reservations should Parties feel shortchanged by a formula or the population data informing the outcome of such a formula. As is evidenced by every CoP, each Party, the Secretariat and other stakeholders all have different interpretations of Convention text, the criteria, the validity of the various scientific data sets, and whether or not species warrant listings under the Convention. To add another factor that is

highly subject to interpretation—percentages of populations across range states, particularly for species that regularly move across borders—that then determines the weight of a Party’s vote, would be nearly impossible to enact equitably or in a well-received manner. The document also suggests that there would be no financial or administrative burden on CITES, but that clearly would not be the case. The Secretariat is highly capable and manages the complexities of a voting body successfully every CoP. However, with this proposal in place, the Secretariat would be responsible for calculating the weight of each Party’s vote based on undefined standards and inputting it into the voting system for potentially 75–100 proposals per CoP. Furthermore, miscalculations would inevitably occur, which would be nearly impossible to verify afterwards. We have seen this happen several times, most recently at CoP17, when the voting system, even with a one Party, one vote setup, had its quirks. For the first half of CoP17, the EU’s then 28 votes were only counted as a single vote, an error that was not identified until well into the second week. To try and implement such a proposal to amend Rule 26 would likely be chaotic and cause more controversy than good.

12. World Wildlife Trade Report

IFAW recommendation: [Oppose](#)

Document 12 proposes a set of Decisions that would establish a working group to develop a methodology so that a “World Wildlife Trade Report” could be regularly published between CoPs. According to the document, the report will assess the trends, patterns and scale of wildlife trade at a wider, macroscopic level than other reports, with the goal of demonstrating how legal, sustainable and traceable wildlife trade can conserve species, enhance livelihoods, provide economic

benefits and improve human well-being. The document also states that the report is intended to ensure more “factual perception and characterization” of wildlife trade and will be used within the CITES community, but that it is also intended to reach a broader audience of policy-makers and the general public.

The document also indicates that an initial World Wildlife Trade Report will be submitted as an Information Document to CoP19.

IFAW recommends Parties oppose these Decisions for several reasons. First, they appear to propose work that has already been undertaken by outside consultants and organizations. The drafters of the World Wildlife Trade Report may simply continue to produce reports, as it appears to already be a well-funded project. Second, while the content of the report may be useful for wildlife policy-makers, it does not serve a purpose specifically identified by CITES, and given limited funding, duplicating work already done or being done and/or doing work that is related but not necessary to implement the CITES agenda is of low priority. Additionally, the focus the authors place on monetary value of products in trade is outside the scope of concern for CITES purposes, as the value of products in trade gives no clear indication of the sustainability or legality of trade.

◀ Elephants at Mana Pools National Park, Zimbabwe.



Photo: © Robert Marc Lehmann

23.2 One Health and CITES: human and animal health risks from wildlife trade

IFAW recommendation: Support with amendments

(Deleted text with blue strikethrough, additions in blue text.)

IFAW supports the incorporation of One Health principles into CITES current practices, as action is urgently needed from all bodies involved in wildlife trade to eliminate the risk of pathogen spillover and future pandemics. However, IFAW believes that some of the recommendations in this document are not appropriate for this Convention and should be deleted.

The resolution and recommendations included in Annex I are largely welcomed, as reducing human and animal health risks from international wildlife trade should be urgently addressed by CITES Parties. Ensuring the One Health approach is used when dealing with live animals in trade or captive breeding, farming, and ranching facilities is a necessary step when trying to eliminate the risk of pathogen spillover. Furthermore, developing and strengthening relationships with the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH;

formerly OIE) and other international bodies. Training CITES compliance and enforcement officials on safe animal handling, and increasing awareness of the risks of pathogen emergence and zoonotic disease transmission are additional and effective ways to continue to reduce risk during the normal course of CITES business.

However, recommending Parties to develop a One Health CITES Action Plan may be over-prescriptive. The key issue is for Management and Scientific Authorities to work in concert with other relevant national agencies to identify and reduce the risk of zoonotic disease transmission at all points along wildlife trade supply chains using international best practices found in guidance documents and materials on a newly established One Health section of the CITES website. This could be done through national action plans if desired by Parties but need not be necessary if key issues are addressed. IFAW suggests amending paragraph 1.(d)(i) of the proposed resolution in Annex I as follows (deleted text in strikethrough, additions in underline):

(d) building on such synergies, Management Authorities, in consultation with Scientific Authorities and other bodies concerned should

i) develop a One Health CITES Action Plan to identify and reduce the risk of zoonotic disease transmission at all points along wildlife trade supply chains during (taking, breeding/ranching/farming, transport, sale [including at markets], inspection, shipment and transshipment) of CITES-listed species and specimens using Guidance and references found international best practices as found in the guidance documents and materials in the One Health section of the CITES website;

Regarding the Decisions, IFAW supports directing the Secretariat to seek expert guidance from WOAH, other international organizations and the scientific community, and IFAW supports populating a newly established dedicated webpage with these resources as they will support effective national action.

IFAW has significant concerns surrounding the draft Decisions in Annex II and recommends these largely be rejected. The development of a One Health Expert Panel creates a similar issue as arose during Animals Committee discussions of a potential amendment to the CITES Convention text; it would be devoting a significant amount of time, resources and influence to a subject that is not within the core mandate of CITES. IFAW recommends that any actions to



Photo: © IFAW

incorporate One Health principles into CITES activities should be supportive and complementary to the scope of the Convention, rather than an additional layer of oversight not directly related to the purpose of the Convention.

IFAW recommends that Parties amend the draft Decisions 19.AA and 19.BB in Annex II as follows *(Deleted text with blue strikethrough, additions in blue text.):*

19.AA The Secretariat shall, in collaboration with the Animals Committee:

a) seek expert guidance from the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and other relevant international health organizations with regard to the establishment of a CITES One Health Expert Panel, to support Parties with the implementation of Resolution Conf 19.XX;

b) make recommendations to the 77th meeting of the Standing Committee regarding:

i) Terms of Reference for a CITES One Health Expert Panel and;

ii) nominations for membership of the Expert Panel;

Subject to the availability of external funding, develop a questionnaire to be distributed to Parties to assess their implementation of the One Health approach when trading in CITES-listed live animals;

c) create a dedicated One Health CITES website, containing references and guidance for Parties sourced from relevant organizations, including OIE, FAO, UNEP and WHO, to support ~~the creation of One Health CITES Action Plans and risk assessments (in accordance with implementation of Resolution Conf 19.XX).~~

Directed to the Standing Committee 19.BB The Standing Committee shall,

a) no later than its 78th meeting, adopt a Terms of Reference and create an intersessional working group with a mandate to: adopt Terms of Reference for and appoint a CITES One Health Expert

Panel, to provide guidance to Parties in the development of their One Health Action Plans and risk assessments (in accordance with Resolution Conf 19.XX).

i) review data collected by the Secretariat on the Parties' implementation of the One Health approach while trading in CITES-listed live animals

ii) make recommendations to the 20th Conference of the Parties on the development of further resources to support Parties with the implementation of Resolution Conf 19.XX.

b) make recommendations to the 20th Conference of the Parties on the development of further resources to support Parties with the implementation of Resolution Conf 19.XX as necessary.



- ▲ Fruit bats hanging from a tree in Kafue National Park.
- ◀ Barbary macaques are an endangered species endemic to Morocco and Algeria. Demand for the pet trade, habitat destruction and unsustainable tourism threaten this monkey species.



Photo: © Jessica Boklan

37. Wildlife crime linked to the internet

IFAW recommendation: Support in part (Support amendments to Res. Conf. 11.3 [Rev. CoP18], Oppose proposed Decisions)

Document 37 proposes amendments to Resolution Conf. 11.3 on compliance and enforcement that enhance existing recommendations regarding best practices and support for addressing wildlife crime linked to the internet. IFAW supports these amendments, which include promoting to the fullest extent possible the use of Interpol resources that IFAW supported the development of. These include the guidelines “Wildlife Crime Linked to the Internet: Practical Guidelines for Law Enforcement Practitioners.”

The proposed Decisions would have the Secretariat commission a study to identify CITES-listed species commonly found in illegal internet trade and best practices to address wildlife crime linked to the Internet. Rather than spend resources duplicating work that has already been done, IFAW recommends deleting these Decisions and instead encouraging Parties to make use of and integrate available best practices and materials that have been produced by experts, practitioners and academics. These include the expert advice already provided and supported by Interpol.



43.2 Making non-detriment findings for specimens of Appendix II species taken in the marine environment not under the jurisdiction of any State

IFAW recommendation: Support

Document 43.2 identifies the making of non-detriment findings for Appendix II marine species taken from the high seas as an implementation gap for many CITES Parties. IFAW agrees that building capacity to make robust NDFs for marine species is key to improving the efforts Parties are already taking for Appendix II listings, as well as ensuring such actions lead to both sustainable and legal trade. Document 43.2 proposes Decisions that would convene a workshop on this issue with outputs reviewed by the Animals Committee and Standing Committee and proposed as recommendations to the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. As identified by Document 43.2, the term “international scientific authorities,” as used in Resolution Conf. 14.6 (Rev. CoP16) on Introduction from the Sea, is undefined and the workshop should dedicate time to clarifying the types of international bodies that qualify as “international scientific authorities.” A simple amendment to the proposed Decision 19.AA d) to add “the meaning of and entities that qualify as ‘international scientific authorities’” to the list of items for which the Secretariat will seek technical, expert advice would ensure this term is defined and relevant

authorities identified. This will enable the workshop members to consider a definition and forward a recommendation to the Standing Committee.



47. Specimens produced through biotechnology

IFAW recommendation: Support in part

IFAW supports the revisions to Resolution 9.6 (Rev. CoP16) on Trade in Readily Recognizable Parts and Derivatives. Not only are these revisions supported by many Parties participating in the working group but this amendment also makes it clear that any products, whether or not produced through biotechnology, should be regulated by the treaty if they meet the definition of “readily recognizable.”

However, IFAW urges caution in attempting to define “biotechnology” as the term is ever-evolving and describes a complex area of scientific work. A narrow definition of “biotechnology” risks the under-regulation of products that should be regulated by CITES because they appear to be CITES-listed specimens, leading to enforcement concerns and potentially significant declines in wild populations of relevant species. On the other hand, a broad definition might result in over-regulation of products, causing administrative headaches and burdens.



Photo: B. Hollweg / © IFAW

As such, sub-paragraph (a)(i) should be removed from draft Decision 19.AA.

Fundamentally, IFAW urges Parties to bear in mind that CITES regulates products, not processes. While IFAW supports the continued work of the working group, IFAW opposes the workshop proposed in the draft Decision 19.CC. IFAW does not believe a workshop on specimens produced through biotechnology should be considered a priority.



48. Definition of the term “appropriate and acceptable destinations”

IFAW recommendation: Support in part

The Standing Committee asks CoP19 to approve non-binding best practice guidance on making the determination that “trade would promote *in situ* conservation” (Annex 1) and non-binding guidance regarding the determination that a proposed recipient of an African elephant or southern white rhino is “suitably equipped to house and care for it” (Annex 2). IFAW thanks Parties for their work

on these documents. The documents offer additional guidance to Parties for making determinations when assessing requests to import animals from populations subject to the “appropriate and acceptable destinations” annotations.

However, IFAW notes that given the amendments made to Resolution 11.20 (Rev. COP18) at CoP18, Parties agreed that where the term “appropriate and acceptable destinations” appears in an annotation in relation to Appendix II-listed African elephants taken from the wild, this term shall be defined to mean *in situ* conservation programs or secure areas in the wild within the African elephants’ natural and historical range in Africa, except in exceptional circumstances.

IFAW shares this view and believes the only real benefit of *in situ* conservation of African elephants can be achieved by keeping elephants in their natural range, where they can form productive parts of the ecosystems to which they belong. IFAW urges Parties to follow the spirit of the Resolution and ensure that this position is clearly and explicitly reflected in the guidance documents. As such, the proposed guidance in Annex 1 should not apply to the determinations on

imports of live elephants taken from the wild, which should continue to be limited to exceptional circumstances determined in consultation with the IUCN elephant specialist group.

IFAW thanks the Secretariat for their efforts to create a dedicated webpage on the CITES website after CoP18, providing easy access to the wide range of resources and best practices that have been developed to guide Parties in their efforts under this piece of work.

IFAW looks forward to reviewing the responses to the notification the Secretariat will issue, and to supporting Parties as they implement best practices in these situations.



- ▲ Three rhinos standing in perfect formation.
- ◀ A collared iguana.



Photo: Donal Boyd / © IFAW

66.2.1 Ivory stockpiles: implementation of Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev CoP18)

IFAW recommendation: Support

Document 66.2.1 is a proposal to adopt a new reporting form for ivory stockpiles and to amend the Decisions on ivory stockpile reporting to be renewed by the CoP. The document notes the challenges with maintaining and securing ivory stockpiles and notes the low compliance rate with stockpile reporting requirements. To simplify the reporting process, Document 66.2.1 proposes a revised model reporting form. In addition, Document 66.2.1 proposes several amendments to the Decisions on ivory

stockpiles forwarded from SC74, including, among other things, a provision urging Parties to fulfill their commitments under paragraph 7 of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) on Trade in Elephant Specimens to report stockpile inventories and consider the merits of destroying government-held stockpiles.

IFAW supports these additions, which build on the draft Decisions proposed by the Standing Committee/Secretariat in Doc.66.1. They are important reminders of the need to report on ivory stockpile quantities as one means of mitigating leakage and entry into black markets. IFAW also supports the call to all CITES stakeholders to support the maintenance, protection and inventorying of

government-held ivory stockpiles through the provision of funding and capacity-building.

66.2.2 Establishing a fund accessible to range states upon non-commercial disposal of ivory stockpiles

IFAW recommendation: Support

Document 66.2.2 proposes the Standing Committee establish a working group to set up a fund that would compensate elephant range states, both Asian and African as necessary, for disposing of ivory in such

a way that it no longer retains any commercial value. The proposal delinks the quantity of ivory available for destruction from the ability to access the fund in an attempt to neither incentivize stockpiling nor effectively penalize countries that have already destroyed much of their ivory stockpiles. As outlined in Document 66.2.2, the funding would be available to support elephant conservation and research programs, as well as for livelihoods and economic development programs. The proposed working group would further develop details regarding access, disbursement and oversight.

IFAW lauds Kenya's proposal as an alternative approach to supporting local livelihoods and economic development in a way that ensures that no new markets for ivory arise and that efforts to close domestic markets continue apace. IFAW urges all elephant range states to consider Kenya's proposal for a dedicated fund for countries disposing of their ivory. It offers an interesting alternative that can provide resources for elephant conservation to all countries that need them, without increasing the poaching risk, and can move discussions beyond the divisive debates about the downlisting/uplisting of elephants. While many details must be worked out for the fund to function as a transparent and equitable mechanism, IFAW supports the draft Decisions calling for the establishment of a working group to explore the feasibility and details of such a fund, noting that lessons learned from the African Elephant Fund should be taken into account.

66.4.1 International trade in live African elephant specimens: Proposed revision to Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) on trade in elephant specimens

IFAW recommendation: Support

At its 74th meeting (SC74), the Standing Committee invited Parties to propose a way forward following debate about differing interpretations of the rules applying to trade in live elephants. Document 66.4.1. proposes changes to Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) to limit the trade in live African elephants to *in situ* conservation programs or

secure areas in the wild within the species' natural and historical range in Africa.

As the document outlines, the IUCN African Elephant Specialist Group does not endorse the removal of African elephants from the wild for any captive use given the lack of direct benefit for *in situ* conservation. IFAW shares the view that the only real benefit for *in situ* conservation of African elephants can be achieved by keeping elephants in their natural range, where they can form productive parts of the ecosystems to which they belong.

Inserting a clear statement of intent on this matter into Resolution 10.10, which deals specifically with elephant matters, is a simple and logical step to capture the intent of Parties as expressed at CoP18. Therefore, IFAW urges Parties to support this suggestion. However, it does not address the outstanding issue of interpreting annotations, and the process for amending them (see comments below on 66.4.2).

66.4.2 Trade in live African elephants: Clarifying the framework

IFAW recommendation: Oppose

As outlined above, SC74 invited Parties to propose a clear legal framework for the trade in live elephants to the CoP. Document 66.4.2 attempts to do so by addressing several factors collectively. It proposes similar, although more complex, language for Resolution Conf. 10.10 (rev. OP18) as Document 66.4.1, but also seeks to address the issue of reservation on annotations and references to resolutions within annotations. However, rather than seeking to address these issues at CoP19, it proposes draft Decisions to direct the Standing Committee to undertake further work on this matter and proposes an African elephant range states dialogue meeting specifically about live elephant trade.

IFAW urges Parties to reject these proposals. The language proposed in Document 66.4.1 contains a simpler way of addressing the issue in Resolution 10.10, and the Secretariat

proposes a clearer way forward for addressing the issue of references to resolutions in annotations and reservations to annotations in Document 88. IFAW urges Parties to adopt these solutions instead, as they address these issues at CoP19 rather than further delaying decisions. Furthermore, IFAW does not see the utility in a dialogue meeting, which should not replace more transparent discussions through regular CITES processes.

66.7 Review of the National Ivory Action Plan process

Document 66.7 notes the history of the National Ivory Action Plan process and proposes a review. The document highlights several previous requests to keep the process under review, and in paragraph 7, highlights issues that could benefit from a comprehensive review. These include: lack of reporting and compliance, reliance on self-assessment by Parties, lack of integration with CITES compliance procedures, other reporting requirements and the ICCWC framework developed since NIAPs were first introduced nearly a decade ago.

IFAW shares the view that the NIAP process would benefit from review to maintain its important role in helping Parties tackle elephant poaching and ivory trafficking and to prevent it from simply becoming a box-ticking exercise. Therefore, IFAW urges Parties to support the draft Decisions proposed in the document that would task the Secretariat with contracting a consultant to undertake the review and for the Standing Committee to contribute to this process. IFAW further urges Parties to consider providing funding to enable the review to take place.

◀ Two young African bush elephants standing in the fields of the ZEN Orphanage in Harare, Zimbabwe.

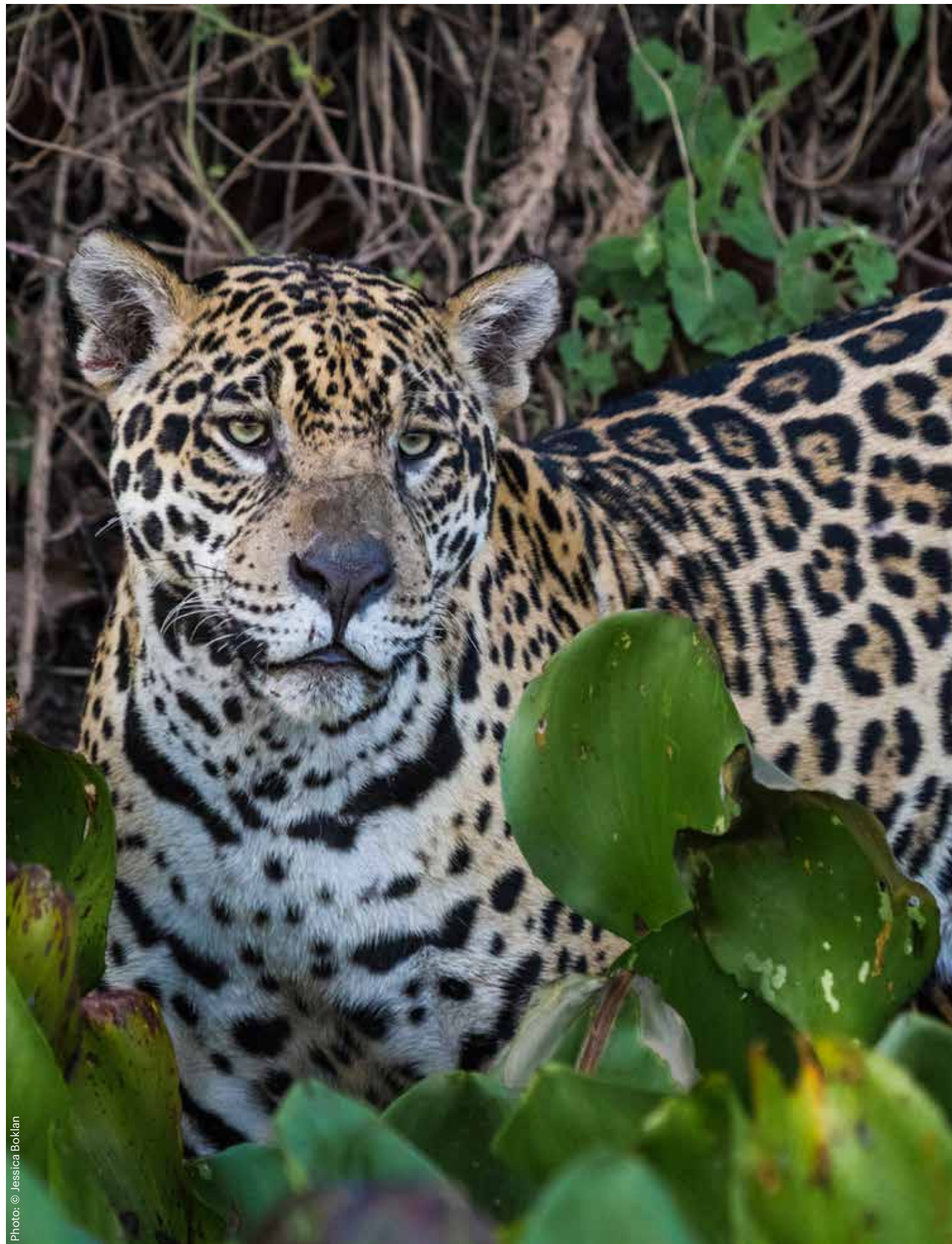


Photo: © Jessica Boklan

73.1 Report of the Standing Committee and 73.2 Proposed amendments to the draft decisions agreed at SC74

IFAW recommendation: Support

Decision 18.251 requested the Secretariat to commission a study to map and analyze the illegal trade in jaguars. With four geographical routes identified, the study acknowledged that the purposes and characteristics of demand for illegal jaguar body parts in these destination countries are currently largely unknown. In addition to identifying major trade routes, the study noted that illegal trade in some range states is becoming more organized and utilizing online platforms and social media to conduct illegal sales.

Such findings are especially concerning, considering that such illegal trade is affecting already Endangered jaguar populations suffering habitat fragmentation and range loss of over 50% and are therefore especially at risk. Such illegal trade and its increased occurrence online must be addressed to effectively protect jaguar populations, and IFAW supports the Secretariat's call for a coordinated response from range states to better monitor the illegal killing of jaguars and sale of their parts.

IFAW recommends the adoption of the draft Decisions proposed by the Secretariat and amended by the Standing Committee in Annex I of Document 73.2. The proposed Decisions will continue to maintain a focus on the need for strong action within CITES to tackle the illegal trade in jaguars and promote better coordination between range states to address this issue.



83. Identifying species at risk of extinction for CITES Parties

IFAW recommendation: Support with amendments

(Deleted text with blue strikethrough, additions in blue text.)

Document 83 proposes that in the face of an unprecedented global biodiversity crisis, the

CITES Secretariat, Animals and Plants Committees, as well as CITES Parties, take a more proactive approach to identifying species that are threatened with extinction that may benefit from a CITES listing. The Conference of the Parties has recognized the important role CITES plays in halting biodiversity loss in Resolution Conf. 18.3, CITES Strategic Vision: 2021–2030, which stipulates the following: “By 2030, all international trade in wild fauna and flora is legal and sustainable, consistent with the long-term conservation of species, and thereby contributing to halting biodiversity loss, to ensuring its sustainable use, and to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”

A significant number of species threatened with extinction are found in international trade but are not listed in the CITES Appendices. Document 83 requests that the Secretariat maintain a database of the CITES status of all Critically Endangered, Endangered, or Vulnerable species so Parties may identify those from the list that are or may be affected by international trade.

However, IFAW is concerned that, in its current form, the wording of “affected” by international trade may inadvertently create a politicized reporting system on species that should or should not be listed—something that should be determined by individual Parties rather than by the Secretariat or the Animals and Plants Committees. To maintain objectivity in this exercise, IFAW recommends replacing the phrase “affected by trade” with “found in trade.” This neutralizes the potential subjectivity and leaves the determination of whether species meet the CITES listing criteria to the CoP.

A regular report to each meeting of the Animals and Standing Committees, and later to the Conference of the Parties, is likely not necessary if the database is made available on the CITES website. Because the IUCN Red List includes data on whether species are “found in trade,” this would likely not be resource intensive.

Easy access to such data would allow governments to regularly and rapidly identify species in need of CITES management and take more proactive action to list threatened species and tackle the biodiversity crisis for species affected or potentially affected by

international trade. IFAW encourages governments to support this proposal with the following amendments.

To ensure that objectivity is prioritized in this document (*deleted text with blue strikethrough, additions in blue text.*):

1. DIRECTS the Secretariat to
 - a) maintain a database indicating the CITES status of all species identified as Critically Endangered, Endangered, or Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List so that Parties may assess whether such species are, or may be, **found in affected by** international trade;
 - b) regularly update this database whenever IUCN updates its Red List, the CITES Appendices are amended, or new information becomes available;
 - c) ~~provide to each regular meeting of the Animals and Plants Committees updated lists of species identified in the database that are either not listed on the CITES Appendices or are listed on Appendix II or III; and~~
 - c) **provide updates to Parties via Notification when this database is amended.**
 - d) ~~provide a draft report for review and finalization by Animals and Plants Committees on CITES progress in listing species threatened with extinction that are or may be found in affected by trade;~~
2. DIRECTS the Animals and Plants Committees to:
 - a) ~~review all changes to the database reported by the Secretariat, including species newly classified as Critically Endangered, Endangered, or Vulnerable;~~
 - b) ~~review and finalize the report on CITES progress in listing species threatened with extinction that are or may be affected by trade;~~
 - c) ~~submit the report on CITES progress in listing species threatened with extinction that are or may be affected by trade to the Conference of the Parties for information.~~



◀ A jaguar peeks out of the bushes in the Pantanal.

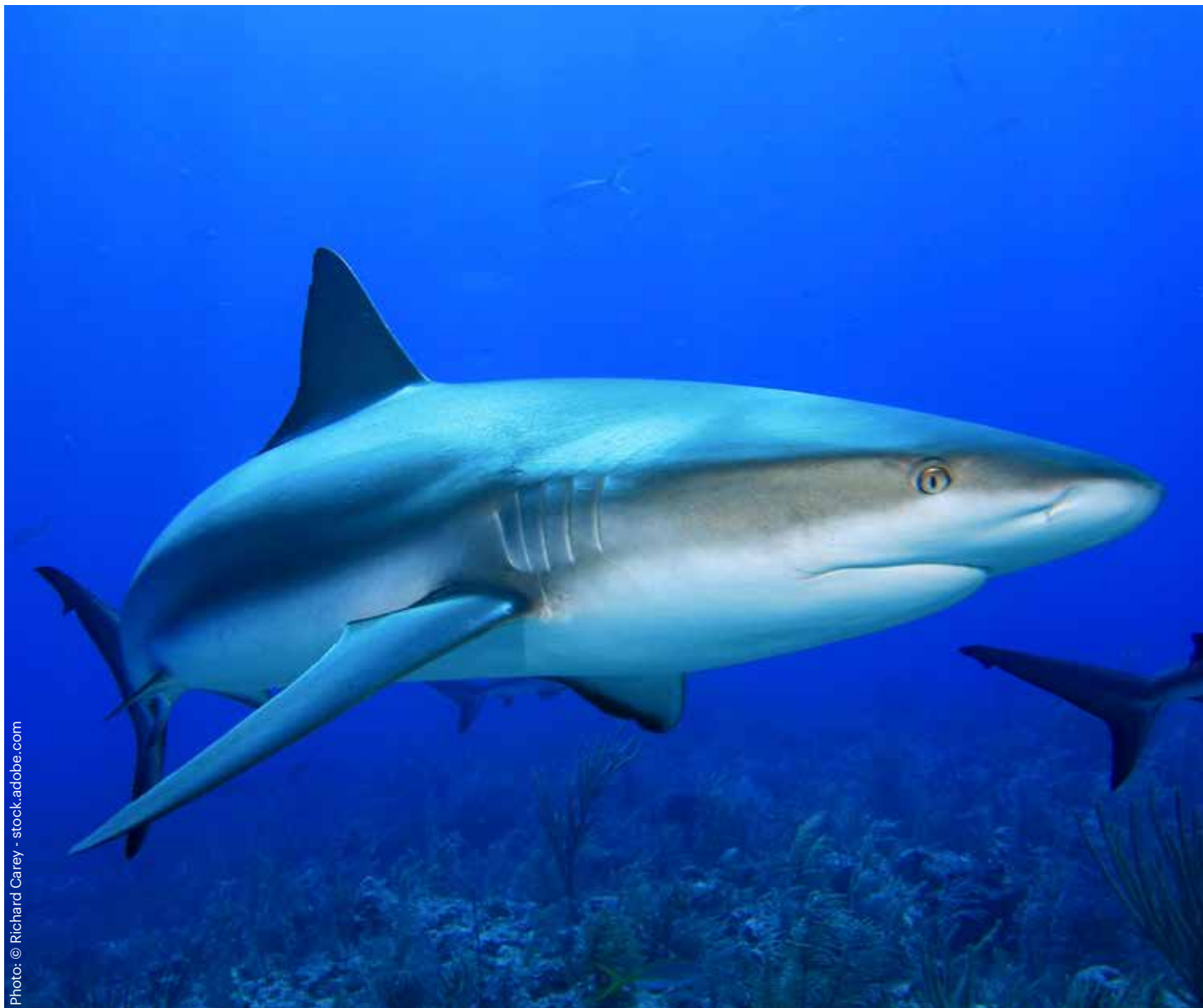


Photo: © Richard Carey - stock.adobe.com

87.1 Proposed amendments to Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev CoP17)

IFAW recommendation: Oppose

IFAW believes that the engagement of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) is integral to the success of long-term conservation initiatives. However, the intent of CITES is to regulate international trade, not local use. Furthermore, the Convention leaves it to individual Parties to determine how to tailor the implementation of CITES listings to national circumstances. As such, IFAW does not believe the proposed changes to the CITES listing criteria in Document 87.1 are appropriate, nor would they result in tangible benefits to IPLCs. Rather, the addition of the proposed criteria would likely limit the ability

of Parties to take international action to stop commercial trade in highly endangered species at a time when swift action to ensure international trade does not contribute to further biodiversity loss is a necessity.

The document suggests that international trade must be identified as the “key driver” of population loss in a species for a species to qualify for listing. However, this would significantly undermine the treaty’s conservation contribution. CITES is intended to ensure that international trade is not, and does not, become a factor in the decline of species. Whether it may or may not be the predominant factor is not the point. The goal is to ensure it is not a factor at all in a species’ decline, whether that means a compounding factor, the major factor, or a possible factor.

While CITES is not a comprehensive conservation treaty intended to address all threats to species, CITES does serve a broader conservation purpose by having the ability to take international trade out of the constellation of existing and potential threats to a species. This is a core strength of CITES, and a role envisaged by Parties in drafting and agreeing to a treaty whose purpose is to ensure trade does not further endanger species or lead to utilization incompatible with their survival. To undermine this purpose by suggesting international trade has to be a “key driver” would undercut the treaty’s conservation value. If stronger conservation is the ultimate aim of this proposal, in reality, its adoption would undercut what it seeks to achieve.

This document also misunderstands how CITES functions. It is the treaty, not just Resolution Conf. 9.24, that sets the listing criteria. The treaty is implicit that the listing criteria should be biological and trade factors; the fundamental principles of CITES articulated in Article II only mention the conservation status of a species and whether it is affected by trade. Each Party retains the sovereign right to make decisions about proposing listings and/or supporting or opposing listing proposals based on their own unique national circumstances. These may include livelihoods and food security concerns, and it is up to each individual Party to decide as such. In addition to the voting/decision-making stage, these considerations may be taken into account when implementing listing decisions at the national level, and efforts should be made to support just transitions when necessary.

There is also very little evidence suggesting that a significant number of Appendix I listings have local livelihood and, in particular, food security impacts. In fact, no evidence or examples are provided in this document. Where there are specific cases, CITES Parties have shown adaptability and willingness to take advantage of the flexibility already offered by the Convention, such as split listings, annotations, listing implementation delays, etc. While these may create enforcement challenges, the Parties have recognized their utility, so while they are not favored approaches, nor are they forbidden.

CITES also does not prevent subsistence use of wildlife—use that is local and not international. It is outside the purview of CITES, thus CITES does not impact the food security of local, rural communities in most cases. As such, there is no reason to include references to its impact in the CITES listing criteria. CITES may impact the food choices in longer, non-local, and most often, commercial international supply chains. This is exactly the CITES goal—to prevent these international, commercial drivers from threatening species.

Far from improving the listing process, the proposed additional listing criteria would introduce further uncertainty. In many cases, it is already difficult to obtain high quality data regarding the conservation status of species or their prevalence in trade. However, such criteria do at least have some level of

objectivity attached to them and have existing resources where information can be taken from (i.e., IUCN Red List and trade databases). However, the proposed additional criteria would then demand analyses of areas such as the effects of a listing on income flows, food security and health of traditional resource users, whether use of the species may continue after a listing, whether existing mechanisms may be affected, and whether trade may continue illegally. Making such assessments in all these areas would be highly speculative, as many consequences could not be foreseen with any level of certainty in advance of changes taking effect.

The aims within this proposal are important but likely better suited for other contexts and Conventions that take decisions affecting subsistence and national and local use, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Within CBD negotiations and during the development of NBSAPs, programs of work exist on these issues, and opportunities exist to tailor conservation actions to national circumstances, as suggested in this proposal.

While IFAW urges Parties to oppose these amendments, we generally encourage governments to examine their application of proposals at a national level to ensure that the rights and livelihoods of IPLCs are preserved, while striving for the best possible conservation benefit CITES can provide to species whose populations are affected by international trade.

87.2 Aquatic species on the CITES Appendices—proposals for an updated approach for listing sharks and rays

IFAW recommendation: Support

In this document, Senegal proposes an amendment to the footnote on aquatic species in CITES Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17) to better address species with slower life histories, such as sharks and rays. The CITES criteria recognize in a footnote that many aquatic species, such as teleost fish, reproduce faster than many terrestrial species and therefore, higher levels of declines are appropriate to warrant a listing within the CITES Appendices. The footnote also clarifies that for species with very low

productivity levels, the application of the footnote, and the enhanced decline requirements, may not be appropriate. For example, using the decline standards for terrestrial species would be more appropriate for sharks and rays.

The inflexibility of some Parties and the FAO’s interpretation of the footnote for aquatic species towards sharks has resulted in a disconnect between the intent of CITES Appendix II and its application to these slow growing species. As laid out in the Convention text, CITES Appendix II criteria are intended for “all species which although not necessarily now threatened with extinction may become so unless trade in specimens of such species is subject to strict regulation in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival.” To date, the majority of shark species listed were already threatened with extinction. For many of these species, the FAO Panel’s interpretation of the current criteria still resulted in the conclusion that they did not meet the criteria for an Appendix II listing or that there was insufficient data. For several of these species, such as silky, mako and thresher sharks, population declines were so severe that Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) have prohibited their retention in at least one or more regions of the world—and the FAO panel still concluded that their listing was not warranted based on their interpretation of the aquatic footnote.

CITES Parties should support the amendments to CITES Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev CoP17) as laid out in this document, as they would ensure that the criteria are applied in an appropriate and flexible manner based on the life history and vulnerability of the species rather than the ecosystem in which it resides.

◀ Caribbean reef shark.



Photo: © Jessica Boklan

additional information - species proposals

proposal 2

Transfer the population of Namibia from Appendix I to Appendix II for the exclusive purpose of allowing international trade in a) live animals for in situ conservation only; and b) hunting trophies

(Botswana and Namibia)

IFAW recommendation: [Oppose](#)

Namibia argues its population of southern white rhinos does not meet the biological criteria for an Appendix I listing. However, this stems from counting the southern white rhinos that are privately owned as part of the wild population. It is unclear if any population mixing takes place between truly wild rhinos and with or within the more than 80 privately held rhino populations. With only 285 southern white rhinos in national parks, and not privately held, Namibia's truly wild population of southern white rhinos meets the biological criteria for an Appendix I listing, because the wild population is very small (Criterion A, Annex 5 of Resolution Conf. 12.4 [Rev. CoP.17] on definitions, explanations and guidelines suggests a wild population of less than 500 individuals is "very small").

Additionally, enforcement concerns continue regarding rhinos in Namibia, which has seen an increase in rhino poaching since 2015. This increased poaching raises concerns as to whether Namibia has in place the conditions to support the precautionary measures required when downlisting a high-value species subject to high levels of illegal trade, as required by paragraph 3(i) of Resolution Conf. 12.4 (Rev. CoP17) and further defined in Annex 4 to the Resolution.

Finally, it is worth observing that the scope of the proposal does not significantly change the status of trade in rhino parts and derivatives from Namibia, which is already

permitted for the export of live rhinos and hunting trophies under the existing Appendix I listing. Given that the proposed annotation is for live animals for *in situ* conservation only, it is not clear how moving them to Appendix II would allow for "access to a far larger market for white rhinos" as the proposal suggests.

proposal 3

Remove the existing annotation on the Appendix II listing of Eswatini's population of white rhinos

(Eswatini)

IFAW recommendation: [Oppose](#)

The current annotation to the Appendix II listing of the Eswatini population of rhinos allows commercial trade only in live animals and hunting trophies. Removal of the annotation would allow trade in rhino horn as well. While rhino poaching and illegal trade appear to have declined recently, the pandemic may have been a major contributor in this decline and it remains uncertain if poaching and trafficking may yet return to pre-pandemic levels. Hundreds of horns still enter illegal trade every year and white rhino populations are still declining. As with ivory, any legal market for rhino products creates enforcement problems by providing legal cover for the laundering of illegal products and potentially stimulates demand. The availability of rhino horn in the marketplace will significantly undermine years of demand reduction work and the strides consumer nations like Vietnam and China have taken to implement domestic bans on rhino horn trade. Therefore, IFAW urges Parties to reject the proposal.

Also, the current annotation only applies to limited trade and notes that all other specimens are treated as if they are on

Appendix I. As a result, Eswatini should make the case that the transfer of commercial specimens of rhino horn meet the precautionary measures outlined in Annex 4 of Resolution Conf. 12.4 (Rev. CoP17) in relation to downlistings. However, Eswatini is not proposing an export quota for CoP to approve, and rhino horn is most certainly in illegal trade. When a specimen is likely to be in trade and no CoP-approved export quota is in place, precautionary measures require that implementation assurances are in place for compliance with the Convention and that appropriate enforcement controls exist. The proposal does not provide these assurances. Although it suggests that all legal horn will be DNA profiled, many transit, re-export and importing countries will not have the equipment or capacity to test all rhino horn, nor will those countries where poached rhino horns are being illegally exported. Therefore, appropriate enforcement controls do not exist. Additionally, although a proposed national Rhino Horn Trade Protocol is a new element from the same proposal that did not receive report at CoP18, its *modus operandi* is unclear.

Furthermore, Eswatini makes the case that it intends to sell rhino horn to fund conservation and that this should be a driving principle in support of its proposal. However, the two countries with the greatest demand for rhino horn, Vietnam and China, have enacted legislation that prohibits trade in rhino horn and regulates the sale and distribution of rhino horn domestically. Therefore, without a country to import legal rhino horn, it is unclear whether legal rhino horn has much value. Rather, the proposal is projecting a value onto legal rhino horn based on its black market value.

◀ A white rhino and calf in Namibia.



Photo: Paolo Torchio / © IFAW

proposal 4

Amendment to Annotation 2 pertaining to the elephant populations of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe

(Zimbabwe)

IFAW recommendation: Oppose

Amendment of the existing annotation for these elephant populations would allow ivory stockpile sales to approved trading partners at any point in the future.

IFAW believes reopening legal trade provides too many opportunities for illegal ivory to be laundered into legal markets, providing continued incentives for poaching. The 2008 stockpile sales failed to quell illegal demand for ivory, nor did they reduce poaching; far from it, they likely did the opposite in the decade that followed.

While there are some encouraging signs that illegal ivory trade has declined in some areas in recent years, this is likely due to enhanced enforcement and the closure of many domestic markets. However, such progress cannot be taken for granted, and the ivory trade still represents a threat to many elephant populations. Parties should not undermine recent progress by reopening markets, particularly as there is no evidence that legal ivory trade can be adequately controlled. Any legal market in ivory presents opportunities for the laundering of illegal ivory.

It is understandable that southern African countries are keen to generate more resources for elephant conservation, given the burden they bear of the largest elephant populations on the continent. IFAW acknowledges the efforts these countries have undertaken to conserve wildlife. However, given that most major domestic ivory markets have now closed, it is not

immediately clear where a buying partner would come from and whether the resources envisaged would result.

Rather, the international community needs to find ways of supporting conservation efforts that do not risk stimulating demand for ivory and creating further cover for illegal ivory trade. As an alternative, IFAW urges Parties to consider the approach outlined in Document 66.2.2 as a way of providing revenue for range states with ivory stockpiles that need support for elephant conservation, without introducing a risk of renewed poaching. Such an approach represents an opportunity to break the cycle of continuous discussions at each CoP relating to ivory stockpile sales.



proposal 5

Transfer the populations of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe from Appendix II to Appendix I

(Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, Mali and Senegal)

IFAW recommendation: Abstain

IFAW recognizes that at a continental level, African elephants meet the Appendix I criteria given recent declines, even if the particular populations in question do not. Further, in general, IFAW does not support the split-listing of species on different CITES Appendices. It creates unnecessary problems for enforcement, where it is often difficult to distinguish between the origins of split-listed species, especially with respect to parts and derivatives.

However, if the aim of the uplisting is to prevent further ivory trade, it could in fact be counterproductive. Within the current CITES context, an uplisting will not change the status quo regarding ivory trade, which is not allowed. By contrast, given the divisive views on ivory trading, an uplisting of these elephant populations to Appendix I will most likely inspire reservations to the uplisting, creating a situation where ivory trade could potentially take place outside of CITES control. In IFAW's view, this would be extremely dangerous for elephant conservation, as it would once again provide avenues for poached ivory to be laundered into markets, much like proposals for stockpile sales. IFAW believes, that is a greater risk than continuing with the current (albeit unsatisfactory) status quo of split-listed populations without ivory trade.



proposal 23

Alligator snapping turtle and common snapping turtle as lookalike (Macrochelys temminckii and Chelydra serpentina) in Appendix II

(United States)

IFAW recommendation: Support

The alligator snapping turtle is an endemic species to the United States. Currently, it is found in high numbers in international trade, driven largely by the global demand for turtle meat. Assessed by the IUCN Red List as Vulnerable in 1996, a recent assessment found that this species is likely worse off than previously thought, with just over 360,000 alligator snapping turtles remaining in the wild.¹ Furthermore, the species is likely to be "quasi-extirpated" across much of its range in the next 50 years due to habitat loss and modification, nest predation and other activities such as legal and illegal take,² with most of the species found in trade from wild sources. The common snapping turtle is proposed for listing as a lookalike due to their similarity in appearance while juveniles.

Furthermore, given the slow life history and low, declining national population numbers of the alligator snapping turtle, it is necessary to include this species in Appendix II before the populations further decline, and an Appendix I listing is warranted. This additional trade regulation will complement existing domestic measures and ensure that use is sustainable and international trade is not detrimental to wild populations.



proposal 34

Glass frogs (Centrolenidae spp.) in Appendix II

(Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Gabon, Guinea, Niger, Panama, Peru, Togo and United States)

IFAW recommendation: Support

Currently, approximately 50% of all glass frog species evaluated by the IUCN Red List are threatened with extinction. Within the Centrolenidae family, 10 species are Critically Endangered, 28 are Endangered, and 21 are Vulnerable species. It is worth noting that while several glass frog species are also currently assessed as Data Deficient, glass frogs are often difficult to study in the wild, and it is likely that many of these species are also threatened but data poor.

Glass frogs are becoming more popular in the international pet trade and are regularly

found hidden in shipments of animals exported from Central America to Europe. Additionally, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Law Enforcement Management Information System (LEMIS) trade data and an analysis of online advertisements reported that over nine species of glass frogs are currently found in international trade.³ Additionally, due to the difficulty of differentiating between species and/or labeling simply at the genus level or as "non-CITES amphibian," the true number is likely higher. A comparison of US import records shows that between 2016 and 2021, imports of glass frogs increased by approximately 44,000%.⁴ Already threatened by habitat loss, climate change and disease, the unmanaged and growing trade in glass frogs is likely exacerbating existing threats to these species and must be limited to legal and sustainable levels so as not to compound the other threats these animals already face.

The listing is put forward at a family level, as visually differentiating between species is nearly impossible. Glass frogs listing at the family level would not only simplify implementation for lower capacity governments but would also prevent a shift in trade from listed to unlisted species, as has been documented in the past (see the Sphyrnidae proposal). Furthermore, a CITES Appendix II listing would allow for an increase in data collection on many Centrolenidae species, providing better insight into the demand and global trade network that exists but remains largely unstudied.



50%+

(approximately) of all glass frog species evaluated by the IUCN Red List are threatened with extinction

◀ African elephants walk through Amboseli, Kenya with Mount Kilimanjaro in background.



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proposal 37

Requiem sharks (Carcharinidae spp.) in Appendix II

(Panama, Bangladesh, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, European Union and its Member States, Gabon, Israel, Maldives, Senegal, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

IFAW recommendation: Support

Nineteen species of requiem shark are currently assessed as Endangered or Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, as a result of unsustainable fishing mortality driven at least partly by international trade demand for their products. This categorization is based on evidence of population reduction due to fisheries exploitation, habitat deterioration, conservative life history characteristics and international trade demand for their products. Suffering population declines ranging from more than 70% to local extinctions, each of the lead species clearly meet the CITES listing criteria, and trade management for these species and their lookalikes is urgently needed.

The world has made significant progress towards managing sharks and rays in recent years, but these actions have not been enough. Shark populations continue to decline rapidly worldwide. More than 50% of shark species are threatened or near threatened with extinction, and pelagic sharks (species of sharks found on the high seas) have declined more than 70% in only a 50-year period.⁵ Adding to the concern, a recent study found that shark populations were functionally extinct on 20% of reefs surveyed globally.⁶ Small or large, coastal or high seas, sharks are disappearing, with current piecemeal management efforts failing to stop their decline. Global shark declines are driven by international demand for shark fins and meat, coupled with a widespread lack of management for both the catch and trade of shark species.

The species found in trade are threatened with extinction at twice the level of chondrichthyans (cartilaginous fishes) as a whole—70% Threatened for species in trade

versus 36% for chondrichthyans as a whole.⁷ The core of this trade is found within the requiem shark family.

The proposal also includes the rest of the Carcharhinidae family as lookalikes (all of which have been determined to be lookalikes in their most commonly traded forms, as fin and meat ID is simplest at the family level). The inclusion of the rest of the Carcharhinidae family is essential for several reasons. The fins and meat of requiem shark species (the most traded products) are difficult to visually differentiate, and the listing of species at the family level for sharks has proven more successful in the past than families that have been listed piecemeal (e.g., documented implementation issues for partial listing of the Sphyrnidae family versus listings of mobulid and wedgefish at family level). Panama has provided documentation within their proposal of the significant similarity of fins across the family. Removal of any one of the proposed species, or the listing of a subset of the family, would create a highly challenging identification and enforcement process—especially for lower capacity governments. To assist governments to better implement this listing holistically, Panama is also working with established shark trade experts to create an ID guide, which works at the family level, for Parties to review ahead of CoP19.

With such a species rich proposal that covers so much of the global shark fin trade, it will be easier for customs and enforcement staff to implement. Almost all shipments of shark fins would likely now have a CITES-listed species within it and would need the requisite paperwork. In contrast, by only listing a few requiem species, the visual ID of requiem shark meat and fins in trade would be incredibly complex and require a much higher number of staff, as well as time to sort through each shipment and differentiate between highly similar sets of unlisted and listed fins.

Furthermore, while not relevant due to CITES criteria for lookalikes, 68% of the requiem shark species are suffering declines of 70% and above—the conservative interpretation to qualify for an Appendix II listing. For the remainder of the species found in this proposal and in trade, they also qualify if the intent of CITES Appendix II (“species not yet

threatened with extinction”) holds true, especially for species with such slow life histories.

A family-level listing is the same approach taken and adopted by Parties for other shark proposals at CoP17 and CoP18 for the wedgefish and mobula rays. The comprehensive management of the main species in the fin and meat trade outlined by this proposal is essential to the survival of the world’s second most threatened group of vertebrates. Fin identification experts have verified the lookalike status across the family, and concluded that a family-level listing is the most efficient way to manage these Endangered and Critically Endangered species in trade.⁸



50%+

of shark species are threatened or near threatened with extinction, and pelagic sharks (species of sharks found on the high seas) have declined more than 70% in only a 50-year period⁵

20%

of reefs surveyed globally in a recent study found that shark populations were functionally extinct⁶

◀ School of Caribbean reef sharks swim over the coral reef, Gardens of the Queens, Cuba.



Photo: © Tom Burns

proposal 38

Small hammerhead sharks (Sphyrnidae spp.) in Appendix II

(European Union, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Panama)

IFAW recommendation: Support

The bonnethead shark (*Sphyrna tiburo*) is a small, globally Endangered shark species with a unique bonnet-shaped head. The species is traded internationally for its fins for use in shark fin soup in East Asia. The species suffered more than 70% declines in much of its range, driven in large part by unregulated international trade. Thus, the species fully meets the CITES Appendix II listing criteria. In addition to the bonnethead shark clearly meeting the CITES criteria in terms of declines, this listing is essential to ensure compliance with existing CITES listings of other species within the same family (hammerheads or family Sphyrnidae). As such, the other five non-CITES-listed members of the hammerhead family are included in the listing proposal due to their similarity in appearance in their primary traded form (fins).

At CITES CoP16 in 2013, the three large members of the hammerhead family (great, smooth and scalloped hammerheads) were listed on CITES Appendix II. At the time, only those three large-bodied hammerhead species were identified as part of the global shark fin trade. However, nearly a decade later, it is now known that bonnethead sharks, along with several other small hammerhead species, are also prevalent in the global shark fin trade.

Now that it is known that these species are found in trade, this presents a compliance issue, as all the unlisted hammerheads are lookalike species for the dried shark fins of the three listed large-bodied hammerheads. Since dried shark fins are the primarily traded form, the omission of unlisted lookalike species makes customs-level enforcement of the existing hammerhead listings challenging. This issue has been raised at the Animals Committee (see AC30 Inf.14), highlighting the need for a family-level listing of hammerhead sharks to aid customs-level enforcement of existing listings. Both on the merit of the bonnethead's Endangered status and lookalike issues throughout the this listing is required to prevent continued declines of hammerhead species due to unregulated trade, and to

facilitate enforcement of existing CITES listings.



proposal 40

Guitarfish (Rhinobatidae spp.) in Appendix II

(Israel, Kenya, Panama and Senegal)

IFAW recommendation: Support

Six species of guitarfish are proposed for listing, with the rest of the Rhinobatidae family being proposed as lookalikes. Each of these species are suffering declines of 60–99%. Shark-like rays, such as guitarfish, are especially vulnerable to overfishing, as they tend to live in coastal areas, making them both easier to catch and at risk due to climate change, coastal development and pollution. These species are also extremely slow growing, so even when management is enacted it takes the populations a long time to recover.

The fins of shark-like rays are found in global trade, and considering their slow life history,



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the Vulnerable, Endangered and Critically Endangered status of the proposed species, and their vulnerability to continued overfishing, they warrant the management that an Appendix II listing would provide. Furthermore, there have been challenges distinguishing whole carcasses, as well as parts and derivatives, from those of other shark-like ray species already listed in the Appendices (Rhinidae, Glaucostegidae and Pristidae). Therefore, an Appendix II listing would also ensure that already listed species could not be traded illicitly under the names of the unlisted Rhinobatidae species that they resemble.



proposal 42

Thelenota (pineapple sea cucumber, giant sea cucumber and red lined sea cucumber) in Appendix II

(European Union, Seychelles and United States)

IFAW recommendation: Support

Three Thelenota species have been proposed to be listed in CITES Appendix II at CITES

CoP19. Global demand for sea cucumbers has increased dramatically over the last 25 years, and without sufficient CITES management, species such as Thelenota will continue to experience population declines. The pineapple sea cucumber (*Thelenota ananas*) is experiencing population declines of 80–90% across at least half of its range and is considered overexploited in an additional third.⁹ Both the giant sea cucumber (*Thelenota anax*) and red lined sea cucumber (*Thelenota rubralineata*) are considered uncommon or rare across their range, but exact population declines are difficult to quantify due to the lack of species-specific data.¹⁰ An Appendix II listing is clearly warranted; Thelenota are slow growing and late to mature, the pineapple sea cucumber is experiencing known and significant declines, and the other two Thelenota species are also extremely vulnerable to overfishing. There is a widespread need to apply the precautionary principle to data-poor marine fisheries, an including Thelenota.

Across the globe, commercially exploited sea cucumber species face decline. Many sea cucumber species are vulnerable to overexploitation due to their late age of maturity, slow growth and low rates of recruitment, as well as their ease of capture due to low mobility and their accessibility in relatively shallow waters. Overall, global

catch and production in sea cucumber fisheries has increased 13- and 16-fold over the past two to three decades.¹¹ Prices have also risen substantially—one study concluded that market prices increased six- to twelve-fold over a decade for the species evaluated. Scientists estimate that 10% of sea cucumber fisheries worldwide are depleted, 38% are overexploited, and 14% are fully exploited.¹² Without proper management via CITES regulations of this growing demand in international trade, population declines will continue.

An Appendix II listing for these species will allow sustainable trade to continue, supporting both consumers and exporters, as well as broader marine biodiversity conservation aims.



80-90%

population decline of the pineapple sea cucumber (*Thelenota ananas*) across at least half of its range and is considered overexploited in an additional third⁹

- ▲ Pineapple sea cucumber underwater.
- ◀ A hammerhead shark.



Photo: © Brian Gratwicke

endnotes

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▲ White spotted Cochran glass frog (*Sachatamia albomaculata*) on leaf.



Photo: © Melanie Mahoney

vision:
animals and people
thriving together.



Photo: © IFAW

mission:
fresh thinking
and bold action for
animals, people and
the place we call
home.

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