



CITES CoP18

Position paper

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INTRODUCTION

The world's wildlife is in serious decline. In launching its Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, in May of this year, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), estimated that a million species may be at risk of extinction, identified direct exploitation of organisms among the key drivers of biodiversity loss, emphasised that transformative changes are required to restore and protect nature, and indicated the need for opposition from vested interests to be overcome.

Commercial trade in animals and their body parts and products is a big part of the problem facing wildlife. Wild animals are traded live as exotic pets, exhibits or for research, and their heads, skins, teeth, bones, bile and other body parts are traded as food, trophies, ornaments, jewellery, traditional medicines, tonics and supplements and for a host of other purposes.

In 2015 alone, more than 1.2 million international transactions involving protected wild animals or parts and products derived from them, were reported. And that's just the legal trade. The illegal trade in wildlife (excluding fish and timber) is thought to be worth in excess of US\$23bn.

The world needs to wake up to the fact that we cannot trade our way out of the extinction crisis. If we are to prevent further declines and secure a future for wild animals, we cannot go on treating them as mere tradable commodities.

Born Free urges government delegates at the 18th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) to adopt a highly precautionary approach in favour of wildlife protection.

ELEPHANTS



Born Free urges Parties to **OPPOSE CoP18 proposal 11** from Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe to alter the annotation to the Appendix II listing of elephant populations in those countries and in South Africa, which would enable commercial trade in various elephant products; and to **OPPOSE CoP18 proposal 10** from Zambia to downlist its elephant population from Appendix I to Appendix II subject to the stated annotation.

These proposals fly in the face of the global momentum to reduce consumer demand for ivory and run counter to the recommendations of both the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)'s World Conservation Congress that countries should close domestic ivory markets,¹ and CITES itself in Resolution Conf.10.10. (Rev. CoP17) which calls for closure of domestic ivory markets contributing to poaching or illegal trade.²

The IUCN *African Elephant Status Report* of 2016 indicated that elephant populations across Africa declined by 93,000-111,000 between 2006-2015, the biggest decline for 25 years, with poaching for ivory the main driver of decline.³ It is widely estimated that 20,000 or more elephants continue to be killed by poachers each year across Africa to supply tusks into illegal international markets. Poaching and ivory trafficking is an increasing threat to elephants in southern African countries and authorising legal trade would only aggravate the situation in the region, as well as incentivising further poaching across the species' range.

There are encouraging signs that market closures and demand reduction efforts are leading to reductions in demand and wholesale ivory prices.⁴

Any resumption of international commercial trade of elephant ivory would severely undermine both the ivory demand reduction campaigns supported by consumer country governments, and compromise international enforcement efforts. There is growing international consensus that legal ivory markets provide a convenient cover for illegal items, and thus contribute to illegal trade and fuel consumer demand for elephant ivory. This demand, in turn, incentivises poaching. Legal domestic ivory markets should be closed, as a matter of urgency. The Report on *Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants* (MIKE) to CoP18 describes an increase in proportion of illegally killed elephants (PIKE) for southern Africa since 2016, including in Chobe National Park (Botswana) and Kruger National Park (South Africa).⁵ The *Elephant Trade Information System* (ETIS) report recommends South Africa and Zimbabwe as Category C countries of concern because of exports of illegal ivory; Namibia is identified as a country of origin or export for illegally worked ivory, and Botswana as an important source of illegal trade in raw ivory.⁶

An increasing number of countries have implemented Paragraph 3 of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17) by banning or restricting trade in ivory, including the USA, China, France, Luxembourg and the UK. Additional jurisdictions have committed to or are considering similar action, including Singapore. Taiwan, Hong Kong,

Australia and Belgium. The European Union, in its *Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking*,⁷ has committed to strengthening its role in the global fight against illegal ivory trade and has taken first steps to restrict trade in ivory from the EU.

Support for proposals to trade in ivory or to weaken CITES protection for elephants would seriously undermine such policies and the progress made to date against poaching and ivory trafficking.

We also urge Parties to explicitly reject Zambia's proposal to downlist its elephant population. The Parties rejected similar proposals by Zambia at CoP12 in 2002 and at CoP15 in 2010 (after amendments tabled during the meeting to delete the ivory trade component).

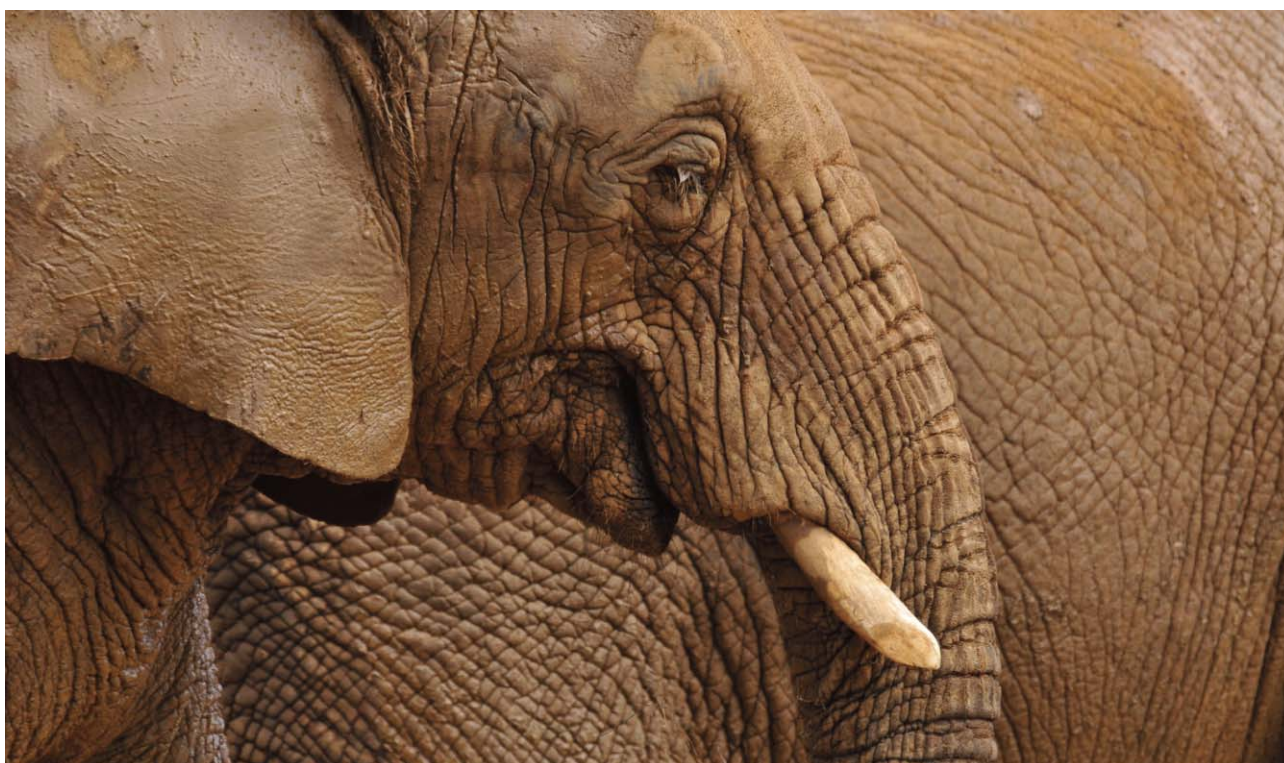
The effect of the proposal would be to allow Zambia to export registered raw African elephant ivory for commercial purposes under certain conditions, again contradicting the recommendation in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17), and undermining demand reduction campaigns and enforcement efforts.

The elephant population in Zambia is small and continues to meet the criteria for listing in Appendix I. In 1972 (three African elephant generations ago), according to Zambia, its elephant population was roughly 200,000. When elephants in Zambia were included on Appendix I in 1989, the population was estimated at roughly 18,000.⁸ The 2016 Great Elephant Census⁹ estimated Zambia's elephant population to be $21,760 \pm 4,523$. Zambia's elephant population has therefore remained roughly constant since it was placed on Appendix I, and remains small. The proposal itself recognises the fragmentation of populations within the country.

Zambia's elephants continue to be subject to poaching. The Great Elephant Census (GEC) found an alarming carcass ratio of 85% in Sioma Ngwezi National Park and substantial declines along the Zambezi River. The GEC report used Zambia as an example to illustrate that just because elephant numbers in a country may appear to be stable overall, it does not mean trends are consistent across the country. It also noted that elephants are on the verge of extinction in south west Zambia. In addition, Zambia shares its population with neighbouring countries heavily affected by poaching whose elephants are on Appendix I.

The Elephant Trade Information System report to CoP18 identifies Zambia as a country of concern linked to large-scale movements of ivory.¹⁰

Downlisting the Zambian elephant population would contradict the precautionary measures set out in Annex 4 of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17). The proposal is based upon socio-economic factors that are not part of the accepted CITES analysis to be used for assessing proposals to amend the Appendices.



Born Free urges Parties to **SUPPORT CoP18 proposal 12** from Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Kenya, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic and Togo, to transfer the elephant populations of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe from Appendix II to Appendix I.

This proposal demonstrates the significant support among African elephant range States for the return of all elephants to Appendix I.

Poaching is on the rise in parts of Southern Africa. According to the ETIS Report to SC70 (SC70 Doc. 49.1) there has been an increase in poaching in areas such as Kruger and Chobe National Parks. The South African government recently announced 72 elephants had been killed by poachers in 2018.¹¹ Reports suggest that poaching has also increased alarmingly across parts of Botswana.¹²

The Great Elephant Census (2016) noted that Botswana's elephant population had decreased by 15% since 2010 and Zimbabwe's by 6% overall. The IUCN African Elephants Status Report (2016) noted that, because of continuing uncertainties, "a well co-ordinated survey of the entire cross-border population of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe remains a very high priority", suggesting that a highly precautionary approach to the status of southern African populations is warranted.

Split-listing leads to confusing policy signals that are likely to be misinterpreted by existing market structures and creates enforcement difficulties. Indeed, CITES recommends avoiding split-listings of species due to the enforcement problems this creates (see Annex 3 of Res.Conf.9.24 (Rev. CoP17)).¹³ The biological criteria for listing in Appendix I are comfortably met if the African elephant is considered as one transboundary population. The African elephant is a highly migratory species that is not bound by national borders. In fact, 76% of Africa's elephants live in transboundary populations.¹⁴



Doc 69.1¹⁵ – IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION CONF. 10.10 (REV. CoP17) ON TRADE IN ELEPHANT SPECIMENS

Asian elephants

Born Free supports draft Decisions 18.BB and 18.CC in Annex 1, as endorsed by the Standing Committee at its 70th meeting.

Born Free also requests that Parties give consideration to the provision of funding which would assist implementation of Decision 18.BB, as per 18.CC (b).

These draft Decisions are revised versions of Decisions 17.217 and 17.218. Decision 17.217 charges Parties implicated in live trade of Asian elephants to conduct trade investigations; improve management of captive populations including through robust registration systems; and conduct trade in compliance with CITES. Decision 17.218 directs the Secretariat to assist implementation of Dec 17.127 and incorporate relevant information from range States and other sources into its reporting on implementation of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17).

Decisions 18.BB and 18.CC widen the remit of the current Decisions from live Asian elephants to all Asian elephant specimens. All indications suggest that trade in Asian elephant skin and ivory has continued since CoP17, and the wider application of the provisions in Decision 17.127 is therefore warranted.

Amends to 17.128 (18.CC), allow for a clearer role for the Secretariat, providing an improved mechanism for information gathering on implementation of 18.BB.

Aside from approving the Decision amendments, SC70 also mandated the Secretariat to issue a Notification asking for reporting on implementation of Decision 17.217 and for any identified gaps in capacity. Only four weeks was allocated for a response to this Notification, and Born Free urges Parties to request the Secretariat prioritise the issuance of future requests for reporting so that sufficient lead time is available for considered responses to be submitted.

Ivory stocks and stockpiles

Born Free urges Parties to ensure that guidance for ivory stocks and stockpiles is presented for adoption at CoP18, or as soon as possible thereafter, and not delayed until CoP19 as proposed by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat has had nearly three years to develop this guidance, with funding provided by the NGO community, and given the proliferation of ivory stockpiles and challenges with their management, reports of theft, and the threat of stockpiles leaking into illegal trade, the finalisation of official CITES guidance without further delay is urgently required.

National Ivory Action Plans (NIAPs)

Born Free urges Parties to support the adoption of the draft amendments contained in CoP18 Doc. 69.1 Annex 3, to the NIAP guidelines contained in Annex 3 of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17).

Born Free urges Parties to support the findings in the ETIS report regarding the categorisation of different countries for the NIAP process, and request that Japan be included as a Category A country in the NIAP process.

The NIAP process can reduce elephant poaching and illegal ivory trade but only if implemented effectively. The experience with NIAP implementation thus far has demonstrated that parts of the NIAP process work well and others require modification to ensure the goals of the process are met. Thus, we recommend amendments to the NIAP guidelines to ensure that progress in the NIAP process is evaluated against key indicators contained in the guidelines such as data on elephant poaching, ivory seizures, successful prosecutions, and any relevant indicators from the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC).

We further recommend that the progress reports submitted by NIAP countries be evaluated against these same indicators and that the Conference of the Parties or Standing Committee adopt appropriate measures, including compliance measures under Resolution Conf. 14.3, where a lack of meaningful progress is indicated by a country's report.

Implementation of SC69 and SC70 recommendations regarding Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) methodology

Born Free urges Parties to support the draft Decisions proposed by the Secretariat in CoP18 Doc 69.1 Annex 1 for review of the ETIS program and to ensure that the review process and its outcomes are transparent. We further support the adoption of the Decision directing the Secretariat to consider options for the Parties to “address the financial and operational sustainability of the MIKE and ETIS programmes”.

Domestic ivory markets

Born Free urges Parties to support the recommendation contained in Doc 69.1 that Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17) should be amended to clarify that “Parties that close their domestic markets” should also “enhance their border controls and collaboration with neighbouring countries that have not taken similar measures”.

Doc 69.4¹⁶ – IVORY STOCKPILES: IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION CONF. 10.10 (REV. CoP17) ON TRADE IN ELEPHANT SPECIMENS

Born Free urges Parties to SUPPORT the recommendations and draft Decisions in CoP18 Doc. 69.4 on ivory stockpiles to ensure their proper management, prevent leakage into trade, and enhance reporting of Parties to CITES on government and privately-held stockpiles to improve official CITES data on global ivory stocks.

Born Free also urges Parties to ensure practical CITES guidance for the management of ivory stockpiles, including their disposal, is finalised at CoP18 and disseminated shortly afterwards.

The report on the CITES Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) Programme for SC70,¹⁷ indicates that overall poaching levels in Africa in 2017 remained high and a matter “of concern”, with the PIKE value (Proportion of Illegally Killed Elephants) for Africa still exceeding 0.5. Furthermore, the ETIS report contained within CoP18 Doc. 69.3¹⁸ indicates that ivory seizures in 2017 were almost the same as in 2016, and may actually be higher because of under-reporting.

Range States and transit countries have accumulated significant stockpiles of seized ivory, with consequent security, management and financial challenges, and theft from stockpiles continues to be problematic.^{19,20} The existence of ivory stockpiles also fuels speculation that the international ivory trade may be restored in the future, stimulating demand and increasing pressure on elephant populations.

CoP18 Doc. 69.4 recommends the urgent and prompt finalisation at CoP18 of CITES guidance for the management of ivory stockpiles, and that Parties maintain inventories of their stockpiles and report them regularly to CITES through the application of compliance measures.

As noted in respect of CoP18 Doc. 69.1, the delay in progress towards the provision of practical guidance for the management of ivory stockpiles, including their disposal, in spite of the provision of external funding in 2017 by Born Free and other NGOs, has been disappointing. Given the continuing elephant poaching crisis and the significant challenges associated with the management and security of ivory stockpiles, any further delay in the development of guidance would be unacceptable. We therefore urge Parties to support the recommendation in CoP18 Doc. 69.4 to establish an in-session technical working group at CoP18 to complete the work and set a timetable for dissemination of the guidance to Parties.

CoP18 Doc. 69.4 further proposes important draft Decisions to enhance annual reporting on ivory stockpiles to the Secretariat, including on the quantities of ivory stolen and/or missing from the stockpiles. The draft Decisions complement revisions to Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev CoP17) recommended in Doc 69.5, and empower the Standing Committee to take action if Parties fail to provide annual inventories. Their adoption should be supported.

Doc. 69.5²¹ – IMPLEMENTING ASPECTS OF RESOLUTION CONF. 10.10 (REV. CoP17) ON THE CLOSURE OF DOMESTIC IVORY MARKETS

Born Free supports the action taken or under consideration by many Parties to close domestic ivory markets. However, the recommendation agreed at CoP17 that domestic markets “contributing to poaching or illegal trade” should be closed as a matter of urgency, has left a loophole that is being exploited by Parties with major legal markets to keep them open, most notably the EU and Japan.

The continuing existence of legal domestic ivory markets drives demand, creates opportunities for laundering illegally obtained ivory, presents monitoring and enforcement challenges, and undermines ivory bans in other countries by providing alternative outlets on which suppliers and traffickers can focus.

CoP18 Doc. 69.5 highlights the role played by markets, such as those in Japan and the EU, in perpetuating ivory trafficking. Evidence from TRAFFIC is presented suggesting that, despite amendments to tighten ivory trade controls, Japan's ivory market is contributing to illegal trade, refuting Japan's claims that its market does not involve illegal ivory. Similarly, Doc. 69.5 exposes loopholes in the EU's ivory trade controls and refutes the European Commission's claim that its market is not contributing to illegal trade and elephant poaching. Evidence shows that illegal ivory (post 1947) is being laundered through the EU market by exploiting a major loophole allowing the uncontrolled sale of "antique" ivory (ie acquired before 1947). Other significant loopholes provide further opportunities for illegally obtained/poached ivory to be laundered and sold. This was confirmed by the Environmental Law Institute (ELI) in an analysis carried out for the CITES Secretariat and summarised in SC70 Doc. 28.²²

The ELI report concludes that ivory bans can result in the shifting of ivory markets to other countries, often adjacent to the country where the ban was imposed. The only way to avoid this is by closing all domestic ivory markets worldwide. As long as legal domestic ivory markets exist, the ivory trade will continue to threaten elephants.

In the face of overwhelming evidence that all domestic ivory markets contribute to poaching or illegal trade, Born Free considers it imperative to close the loophole in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17) that is being exploited by Japan and the EU to keep their markets open.

We therefore strongly support the recommendations in Doc. 69.5 to revise Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17) to ensure all remaining domestic ivory markets are closed as a matter of urgency, as well as the enhanced provisions to enable adequate monitoring of and compliance with this recommendation, alongside other amendments proposed to enhance management and enforcement in relation to narrow exemptions and ivory stockpiles.



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WOOLLY MAMMOTHS

Born Free urges Parties to **SUPPORT CoP18 proposal 13** from Israel to list the woolly mammoth in Appendix II.

The proposal is to list the woolly mammoth, *Mammuthus primigenius*, in Appendix II in accordance with Article II, paragraph 2 (b) of the Convention (the so-called "look-alike provision"), despite the fact that this species has been extinct for thousands of years.

The major legal exporter of woolly mammoth tusks is Russia. According to the Proposal, woolly mammoth tusk imports via Hong Kong, one of the main trade routes into mainland China, have greatly expanded from an average of less than nine tonnes per year from 2000 to 2003 to an average of 31 tonnes per year from 2007 to 2013. Some reports suggest the international trade in woolly mammoth ivory may be as high as 60 tonnes annually.²³

Since woolly mammoth ivory trade is almost totally unregulated and undocumented, and because woolly mammoth ivory is not easily distinguished from elephant ivory without expertise, there is a tangible risk of illegal international trade in elephant ivory being facilitated by deliberately mislabelling specimens of elephant ivory as woolly mammoth ivory in order to circumvent CITES rules and domestic restrictions on elephant ivory.

Various reports document that woolly mammoth ivory has been intermingled with illegal elephant ivory in trans-shipment and retail stores. Specimens are often fashioned in similar styles and provide an easy cover for illegal elephant ivory to be laundered into the marketplace. Recent scientific DNA analysis found woolly mammoth ivory and illegal elephant ivory in the same shipment in Cambodia.²⁴ Extensive evidence exists of elephant ivory being sold as woolly mammoth ivory in China.²⁵ In November 2015, undercover agents bought an ivory sculpture from a renowned antiques dealer in New York, presented as being made of woolly mammoth ivory. Analysis subsequently revealed that the sculpture was actually made from elephant ivory.²⁶

The proposal to list the woolly mammoth in Appendix II would require that international commercial trade in woolly mammoth ivory is tracked and monitored to ensure that woolly mammoth ivory trade does not become a conduit for illegal ivory trade; this objective would not be achieved through an Appendix III listing.

Listing the woolly mammoth in Appendix II is not intended to stop trade in woolly mammoth ivory but rather to facilitate documentation of the international trade in woolly mammoth ivory in order to better understand its implications for living elephant populations. The proposal therefore merits support.



RHINOCEROSES



Born Free urges Parties to **OPPOSE CoP18 Proposal 8** from Eswatini to remove the existing annotation for its Appendix II-listed southern white rhinos, and **OPPOSE CoP18 Proposal 9** from Namibia to downlist its southern white rhinos from Appendix I to Appendix II subject to an annotation restricting commercial trade to live animals to appropriate and acceptable destinations and hunting trophies.

Rhino populations continue to be threatened by poaching for their horns. Since 2008, almost 8,000 rhinos have been killed by poachers in South Africa alone, and while there have been some encouraging signs that the level of poaching may be reducing, particularly in the Kruger National Park, poaching continues at unsustainable levels.

While most of the impact has been felt by South Africa to date, nevertheless the continuing poaching crisis threatens individual rhinoceros and their populations across their entire range, notably those of Namibia, Zimbabwe, Kenya, and India, with significant policy and resource implications for enforcement authorities. Any legal trade in rhinoceros horn can legitimise the product in the eyes of consumers, stimulate demand, incentivise further poaching, and create opportunities for traffickers to launder illegally-obtained rhinoceros horn into trade.

The international ban on rhino horn trade is supported by most rhino range States and must remain in place. We note in particular the Declaration²⁷ emerging from the Second Asian Rhino Range State meeting, which took place in New Delhi, India, on 26th-28th February 2019, which includes the following statement:

“To call to the attention of all countries that possible opening of international trade of rhino horn and other derivatives will have a severe detrimental impact on rhino populations in Asian rhino range countries.”

Maintaining the international ban, and supporting it through domestic bans, will help provide consumers with a clear message, and augment demand reduction efforts, while simplifying enforcement.

Eswatini's population of white rhino is extremely small and has been reduced further since CoP17. The population decreased from 73 to 66 individuals by December 2017 due to the impacts of a severe, prolonged drought. The population continues to meet the criteria for Appendix I. Eswatini remains in Category 3 of the CITES National Legislation Project²⁸ and there are serious doubts as to whether it has adequate legislation to successfully manage the proposed trade. Also, the proposal provides limited detail on who the legal trading partners would be.

Namibia's proposal appears to be a first step in paving the way for a future legal trade in rhinoceros horn, since trade in hunting trophies and live animals for non-commercial purposes is already possible under the current Appendix I listing. At around 1,000 individuals, Namibia's white rhino population remains small. Moreover,

Namibia's white rhinos are separated into approximately 70 smaller sub-populations, the population continues to meet the criteria for listing in CITES Appendix I, and the precautionary measures called for in Annex 4 of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17) should preclude downlisting of the population, as the species is in demand for international trade and its transfer to Appendix II is likely to stimulate trade and result in difficulties for enforcement authorities.

Demand for rhino horn in consumer countries remains significant, and poaching remains a very real threat in Namibia, with significantly increased poaching rates in 2015 and 2016. In its report to CoP18 contained in Annex 2 of CoP18 Doc. 83.1, IUCN/Traffic stated that "...increases in reported poaching [of rhinoceros] in Botswana and Namibia in 2018 are cause for concern".²⁹

In its report to SC70,³⁰ the SC Working Group on Rhinoceroses recognised that Namibia should be identified as a country of priority concern (as recommended in the IUCN/Traffic report to CoP17).³¹ The SC Working Group also noted that while Namibia had provided prosecution data for 85 cases relating to rhinoceros poaching and trafficking in rhinoceros horn since 2016, only one case had resulted in a conviction. It was also reported, that "prosecutors can sometimes be lenient with penalties and suspects released on bail tend to reoffend".

Born Free therefore urges Parties to reject proposals from Eswatini and Namibia which would weaken the international ban on rhinoceros horn trade, with potentially disastrous consequences for rhinoceros populations across their range.

Doc. 83.1 – RHINOCEROSES – REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE AND THE SECRETARIAT (incorporating the IUCN/TRAFFIC report to CoP18)

Born Free urges Parties to STRENGTHEN the proposed Decisions.

The IUCN/Traffic report *African and Asian Rhinoceroses – Status, Conservation and Trade*, included as Annex 2 to CoP18 Doc. 83.1, highlights that rhino poaching has been declining since 2015, and the total number of rhinos poached across Africa in 2018 is likely to have dropped below 1,000 for the first time in six years, reflecting measures taken to improve rhino protection and law enforcement, and to reduce consumer demand.

While this is welcome news, there is no room for complacency. The report indicates increases in poaching in Botswana and Namibia. Since the previous IUCN/TRAFFIC report to CoP17, continued poaching, combined with other factors including a prolonged drought in southern Africa, has resulted in an overall decline in populations of both white and black rhinos across Africa. The possibility that demand may be increasing in China, combined with the potential that China's domestic ban on commercial trade in rhinoceros horn could be weakened, are real causes for concern.

In light of this, and while recognising the value of the Decisions proposed in CoP18 Doc.83.1 Annex 1, Born Free urges Parties to strengthen the Decisions in a number of respects:

- Botswana should be added to the list of countries in Decision 18.BB, given the reported rise in poaching
- Decision 18.CC should be directed to South Africa and Namibia, in addition to Zimbabwe, given the outstanding unresolved cases in both of those countries^{32,33,34}
- Notwithstanding our support for the implementation of comprehensive domestic bans on rhinoceros horn, South Africa should be encouraged, by Decision, to expedite the finalisation and implementation of its hitherto draft Regulations relating to Domestic Trade in Rhinoceros Horn,³⁵ and other associated legislation, in order to ensure that its domestic trade is closely and adequately regulated to prevent horn legally obtained in South Africa from being exported for commercial use in illegal markets
- Timings for reporting requirements in the proposed Decisions need to be specific:
 - 18.AA has no reporting requirements
 - 18.BB – Identified Parties should be required to report to the Secretariat in advance of the document deadline for each regular meeting of the Standing Committee
 - 18.CC – identified Parties should be required to report to the Secretariat in advance of the document deadline for SC73
 - 18.FF – The Secretariat should be required to prepare recommendations for consideration by the Standing Committee at its 73rd and 74th meetings

- The reporting discrepancies noted in the IUCN/TRAFFIC report associated with trophy exports from Namibia and South Africa need to be addressed, and a Decision should be adopted calling for a detailed plan of action by these Parties with a clear reporting requirement to the 73rd Meeting of the Standing Committee
- China should be encouraged to develop and report on a National Rhino Action Plan, given its clear status as a major destination (second highest number of seizures, highest in terms of being implicated in seizures elsewhere, increasing trends by most measures for rhino horn trade, increasing number and proportion of Chinese nationals being arrested in association with rhino horn trafficking), and encouraged to report on horn stockpiles
- Decisions emerging from CoP18 should also recognise the role of additional Parties in the illegal trade chains for rhinoceros horn. Thailand, Myanmar and Lao PDR are all mentioned in the IUCN TRAFFIC report as having an identified role in illegal rhino horn markets, with Myanmar singled out for scrutiny. The report also mentions significant stockpile declarations from Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia and Thailand. A focus on illegal trade across the Vietnam/China border would also be valuable
- The recommendations on p29-30 of the IUCN/TRAFFIC report should be incorporated into Decisions, or into Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP17). In particular:
 - The ICCWC recommendation to 'follow the money' and make use of controlled deliveries, and asset forfeiture approaches to recover criminal revenues
 - The need to tackle internal corruption and staff involvement in poaching
 - The need for independent scrutiny and monitoring of court proceedings
 - The need to address the identified continued lack of regular reporting of horn stocks to CITES by range States.

Finally, in its report to SC70 contained within SC70 Doc. 56,³⁶ the SC Rhino Working Group, established at SC69 and chaired by the United Kingdom, recommended that the Standing Committee should consider directing the Secretariat to commission work to develop a methodology for measuring the impacts that Parties' efforts are having on slowing the rate of poaching and trafficking of rhinoceros horn. This recommendation should be included in any decisions emerging from CoP18, and the Standing Committee should be encouraged to consider reconvening the Rhino Working Group so it can continue its valuable work.

Doc. 83.2³⁷ – REVISIONS TO RESOLUTION CONF. 9.14 (REV. CoP17) ON CONSERVATION OF AND TRADE IN AFRICAN AND ASIAN RHINOCEROSES, AND ASSOCIATED DECISIONS

Born Free urges Parties to SUPPORT Kenya's proposed changes to Res. conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP17) and the associated decisions in Doc. 83.2.

The proposed changes would:

- Introduce language into the CITES Resolution urging all Parties to close domestic markets in rhinoceros horn
- Require Parties to report on their implementation of the Resolution through associated Decisions
- Strengthen the management of rhinoceros horn stockpiles.

The existence of legal domestic markets undermines the CITES ban on international trade in rhino horn and leads to increased poaching and illegal trade. There are strong precedents within CITES for addressing domestic trade in specimens of species at risk from heavy trade in their parts and derivatives. Before it was replaced by Resolution Conf. 9.14, Resolution Conf. 6.10 on Trade in Rhinoceros Products urged "a complete prohibition on all sales and trade, internal and international, of rhinoceros parts and derivatives, especially horn...".³⁸ At CoP17 Parties acknowledged the role domestic ivory markets play in the ongoing slaughter of the world's elephants and agreed to amend Resolution Conf. 10.10 to recommend "that all Parties and non-Parties in whose jurisdiction there is a legal domestic market for ivory that is contributing to poaching or illegal trade, take all necessary legislative, regulatory and enforcement measures to close their domestic markets for commercial trade in raw and worked ivory as a matter of urgency".³⁹ Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP17) on Conservation of and Trade in Tigers and Other Asian Big Cat Species, urges Parties "... to consider introducing national measures to facilitate implementation of CITES, such as voluntarily prohibiting internal trade in such parts, derivatives and products...".⁴⁰

The existence of legal rhinoceros horn markets confuses consumers, promotes demand, provides opportunities for the laundering of illegally obtained horn, and complicates enforcement. Claims that the CITES international trade ban for rhino horn has been ineffective are inaccurate and misleading. Previous efforts to close domestic rhino horn markets have resulted in significant reductions in rhinoceros horn trade.⁴¹ Since the moratorium was overturned by South Africa's Constitutional Court in April 2017,⁴² domestic rhino horn trade has been legal once again in South Africa, and nearly 1,000 rhino horns have been traded since the moratorium was lifted, despite the government having thus far failed to introduce new regulations for domestic trade in rhino horn.

This legal domestic trade provides new opportunities for traffickers to launder illegally sourced rhino horn into the legal market, and the pro-trade lobby in South Africa does not hide its desire to sell rhino horn and rhino horn products to consumers in Asian countries, irrespective of domestic laws banning trade in and, in some cases, possession of rhino horn. China's recent decision to weaken its domestic rhino horn trade ban⁴³ could also be devastating for the continued survival of wild rhinos.

Urging Parties to close domestic markets would increase the international pressure on those Parties in which such markets persist, thereby strengthening the international ban.

The proposed changes to the Resolution also include measures designed to strengthen the management of rhinoceros horn stockpiles. The Resolution does not currently include an option for rhinoceros horn stockpile destruction despite destruction being a recognised stockpile management tool utilised by many CITES Parties for a multitude of CITES-listed species. Stockpiles come with storage and security costs that create an added burden for often underfunded wildlife management agencies, and there is an inherent risk of theft from stockpiles of rhino horn and other high value wildlife products. Many Parties are unwilling and/or unable to provide accurate information about the amount of rhino horn in their stockpiles to the CITES Secretariat in contravention of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP17). The proposed changes aim to address these issues.

Doc 48⁴⁴ – BLACK RHINOCEROS HUNTING TROPHIES: EXPORT QUOTA FOR SOUTH AFRICA

Born Free urges Parties to OPPOSE the proposed change to South Africa's export quota for black rhinoceros hunting trophies.

The black rhino is listed as Critically Endangered by the IUCN,⁴⁵ with a total estimated population of 5,250 individuals. Decades of poaching have reduced Africa's black rhino population by 97.6% since 1960, and poaching for their horns continues to threaten the species.

Of the three black rhino subspecies found in South Africa, the countrywide population of the most widespread (*D. b. minor*) is reported to be declining by 1.35% per annum,⁴⁶ while the other two subspecies (*D. b. bicornis* and *D. b. michaeli*) are comprised of very small populations numbering 254 and 79 individuals respectively, according to the IUCN/TRAFFIC report to CoP17.⁴⁷

The Proposal itself acknowledges that the distribution of the black rhinoceros in South Africa is fragmented, and that there is currently no benefit derived for habitat conservation through trophy hunting of black rhinoceros.

The proposal indicates that, for the period 2005-2015, a total of 40 hunting trophies were exported from South Africa, representing on average 75% of the current annual export quota of five individuals. It therefore seems that an increase in the annual quota is unnecessary.

Worryingly, the proposal indicates that, by increasing the export quota for hunting trophies to 0.5% of the population, it would increase total offtake to 48% of the potential annual population increment when taking into account rhinos killed due to poaching.

The proponent argues that this increase in quota will provide an incentive for private rhino owners to purchase and breed more black rhinos. However, an increase of just four trophies annually is unlikely to result in the envisioned increase in black rhino owners, especially given that between 2005 and 2015 South Africa has annually exported, on average, less than the maximum five permitted black rhino trophies.

Increasing the number of trophy exports would potentially further reduce the potential annual population increment, a constraint this species cannot afford.

AFRICAN LIONS



AGENDA ITEM 76 – AFRICAN LION (*Panthera leo*)

Lions are in serious decline across much of Africa – the 2016 IUCN Red List assessment⁴⁸ inferred a 43% decline over the previous 21 years (or three lion generations), and estimated that just 23,000-39,000 mature individuals remain across the continent, occupying as little as 8% of their historic range.

Across all but four southern African countries, lions have declined by an average of approximately 60%, and the population of West Africa is regionally classified as Critically Endangered.⁴⁹

Both the IUCN Red List assessors and lion range States⁵⁰ have agreed that trade in lion products (particularly bones) are major contributing factors to these declines. Trophy hunting is also identified as a potential threat in the IUCN Red List assessment, depending on how it is regulated and managed.

CITES represents a mechanism by which close management and monitoring of international trade in lions can be achieved. Born Free strongly advocates the adoption of a highly precautionary approach to trade in lions and lion products from any source.

Doc 76.1 (Rev.1) – Report of the Secretariat

Born Free urges Parties to SUPPORT the adoption of the draft Decisions in Annex 1, with some strengthening of those Decisions to specify reporting timelines.

The draft Decisions proposed by the Secretariat in Annex 1 of its document replace those agreed at CITES CoP17, and direct the Secretariat to:

- Undertake a study of lion population trends and conservation and management practices
- Convene a CITES Big Cats Task Force
- Conduct further research and analysis on the legal and illegal trade in lions and other big cats
- Assess whether the trade in lion specimens reported under purpose code “H” follows the guidance in RC 12.3 (Rev. CoP17) on Permits and Certificates, par. 3 h.

The Decisions also direct the Animals and Standing Committees to develop recommendations for CoP19.

While supporting these proposed measures, Born Free urges Parties to ensure they are accompanied by appropriate deadlines:

- Decision 18AA(e) should specify that the Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa be shared with AC in time for them to be included on the agenda of AC30, noting that Version 1 of the Guidelines have been provided in CoP18 Inf 10⁵¹

- Decisions 18AA(f) and 18CC(f) should specify a reporting requirement to AC31 & 32 and SC73 & 74
- Decision 18BB(a) should specify a timeline for the establishment of the proposed CITES Big Cats Task Force and its mandate.

Doc 76.2⁵² – CONSERVATION OF AND TRADE IN AFRICAN LIONS

Born Free urges Parties to SUPPORT the adoption of the draft Resolution submitted by Nigeria and Togo in CoP18 Document 76.2.

The TRAFFIC report *The Legal and Illegal Trade in African Lions*, appended to the Secretariat's report in SC70 Doc 54.1,⁵³ also acknowledges that poaching of lions for trade in body parts is an emerging threat, and increasing demand for lion bone and other products in Asia may have an impact on wild lion populations across their range, as well as on other big cat populations. The report also identifies major discrepancies in the data obtained from the CITES Trade Database on trade in lion specimens.

Ongoing legal trade in lion specimens from captive breeding operations may result in product legitimisation in the eyes of consumers, demand stimulation, opportunities for laundering illegally obtained products into trade, and enforcement challenges, which could in turn impact on wild lions through increased poaching for international trade.

A specific CITES Resolution is therefore warranted to augment other conservation measures. The possible need for a Resolution was recognised in Decision 17.243(b), adopted by consensus at CoP17. Niger, as Chair of the Working Group on African lions established at SC69, recommended the development of a Resolution in its report to SC70⁵⁴ and its presentation to the joint CMS/CITES African Carnivores Initiative Range State meeting⁵⁵ held in November 2018 in Bonn, Germany.

The proposed Resolution would:

- Encourage Parties and stakeholders to increase public awareness of the plight of lions, their importance to African ecosystems, and the damaging conservation and societal impacts of lion population declines, necessitating closer monitoring of domestic and international trade in lion products
- Establish a formal process by which range States and other Parties should review policies on trade in lion specimens, prioritise enforcement of international restrictions on trade in lion products, enhance associated regulatory and enforcement activities, and share information on seizures, arrests, prosecutions and sentences with the CITES Secretariat, any relevant CITES Task Force, other Parties and law enforcement agencies as appropriate
- Enhance co-operation amongst law enforcement agencies at national and international levels, and between enforcement agencies and CITES Authorities, concerning control of trade in lion specimens
- Promote the recognition of the potential risk that legal trade in lion specimens from captive-bred lions will act as a stimulus and cover for illegal trade in wild lion specimens, the difficulties for enforcement authorities in distinguishing between lion specimens from captive-bred and wild populations, and the need to adopt a precautionary approach (and where appropriate establish a zero quota) with respect to any trade in lion products from any source
- Encourage the regulation and monitoring of the activities of captive breeding facilities in order to prevent commercial trade in lion products that might impact wild lion populations
- Encourage the development and implementation of demand reduction/consumer behaviour change campaigns
- Establish strict and precautionary quotas for lion trophy exports (including the possibility of a zero quota)
- Provide clear direction to Parties and the Secretariat on regular reporting requirements with respect to trade in lion specimens.

The draft Resolution will augment mechanisms by which trade in lions can be managed by the Convention, and contribute to wider measures aimed at improving the conservation and protection of African lions through the African Carnivores Initiative.

GREAT APES



Doc 73⁵⁶ – GREAT APES (*Hominidae* spp.)

Born Free urges Parties to SUPPORT the adoption of the draft changes to Resolution Conf. 13.4 (Rev. CoP16) contained in CoP18 Doc. 73 Annex 1.

Born Free also urges Parties to push for the re-establishment of the Great Ape Task Force, with a mandate to assist Parties and other key stakeholders with the implementation of the Convention and the Resolution in respect of trade in great apes.

The GRASP/IUCN Great Ape Status Report, annexed to SC70 Doc 52,⁵⁷ raises a number of concerns relating to trade in great apes:

- All great apes are listed on Appendix I of CITES, all are considered Endangered or Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List, and all are protected by national legislation in their range States. All but one sub-species are in decline, some are in drastic decline
- The biological characteristics of great apes render them highly vulnerable to exploitation from even low levels of offtake
- Poaching for the illegal domestic and international bushmeat trade is a highly significant threat to most great ape populations. Illegal trafficking of live infants is recognised as an additional issue for some populations, and for every infant in trade, several other animals are likely to have been killed. The true scale of poaching and trafficking remains difficult to evaluate
- Increasing development/conversion of, and human encroachment into, great ape habitats is a serious threat, and further facilitates poaching and illegal trade
- Criminal syndicates are known to target and traffic great apes using fraudulent CITES permits
- Very few arrests/convictions have been made for illegal trade in great apes or products derived from them. Weak enforcement, lenient sentencing and corruption present serious obstacles to tackling ape trafficking.

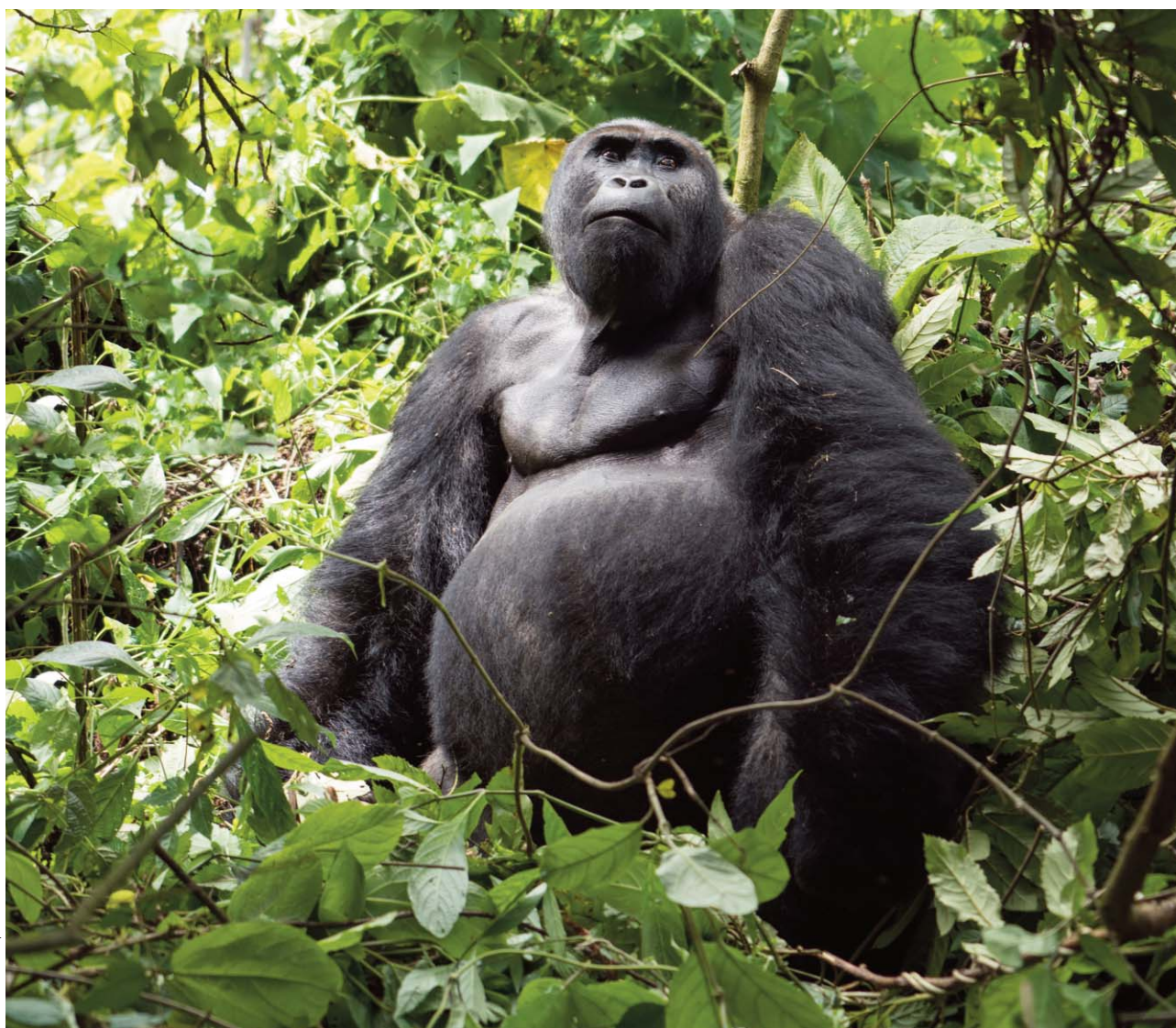
While illegal live trade is commonly considered a by-product of poaching for bushmeat, nevertheless given the vulnerability of great apes to exploitation, and the likelihood that illegal live trade is dramatically under-reported, live trade should be considered among key factors that threaten the survival of great ape populations. The GRASP *Stolen Apes* report⁵⁸ estimates that close to 1,800 great apes were captured from the wild for illegal trade between 2005-2011, and 115 seizures of internationally-trafficked live great apes were recorded for the period 2000-2014.⁵⁹

The CITES Trade Database also provides evidence of inconsistencies and inappropriate use of source and purpose codes for great apes.

Further action is clearly required by CITES Parties to prevent illegal trade in great apes. The changes to Resolution Conf. 13.4 (Rev. CoP16) suggested in CoP18 Doc 73 Annex 1 should therefore be supported.

Born Free also recommends the re-establishment of the Great Ape Enforcement Task Force (originally suggested at CITES SC53) co-ordinated by the Enforcement Unit within the CITES Secretariat and with members drawn from law enforcement agencies and/or customs authorities of CITES Parties of great ape range States, key intergovernmental agencies including ICCWC members, representatives of relevant regional Wildlife Enforcement Networks, and other recognised experts, and with a mandate to:

- Liaise closely with local, regional and international experts, including non-government organisations, with interest and experience in great ape conservation and trade issues
- Assist GRASP and the Section on Great Apes (SGA) of the IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group with the compilation of regular reports to Standing Committee and CoP on the status of and trade in great apes
- Provide intelligence support and technical advice to CITES Parties, aimed at identifying and tackling illegal trade in great apes, including online trade
- Establish a great ape trade resource kit to assist Parties in their efforts to tackle illegal trade in great apes
- Work closely with the CITES and CMS Secretariats (including any appropriate/related daughter agreements such as the Gorilla Agreement) and provide assistance in the development and implementation of measures aimed at securing great ape conservation and tackling illegal trade in great apes.



GIRAFFES

Born Free urges Parties to **SUPPORT CoP18 proposal 5** from Central African Republic, Chad, Kenya, Mali, Niger and Senegal to list *Giraffa camelopardalis* on CITES Appendix II.

Giraffes meet the criteria for listing on Appendix II according to Article II, paragraph 2 (a), of the Convention, as a 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 utilisation incompatible with their survival”. The species also meets Criterion B of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17), Annex 2a: “that regulation of trade in the species is required to ensure that the harvest of specimens from the wild is not reducing the wild population to a level at which its survival might be threatened by continued harvesting or other influences”.

In addition, the species meets the precautionary measures found in Annex 4 of that Resolution: “when considering proposals to amend Appendix I or II, the Parties shall, by virtue of the precautionary approach and in case of uncertainty, either as regards the status of a species or the impact of trade on the conservation of a species, act in the best interest of the conservation of the species concerned and adopt measures that are proportionate to the anticipated risks to the species”.

The giraffe is classified as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species due to an observed, past (and ongoing) population decline of 36-40% over three generations (30 years, 1985-2015).⁶⁰ The number of mature individuals is estimated as 68,293.

Giraffe populations are scattered and fragmented with different growth trajectories and threats. The population sizes of the nine sub-species varies widely, with two of them (*G. c. giraffa* and *G. c. tippelskirchi*) accounting for close to half of giraffes living in Africa, while the other seven sub-species live in scattered, fragmented populations, with some numbering fewer than 1,000 animals. *G.c. reticulata* is classified as Endangered on the IUCN Red List, while *G.c. antiquorum* and *G.c. camelopardalis* are both classified as Critically Endangered.

The 2018 IUCN Red List assessment states that legal hunting of giraffes occurs in parts of southern Africa, illegal hunting for meat takes place in several parts of the range, and that some trade in live specimens takes place between game ranches in southern Africa. However, examination of US trade data indicates that between 2006 and 2015, almost 40,000 giraffe specimens were imported to the US alone, the equivalent of at least 3,750 individual giraffes. Items included bone carvings, bones, trophies, skins and skin pieces, and jewellery. Trade data for other countries does not exist in readily-accessible formats since the species is as yet not listed on CITES and therefore trade is not recorded on the CITES trade database.

The listing of giraffes on Appendix II would bring this increasingly threatened species within the purview of CITES and enable the Convention to monitor trade in the species to ensure it does not contribute to further population declines.

Born Free wishes to draw Parties' attention to the *Declaration in Support of the Proposal to Include the Giraffe in CITES Appendix II*, issued by the 30 member countries of the African Elephant Coalition, nine of which are also giraffe range States, in Nairobi, Kenya on 13th February 2019; and to the supplemental information supporting the Proposal provided by the proponents in CoP18 Inf 6.⁶¹



ASIAN SMALL-CLAWED OTTERS

Born Free urges Parties to **SUPPORT CoP18 proposal 6** by India, Nepal and the Philippines to transfer the Asian small-clawed otter from Appendix II to Appendix I.

The IUCN Red List classifies Asian small-clawed otters as Vulnerable⁶² with a decreasing trend due to inferred population decline driven by habitat loss and exploitation. The population is inferred to have declined by more than 30% in the last 30 years due, in large part, to significant reductions in its range, and exploitation for the global trade in otter skins and the pet trade.

Asian small-clawed otters have disappeared or declined in many parts of their range. They are believed to be extirpated or extremely rare throughout much of their range in southern China. Recent surveys suggest that small-clawed otters have disappeared from the western Himalayan foothills and perhaps the Indian part of the Sundarbans. It is likely that the present range in India has been diminished, and they are now considered to be extremely rare in Myanmar.

Throughout their range, Asian small-clawed otters are threatened by habitat loss from human development and activities. In addition, poaching for illegal trade in furs, traditional medicine and a burgeoning online trade in otter pups as pets pose a threat to the survival of the species. Small-clawed otters are popular attractions in zoos and increasingly in pet shops, pet fairs, and even in coffee shops. In just two years, between 2015 and 2017, 59 live otters, mostly juveniles, were confiscated in four countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam), and 32 were identified as Asian small-clawed otters, according to a report by TRAFFIC.⁶³ The report also documented between 734 and 1,189 otters advertised for sale online in 560 advertisements in Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Malaysia over a four-month period, 98% of which were for Asian small-clawed otters, which is the most popular otter in the pet trade (due to its small size).

An additional report by TRAFFIC in 2018 on otter trade in Japan⁶⁴ described an unprecedented boom in demand for otters. A total of 32 small-clawed otters were reported to be on display across 10 cafes, the vast majority of live otters imported by Japan between 2000 - 2016 were small-clawed otters, and smuggling from Thailand to Japan increased sharply in 2016 and 2017, when five cases involving 39 live otters (75% of the 52 otters seized in total) were reported. The TRAFFIC report identified increased visibility and popularity of pet otters on social networking sites and the possible amplification of the demand by the mass media was identified as a serious concern, and stated: "The repeated seizure incidents involving Japanese suspects and the large number of otters (10 to 12 juveniles) seized in one consignment likely indicate the presence of organised smuggling operations targeting market demand in Japan. The fact that the retail price in the Japanese market has reached over 300 times the reported black market price in Thailand further suggests strong financial incentives underpinning attempts to smuggle live otters to Japan."

In addition, CITES trade data⁶⁵ revealed imports for commercial purposes of 83 live otters between 2000 and 2016, of which 74 (89% of the total), including all of the imports since 2009, were small-clawed otters. Some of these imports were identified under the exemptions applying to zoos and to captive-bred specimens.

A study of online trade in otters via five Facebook groups in Thailand from March 2017 to April 2018⁶⁶ found 160 sale posts from 59 individual sellers, with a total of up to 337 individual otters advertised for sale, 127 of which were identified as small-clawed otters. An additional 183 individuals were unidentifiable as the photos posted were unclear or the otters were too young to identify them to species level. The authors concluded: "Chances of survival for newborn otters in the trade appear to be low; this is reflected from the juvenile otters which [were] offered at a higher price as a result of increased survival chance. However, the much higher volume of newborn pups supplied in the trade indicates that otters are indiscriminately extracted from the wild, even as a newborn, despite the risk of death. While each trader individually sells a small number of otters each time, the overall volume of the trade itself is significant, raising concerns for the wild populations of smooth-coated otter and Asian small-clawed otter, both of which are already recognised by the IUCN Red List as Vulnerable".

With regard to cross-border trade, the authors stated: "Online otter trade in Malaysia has also been reported, especially in the northern region of Kelantan which borders Thailand". This suggests a potential international trade link which needs to be further explored. This aspect of potential international trade should not be overlooked as it has potential implications to the implementation of CITES.

The species has also been found on sale in the European pet market, with prices for 20 small-clawed otters offered online on German trade platforms between 2010 and 2014 ranging from €600 - €1,500 per individual (Pro Wildlife 2016).⁶⁷ In 2015, AAP Animal Advocacy and Protection's rescue centre in the Netherlands was asked to re-home six live specimens which had been confiscated from a Dutch dealer/hobbyist.

SMOOTH-COATED OTTERS

Born Free urges Parties to **SUPPORT CoP18 proposal 7** by Bangladesh, India and Nepal to list the smooth-coated otter on Appendix I.

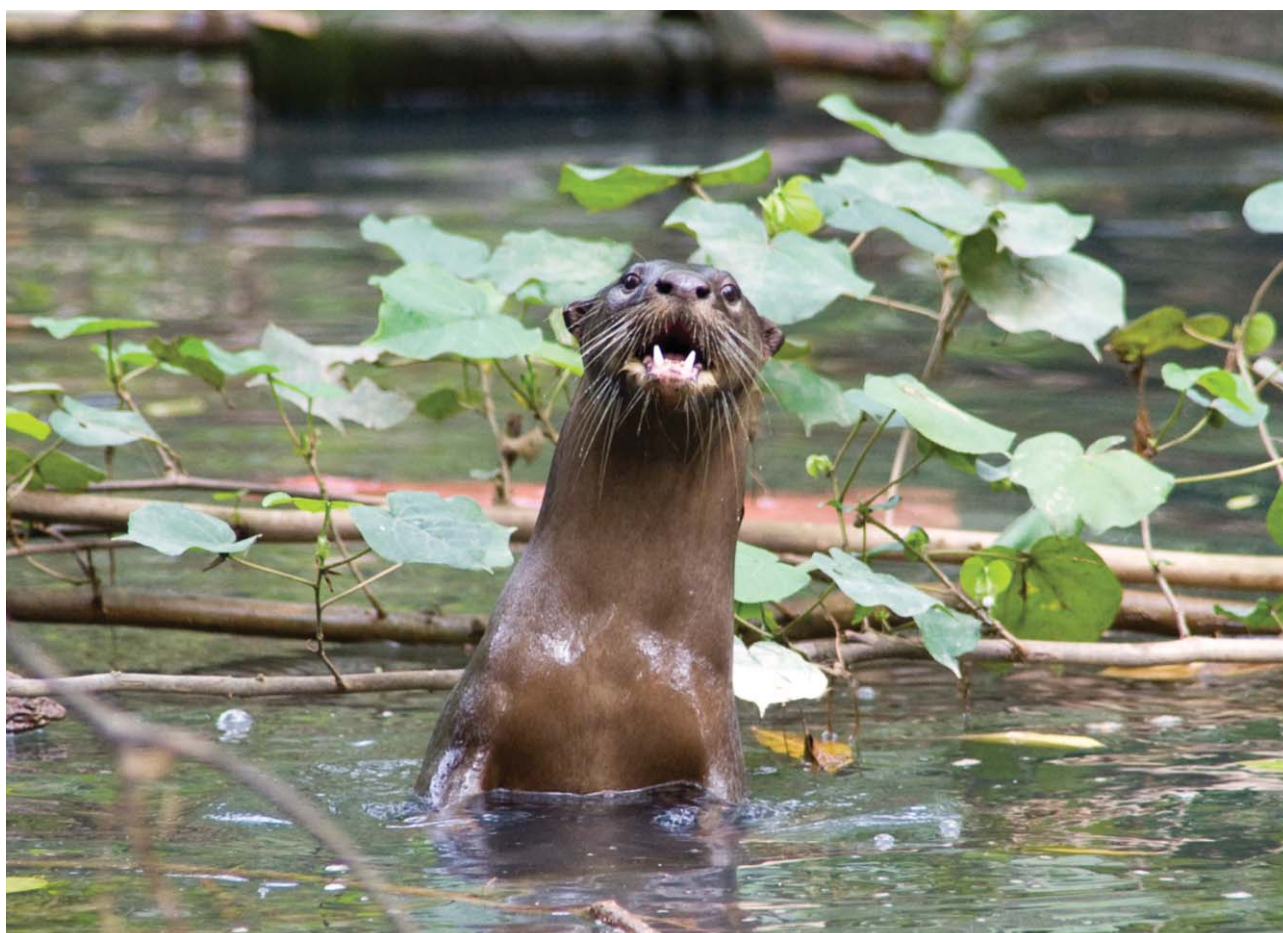
The smooth-coated otter is classified as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List,⁶⁸ which infers a global population decline of more than 30% in the last 30 years.

In the last decade, loss of mangroves to aquaculture, reclamation of wetlands for settlements and aquaculture, stone quarrying and sand mining, large-scale hydroelectric projects, and other habitat alterations have led to significantly reduced habitat for smooth-coated otters. This and significant poaching intensity has resulted in population reductions in many parts of its range. It is believed that the population has been extirpated from most parts of its range in Iraq due to intensive poaching pressure.

According to TRAFFIC, poaching and illegal trade for use as pets, for fur, and for use in traditional medicine poses a significant and growing threat to all tropical Asian otter species. Between 1980 and 2015, 2,949 otter pelts were reported to have been seized in India.⁶⁹ Although few were identified down to the species level, given that smooth-coated otter pelts are desirable, a significant number are likely to have been derived from smooth-coated otters. In 1993 alone, 40 skins were identified as smooth-coated otters amongst the 234 total skins seized in India that year.

In Pakistan, fisherman target smooth-coated otters for their pelts as they fetch high prices from middlemen who move the pelts into Russia. In Iraq, smooth-coated otters are hunted for their pelts and sold to smugglers who operate along Iraq's borders, fetching US\$100 - US\$300 per pelt.

The trade in live otters for pets is an emerging threat to tropical Asian otters and smooth-coated otters were also found for sale in a TRAFFIC study.⁷⁰ A study of online trade in otters via five Facebook groups in Thailand from March 2017 to April 2018⁷¹ identified 15 posts specifically offering a total of 29 individual smooth-coated otters. A further 183 individuals were unidentifiable as the photos posted were unclear or the otters were too young to identify them to species level. For more details on implications of the trade, see our comments on the small-clawed otter.



SAIGA ANTELOPES

Born Free urges Parties to **SUPPORT CoP18 proposal 2** submitted by Mongolia and the US to transfer the saiga antelope from Appendix II to Appendix I.

The saiga antelope is classified on the IUCN Red List as Critically Endangered.⁷² The assessment estimates the total population across the species range in Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Russian Federation, at approximately 124,000 mature individuals with a decreasing trend.

The Proposal references reports indicating catastrophic population declines in excess of 80% over recent decades.

The IUCN Red List assessment identifies uncontrolled illegal hunting for horns and meat since the break up of the former USSR as a major and ongoing cause for population declines, with selective hunting of young males distorting sex ratios additionally affecting reproduction. Destruction of key habitats and interruption of traditional migration routes are identified as significant secondary threats, alongside mass mortality events caused by disease outbreaks.

The proposal reports that while every range State operates a ban or moratorium on hunting, illegal hunting for horns and associated illegal trade continues. Significant horn stockpiles are reported; for example, Singapore exports high volumes of saiga horn to China, Hong Kong SAR and Malaysia.

An examination of data from the CITES trade database for 2016 alone revealed that 944kg of saiga products, described as horn or medicine, were exported from China, Japan, Kazakhstan and Singapore for commercial purposes, with in excess of 25,000 additional items identified only as medicine reported to have been exported for commercial purposes for which the units were not specified.⁷³

The criteria for an Appendix I listing are clearly met, given the marked and ongoing decline in the population size in the wild, and the fact that international trade in horns, skins, and meat is identified as the major threat to the survival of the species. The species has a high vulnerability due to intrinsic and extrinsic factors (disease, fluctuations in population size due to mass mortality events, vulnerability to climate change which exacerbates the impact of disease, and habitat fragmentation).



BUKHARA MARKHORS (Population of Tajikistan)

Born Free urges Parties to **OPPOSE CoP18 proposal 1** submitted by Tajikistan to transfer its population of the Bukhara markhor from Appendix I to II.

Capra falconeri heptneri is a sub-species of markhor that exists in Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The sub-species has not been assessed by IUCN, although at a species level the markhor, *C. falconeri*, is classified on the IUCN Red List as Near Threatened with a total mature population estimated at 5,754 individuals.⁷⁴ The assessment estimated the total population of *C. f. heptneri* to about 1,680 markhor (1,008 mature individuals) with around two thirds of those located in Tajikistan.

According to the IUCN assessment, the main threats to the subspecies in Tajikistan are poaching for meat, skins, and horns, illegal trophy hunting leading to low population of adult males (4 - 5% of the total number compared to 20% in other areas), and poor habitat quality due to fuel wood collection and intensive grazing.

CITES trade data is only available for *C. falconeri* with exports from Tajikistan (2007-2016) of eight wild-sourced hunting trophies.

The biological characteristics of the species (age at maturity, gestation, fecundity, average lifespan) make it highly vulnerable to over-utilisation.

The Appendix I listing criteria continue to be met for the species. The global population of *C. f. heptneri* is small (defined as < 5,000 in Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17)) and most populations are very small (defined as < 500 in Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17)).⁷⁵ In addition, the sub-species occurs in very few locations: two in Afghanistan, two in Turkmenistan (one of these is shared with Uzbekistan), and two in Tajikistan.

In addition, Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17) states that “listing of a species in more than one Appendix should be avoided in general in view of the enforcement problems it creates”.



AGAMID LIZARDS

- *Calotes nigrilabris* and *Calotes pethiyagodai*
- *Ceratophora aspera*, *C. erdeleni*, *C. karu*, *C. stoddartii* and *C. tennentii*
- *Cophotis ceylanica* and *Cophotis dumbara*
- *Lyriocephalus scutatus*

Born Free urges Parties to **SUPPORT CoP18 proposals 23, 24, 25 and 26** submitted by Sri Lanka to list 10 species of Agamidae in Appendix I.

Of Sri Lanka's 220 recorded reptile species, 135 are endemic,⁷⁶ including all 10 species in the four proposals.

All 10 species are threatened by habitat destruction and fragmentation involving anthropogenic activities such as deforestation. Harvesting and trade places these species at significant further risk. They are highly sought after in the pet industry, with many exhibiting unique morphological and behavioural features which render them attractive to this market. High prices at the retail end make these species particularly attractive to traffickers.

Sri Lanka prohibits the collection and export of all these species under its Flora and Fauna Protection (Amendment) Act, No. 49 of 1993, which is part of the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance No. 2 (1937). Despite this clear and strong legislation, an alarming abundance of adult Sri Lankan lizards have been showing up in the international pet trade market in recent years.

In 2010, the high demand for unique and rare species became apparent when a delegation of 14 German pet traders visited Sri Lanka in order to examine export options for endemic reptiles. This initiative met with strong local opposition, and was ultimately abandoned, with no legal exports resulting, but in 2011 wildlife traders began offering Sri Lankan agamids for sale. Since that time, all 10 species have been observed for sale online. Highlighting the presence of active markets and lucrative returns, a wide variety of foreign nationals trade in these 10 species, including Russian, Italian, German, French, Spanish, Czech, British, Japanese, Malaysian, and Taiwanese.

There is a very small chance that prior to this export ban, individuals that were exported legally are the origin of specimens currently in trade. However, there is very little evidence of captive breeding success for any of these species. Therefore, since exports from the species' sole range State have been banned for many years, there is a very high likelihood that specimens currently in trade in the EU and elsewhere were illegally taken from the wild. In addition, there is solid evidence of recent cases of trafficking, and online advertising for the sale of all the lizard species subject to the Proposals, usually as adults. This presents further evidence of illegal trade, particularly in the EU and USA.

National conservation and protection measures appear to be insufficient to save these species from unlawful collection and smuggling to exotic pet markets. Excluding the USA, no Party has legislation which prohibits the import and sale of specimens for which capture and export is illegal in the country of origin. Therefore, a listing on CITES Appendix I is necessary to involve all import markets in active enforcement.

The proposals meet criteria A, B and C in Annex I of Res. Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17) for a CITES Appendix I listing as outlined in the individual proposals.

Calotes nigrilabris* and *C. pethiyagodai

C. nigrilabris is classified as Endangered in the National Red List of Sri Lanka.⁷⁷ Due to its recent discovery, *C. pethiyagodai* is not yet listed in the National Red List but due to its small area of occupancy would already seem to qualify for endangered status. Neither species has yet been assessed by the IUCN Red List.

Due to their restricted range, small populations, habitat specialisation and low reproductive output, *C. nigrilabris* and *C. pethiyagodai* are highly vulnerable to habitat loss and over-collection. Thus, although total numbers in trade may not be very high, even moderate offtakes are of significant concern. Since 2011, *C. nigrilabris* has been regularly observed in the international pet trade.

The proposed listing satisfies Criteria A (i) and (v); and B (i), (iii) and (iv); and C (i) of Res. Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17) Annex I.

***Ceratophora* spp**

Of the five species in the genus, three (*C. karu*, *C. erdeleni*, and *C. tennentii*) are restricted to relatively small areas of Sri Lanka and are classified as critically endangered in Sri Lanka's National Red List. The remaining two (*C. aspera* and *C. stoddartii*) are classed as endangered. The IUCN Red List has assessed two *Ceratophora* species; *C. tennentii* is classified as Endangered and *C. aspera* as Vulnerable.

Like most Sri Lankan agamids, *Ceratophora* species prefer very specific microclimatic and habitat conditions and this renders them particularly susceptible to any threat. *Ceratophora* lizards are well renowned for their distinct colouration and snout extensions, and a considerable number of adult animals of all five species have been observed on sale in international pet markets: *C. stoddartii* since 2011, *C. aspera* and *C. tennentii* since 2014, and *C. erdeleni* and *C. karu* since 2017. *C. stoddartii* is one of the most abundant Sri Lankan agamids recorded in the international pet trade.

The proposed listing satisfies criteria A i), ii) and v); and B i), iii) and iv) of Res. Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17) Annex I.

Cophotis ceylanica* and *Cophotis dumbara

Both species occur in restricted areas and are seriously threatened. The IUCN Red List and the National Red List of Sri Lanka both classify *C. dumbara* as Critically Endangered, and *C. ceylanica* is listed as endangered in Sri Lanka's National Red List but remains unassessed by the IUCN Red List.

While *C. ceylanica* is more commonly observed in the international pet trade, *C. dumbara* has also been seen in trade since at least 2016.

The proposed listing satisfies criteria A (i), (ii) and (v); and B (i), (iii) and (iv); and C (ii) of Res. Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17) Annex I.

Lyriocephalus scutatus

The hump snout lizard is classified on Sri Lanka's Red List as vulnerable, and is listed as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List. It is the only species of its genus, and has bright colouration and a unique snout structure.

The range of *L. scutatus* is increasingly restricted due to severe and ongoing deforestation and subsequent habitat loss caused by human activities. Despite its distribution representing a relatively significant area, due to its complex territorial behaviour and susceptibility to a reduction in mating partners, collection poses a significant risk of further fragmentation of the species in its habitat. The IUCN Red List assessment notes that collection for the pet trade is reducing population numbers.⁷⁸

The popularity of the hump snout lizard in Japanese, European and USA pet markets has been on the increase since 2013, as reflected by records of online trade. In some cases these adverts openly state the wild caught origin of the specimens. Prices in the European pet market may reach €2,500 per pair, while prices in the US market are as high as US\$5,500 per pair.

The proposed listing satisfies criteria B iii), and iv) of Res. Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17) Annex I.



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STAR TORTOISES

Born Free urges Parties to **SUPPORT CoP18 proposal 36** submitted by Bangladesh, India, Senegal and Sri Lanka to transfer the star tortoise from Appendix II to I.

India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are the range States of the star tortoise and it has been listed on Appendix II since 1975 (as *Testudinidae* spp). The IUCN Red List classifies the star tortoise as Vulnerable, with a decreasing population trend (2016 assessment). In upgrading the status from Lower Risk/Least Concern, IUCN assessors took into consideration that “the illegal wildlife trade is increasingly targeting this species to meet apparently increasing international demand for use as exotic pets (and that) illegal collection for the international wildlife trade is of most major concern”.⁷⁹

As far back as 1998, the *Sri Lankan Conservation Assessment Management Plan* identified its declining population in the country, and also identified the pet trade as one of the species’ main threats, thus classifying it as Vulnerable as per IUCN criteria.⁸⁰

Collection is known to be widespread across its range, stimulated by demand from the global pet trade. Most of the pet trade involves small to medium-sized animals. The principal markets are in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and China, with secondary markets in other south east and east Asian countries, Europe and USA. *Geochelone elegans* was the most frequent illegally traded tortoise seized by Thai authorities between 2008 and 2013 (5,966 individuals in 15 cases).⁸¹

In India, a vibrant domestic trade dating back to at least the 1970s was largely wiped out when enforcement was activated, and appears to have been replaced by the export trade.⁸² In the early 1990s, about 5,000 tortoises were estimated to be illegally exported, but in the following years the trade dramatically expanded, as evidenced by at least 55,000 collected in 2014 from just one location over one year.⁸³

All three range States have enacted stricter domestic measures for *G. elegans*. In India, the species has been listed on Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 for over four decades and it is therefore illegal to possess and commercially trade this species either within or from India. In Sri Lanka, *G. elegans* is listed on Schedule II (Strictly Protected Fauna) of the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance Act 2009, making it illegal to remove, possess, trade or consume in Sri Lanka. In 2014, Pakistan included *G. elegans* in Schedule II (Protected Animals) of the Sindh Wildlife Protection Ordinance 1972.

Domestic regulations and their enforcement in range States are being undermined by consumer countries which have a legal domestic trade; once they arrive in such countries, it becomes very difficult to differentiate wild-sourced from legally captive-bred specimens. *G. elegans* is therefore one of those commercially-exploited species which would clearly benefit from national bans in countries with a significant demand.

While legitimate captive breeding of *G. elegans* does take place, laundered wild-sourced specimens (as well as smuggled specimens) are strongly indicated to be the bulk of traded individuals.

Habitat loss and conversion are additional serious threats.

G. elegans meets the criteria for an Appendix I listing since it has a restricted area of distribution, is characterised by high vulnerability and has suffered a marked decline in its population size in the wild.

ASIAN BIG CATS

Doc.71.1⁸⁴ – REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

Doc.71.2⁸⁵ – DRAFT DECISIONS ON ASIAN BIG CATS

Born Free urges Parties to SUPPORT the adoption of all draft Decisions in Doc.71.2, with one amend to draft Decision 18.JJ so that Parties are directed to submit reports for consideration at SC73.

Due to significant overlap, these two documents are covered here together. Noting the ongoing delay in implementation of actions on Asian big cats already agreed by previous CoPs, Born Free considers that the draft Decisions proposed by India in Annex 1 of Doc.71.2 are urgently required to address these ongoing delays and to enable implementation of existing measures under Resolution Conf. 12.5 (CoP17) and Decision 14.69.

The proposed Decisions in Doc.71.2 are based on the wealth of information made available through implementation of Decision 17.228 and, *inter alia*, urge: i) Parties to prohibit internal and international commercial trade in, and regulate possession of Asian big cat parts and derivatives, and take law enforcement action against those engaged in illegal trade; b) Parties implicated in Asian big cat trade to strengthen enforcement controls and co-operation with neighboring countries to dismantle criminal networks; and c) consumer states to take urgent action to end demand for big cat parts and derivatives.

Regarding the Secretariat's recommendations in Doc.71.1:

- A. Born Free SUPPORTS the retention of Decision 14.69, agreed at CoP14 but yet to be implemented.
- B. Born Free welcomes proposed revisions to Res. Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP17), with some suggested amendments:
 - (i) Regarding the draft text “g) all Parties in whose jurisdiction there is a legal domestic market for specimens of tiger and other Asian big cat species **that is contributing to poaching or illegal trade**, take all necessary legislative, regulatory and enforcement measures to close their domestic markets for commercial trade in tiger and other Asian big cat specimens”.

The highlighted text introduces a lack of clarity on who and how such a causal link is to be established, if indeed it is possible to prove its presence or absence. In addition, such wording creates an exploitable loophole for both small and large markets to remain open, thus maintaining adverse pressure on wild populations. This has been observed in the case of elephant ivory following such wording being introduced at CoP17. This language is proposed for deletion at CoP18.⁸⁶ The highlighted text should therefore be omitted.

- (ii) Regarding the additional text added to a): “all Parties and non-Parties, especially range and consumer States of **Asian** big cat species, to adopt comprehensive legislation or, where applicable, review existing legislation to ensure that there are provisions for deterrent penalties and addresses both illegal trade in specimens of native and non-native **Asian** big cat species as well as products labelled as, or claiming to contain specimens of native and non-native Asian big cat species”.

The highlighted text should be omitted, since there is a growing Asian market in parts and derivatives of non Asian big cat species, such as jaguar and African lion.

- C. Born Free SUPPORTS the adoption of Decisions 18.CC and 18.EE in the Secretariat's document, with an amendment to b) of 18.EE so that “formulate time-bound, country-specific recommendations” replaces “formulate any recommendations”, mirroring the language in Dec 17.227 (proposed for deletion at CoP18).

However, the Secretariat has not carried out the missions mandated under Decision 17.229 and, in isolation, these two Decisions therefore allow action on facilities of concern to be delayed until CoP19. It is therefore vital that the related Decision 18 AA proposed by India in Document 71.2 is also adopted, thus allowing key actions to be implemented once the Secretariat's missions take place.

CHEETAHS

Doc. 60⁸⁷ – ILLEGAL TRADE IN CHEETAHS (*Acinonyx jubatus*)

Born Free urges Parties to OPPOSE the deletion of Decision 17.127, so that Parties are afforded the means to be provided further reporting on both implementation of enforcement recommendations and on progress in halting illegal trade in cheetah.

Born Free recommends that, should the Big Cat Task Force be established, members ensure that sufficient consideration is given to cheetah; that destination countries are represented and engaged; and that a clear and open information gathering process be established early on in deliberations so that all stakeholder input can be taken into consideration.

The Secretariat is suggesting deletion of all cheetah Decisions. This includes Dec 17.127, which directs the Secretariat to report progress on recommendations adopted at SC66⁸⁸ and on “progress in halting illegal trade in cheetahs”. Some of these recommendations contain specific actions which Parties should take to strengthen enforcement at national, regional and cross regional levels, and are therefore a valuable reference point for Parties to assess progress in addressing cheetah trafficking.

The Secretariat has reported on the information Parties have submitted in response to two Notifications (Notif. 2017/039 and Notif. 2018/058), but not on “progress in halting illegal trade in cheetahs”. In addition, the intent of SC66 recommendations relating to enforcement actions has not been significantly realised, and cheetah trafficking from eastern Africa to the Middle East is ongoing, with potentially far-reaching consequences for the conservation of wild cheetah populations. This was amply highlighted at SC70 by Party interventions and by SC70 Inf. 44,⁸⁹ countering the Secretariat’s assertion in SC70 Doc. 43 that cheetah trafficking “remains limited”.⁹⁰

The Secretariat is also proposing that matters relating to illegal trade in cheetah not be dealt with by the regional workshop previously mooted by the Secretariat, and instead be addressed by the CITES Big Cats Task Force being proposed under CoP18 Doc. 76.1 on African lion. This carries a number of risks:

- CoP18 may not approve the draft Decision mandating the Task Force, and illegal trade in cheetah would then not be catered for in any ongoing CITES initiative, despite the issue remaining of serious concern
- Due consideration of illegal trade in cheetah by the Task Force could be marginalised by what will likely be a strong focus on lions in its deliberations
- The Task Force may suffer from insufficient involvement by Middle Eastern countries which act as destination countries for trafficked cheetah, and thus limited endorsement of its outputs.



DEFINITION OF THE TERM 'APPROPRIATE AND ACCEPTABLE DESTINATIONS'

Doc 44.1⁹¹ – REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

Born Free urges Parties to SUPPORT the adoption of the non-binding guidance in CoP18 Doc. 44.1 Annex 1, and the draft Decisions in Annex 2.

We recognise the significant progress that has been made on this important issue, and support the adoption of the proposed draft guidance and associated Decisions.

We urge Parties to view the proposals in CoP18 Doc. 44.1 as a first step in a process that will ultimately see the emergence of more comprehensive generic and species-specific guidance.

Doc. 44.2⁹² – INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN LIVE AFRICAN ELEPHANTS: PROPOSED REVISION OF RESOLUTION CONF. 11.20 (REV. CoP17) ON DEFINITION OF THE TERM 'APPROPRIATE AND ACCEPTABLE DESTINATIONS'

Born Free urges Parties to SUPPORT the changes to Resolution Conf. 11.20 (Rev. CoP17) as proposed in CoP18 Doc. 44.2.

The negative impacts associated with the capture of live elephants from the wild for captive purposes on individual elephants, their families and wider social groups, and the ecosystems of which they are an integral part, are well-documented by elephant scientists. These issues were presented in detail to CITES Parties in SC69 inf 36.⁹³

We note in particular that the African Elephant Specialist Group of the IUCN Species Survival Commission has stated that it “does not endorse the removal of African elephants from the wild for any captive use”, believing there to be “no direct benefit for [their] *in situ* conservation”.⁹⁴

Between 1990 and 2015, 1,774 live, wild-sourced African elephants were reported to have been exported internationally, mostly to non-range States. In 2016, the export of a further 57 live wild-caught elephants were declared on the CITES trade database.⁹⁵

SC69 Inf. 36 documents the fact that, since 2012, China has imported 108 elephants from Zimbabwe, including 34 in December 2016. All but one of the juvenile elephants imported in 2012 have since died, and the only survivor on display is reportedly being kept in inappropriate housing and is in poor health. Of 27 live, wild-sourced elephants exported from Zimbabwe in 2015, apparently only 24 arrived.

A total of 17 elephants were exported from Swaziland to three US zoos in March 2016. One juvenile died prior to transfer. The group included a pregnant female, a violation of IATA transport guidelines. A further juvenile male died under anaesthesia in September 2017.

Amendments to Res.Conf.11.20, adopted at CoP17 in 2016, included a new requirement that, to be “appropriate and acceptable”, trade in live animals must promote *in situ* conservation. In spite of this, the removal of wild young elephants from their family groups for export to captive facilities continues with no indication that the amendments to Res. Conf. 11.20 were being appropriately implemented. At least 14 more animals were exported from Zimbabwe in August 2017. Video footage suggests most of these elephants were aged between two and four. A number displayed stress-induced behaviours. On February 9th 2019, *The Times* of London revealed that 35 wild caught elephants, some as young as two, were being held in pens in Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe, awaiting transfer to zoos in China.⁹⁶

In February 2019, the African Elephant Coalition (AEC) reiterated its call for an end to the export of live elephants to zoos and other captive facilities during its Summit in Nairobi.⁹⁷

The proposed amendments to Res. Conf. 11.20 (Rev. CoP17) contained within CoP 18 Doc. 44.2 reflect this position by including a new requirement that, to be deemed “appropriate and acceptable”, destinations for live wild-caught elephants should be limited to *in situ* conservation programmes or secure areas in the wild within the species’ natural range, except in the case of temporary transfers in emergency situations.

CONFISCATED SPECIMENS

CoP18 Doc 35⁹⁸ – DISPOSAL OF CONFISCATED SPECIMENS

Born Free urges Parties to REJECT the recommendation in CoP18 Doc. 35 that Decisions 17.118 and 17.119 have been implemented and can be deleted, and to recommend that the mandate of the Standing Committee be extended in order for it to further explore and develop protocols to assist Parties in the handling of confiscated live specimens.

While the SC Working Group established at SC69 to assist in the fulfilment of Decisions 17.118 and 17.119 failed to reach consensus on a number of issues within its mandate, there was broad consensus during its discussions that:

- Guidelines assisting enforcement authorities in identifying and working with appropriate rescue centres could potentially be useful to the Parties
- Further guidance on the humane handling of seized and confiscated specimens, humane euthanasia methods, and the process for disposal of confiscated specimens would also be helpful to the Parties.

The Working Group also discussed inconsistencies between aspects of Res. Conf. 17.8 and the text and intention of the Convention.

In its report to SC70,⁹⁹ the working group invited the Standing Committee:

- to acknowledge the different opinions expressed by the members of the Working Group
- to invite the Secretariat to include consideration of paragraph 5a of Res. Conf. 17.8 in its existing legislative initiatives such as the National Legislation Project, and to support Parties' efforts in the development, legal formulation and implementation of effective mechanisms to recover the costs of confiscation, custody, and disposal
- to propose that the CITES Secretariat evaluate the aim and purpose of a list of rescue centres and how such a list might be managed and updated
- to form an in-session Working Group to see if consensus on some of the open topics could be reached
- depending on the discussion and outcome of discussions at SC70, to propose draft decisions aimed at continuing the work of the Working Group, for consideration at CoP18.

The Decisions contained in CoP18 Doc. 35 do not adequately address the need identified by the Working Group for continued consideration of these issues. The Standing Committee should therefore be mandated to continue this important work. Confiscated live specimens should be provided with the care required to protect their welfare and, where possible, to facilitate their re-introduction to the wild. In order to achieve this, and to avoid a situation where poor decisions may be made which do not best provide for the requirements of live animals, Parties clearly need assistance in the development of robust and effective action plans on dealing with seized and/or confiscated live specimens, as detailed in Res. Conf. 17.8 Annex 3.

The renewed mandate for the Standing Committee should include:

- An examination of the extent to which Parties have developed Action Plans, as per Annex 3 of Resolution 17.8, in order to identify best practice and provide further guidance
- The need for and, if desired, the development of, guidelines for Parties on designating and interacting with rescue centres
- Further evaluation of the aim and purpose of a register of rescue centres and facilities that could assist Parties in facilitating the proper handling and care of confiscated live specimens
- The development of guidelines on the designation and operation of suitable rescue centres, the humane handling of confiscated specimens, humane euthanasia, and the sale of confiscated specimens
- A review of the legal authority to confiscate illegally traded specimens

- An examination of the extent to which Parties include in their domestic measures “legislative provision to require the importer or the carrier who violated the Convention, or both, to meet the costs of confiscation, custody, storage, destruction or other disposal, including returning specimens to the country of origin or re-export (as appropriate) where the Scientific Authority of the confiscating State deems it in the interest of the specimens to do so, and the country of origin or last re-export so wishes”, as recommended in Resolution Conf. 17.8 paragraph 5(a).

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