

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Seventy-fourth meeting of the Standing Committee
Lyon (France), 7 - 11 March 2022

Species specific matters

Marine turtles (Cheloniidae spp. and Dermochelyidae spp.)

REPORT OF THE ANIMALS COMMITTEE

1. This document has been submitted by the Animals Committee.*
2. At its 18th meeting (CoP18, Geneva, 2019), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 18.210 to 18.217 on *Marine turtles (Cheloniidae spp. and Dermochelyidae spp.)*, which are presented in the Annex to this document.
3. At the 31st meeting (AC31, online, June 2021), the Animals Committee considered document AC31 Doc. 24 and its addendum by the Secretariat, which presented the implementation of these Decisions. Pursuant to Decision 18.210 paragraph f), the Secretariat issued [Notification to the Parties No. 2020/035](#) requesting the Parties for information on the status of implementation of Decision 18.211 to 18.214, including any planned implementation activities. The responses were presented in Annex 2 to the addendum of AC31 Doc. 24 in the language and format in which they were received.
4. At AC31, the Committee established an in-session working group on Marine turtles (Cheloniidae spp. and Dermochelyidae spp.) with the mandate to consider the review of the marine turtle study and draft recommendations by the co-leads of the agenda item presented in Annex 1 to the addendum of document AC31 Doc. 24 and the scientific information in the responses from Parties to Notification No. 2020/035, and revise the draft recommendations in Annex 1 to the addendum of document AC31 Doc. 24.
5. The Animals Committee noted that the study entitled "Status, scope and trends of the legal and illegal international trade in marine turtles, its conservation impacts, management options and mitigation priorities", identified key issues where CITES and other actors can help with the conservation of marine turtles. The Committee reminded Parties to include marine turtle confiscation and seizure date in their annual illegal trade report.
6. The Animals Committee agreed to submit the following four draft decisions (as agreed on in [AC31 Sum. 3](#)) to the Standing Committee for its consideration:

* The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.

19.AA *Directed to the Parties*

Parties are encouraged to:

- a) develop robust and standardized frameworks for determining sustainable use of marine turtles that are science-based, integrate a determination of suitable offtake levels, take into account the needs of traditional subsistence users, account for existing use in other States sharing the marine turtle(s) stocks, and account for national enforcement capacity taking into consideration the advice, resolutions, conservation and management measures of relevant bodies including competent fisheries authorities and experts, as appropriate;
- b) work with their fisheries communities to ensure that there is effective documentation at the national level of marine turtle fisheries by-catch and mortality that can inform conservation and management measures taking into consideration the advice, resolutions, conservation and management measures of relevant bodies including competent fisheries authorities and experts, as appropriate;
- c) where marine turtles hatchery establishments exist, develop science-based operational protocols for marine turtle hatchery establishments to ensure that they provide conservation value to marine turtle populations;
- d) share holistic regional marine turtle survival probability models and their output and other information to assess sustainability of current harvest and by-catch levels while taking into account other threats to the population across their range (number of turtles of different age classes taken from populations), limitations of source rookeries (number of turtles recruited per year), natural survival probabilities, and marine turtle biology taking into consideration the advice, resolutions, conservation and management measures of relevant bodies including competent fisheries authorities and experts, as appropriate;
- e) undertake as appropriate research that can support the development of protection and conservation measures for marine turtle foraging, nesting and migratory areas; and
- f) report on the implementation of paragraphs a) to e) to the Secretariat, for subsequent reporting to the Animals and Standing Committees, as appropriate.

19.BB *Directed to the Secretariat*

The Secretariat shall:

- a) based on analysis of the annual illegal trade reports, bring to the attention of the Animals and Standing Committees, as appropriate, any significant changes in the illegal trade of marine turtles;
- b) liaise with the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), its Indian Ocean and South-East Asia Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding (IOSEA) on the conservation and management of marine turtles, as outlined in the CMS-CITES Joint Work Programme 2021-2025; and
- c) report on the implementation of paragraphs a) to f) of Decision 19.AA to the Animals and Standing Committees, as appropriate.

19.CC *Directed to the Animals Committee*

The Animals Committee shall consider any reports from Decision 19.AA and 19.BB paragraph a) brought to its attention by the Secretariat, and make recommendations, as appropriate, including on the possible need for incorporation of the substantive content of Decision 19.AA and 19.BB and any other relevant measures into a new resolution on marine turtles which should also incorporate any relevant provisions of Resolution Conf 9.20 (Rev.) on *Guidelines for evaluating marine turtle ranching proposals submitted pursuant to Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15)*.

19.DD Directed to the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee shall consider any reports from Decision 19.AA and 19.BB paragraph a) brought to its attention by the Secretariat and any recommendations from the Animals Committee, and make recommendations, as appropriate.

Recommendations

7. The Standing Committee is invited to:

- a) review the recommendations of the Animals Committee in paragraph 5 of the present document; and
- b) consider the draft decisions by the Animals Committee in paragraph 6 of the present document and consider any additional draft decisions for submission, as appropriate, to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Decisions adopted by the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties
on Marine turtles (*Cheloniidae* spp. and *Dermochelyidae* spp.)

18.210 Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall, subject to available resources:

- a) convey to Parties the findings of the study presented in information document CoP18 Inf. 18 on the legal and illegal international trade in marine turtles with a view to inform targeted conservation and management efforts;
- b) refer the study contained in information document CoP18 Inf. 18 to the Standing Committee at its 73rd meeting and the Animals Committee at its 31st meeting for consideration;
- c) support Parties, upon request, with the CITES-relevant aspects of the development, implementation and/or update of management and action plans for the conservation of marine turtles;
- d) assist Parties, upon request, with the identification of inconsistencies, overlaps and gaps in national legislation and regulations relating to the implementation of CITES for marine turtles; and
- e) convey to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) the findings of the study presented in information document CoP18 Inf. 18 to inform efforts, including by Regional Fisheries Bodies, addressing marine turtle bycatch and illegal take, and promote collaboration, as appropriate.
- f) issue a Notification requesting that Parties provide information on implementation of Decisions 18.210 to 18.214 for consideration by the Standing Committee at its 73rd meeting; and
- g) report on the implementation of Decisions 18.210 to 18.215, and on any technical and financial mechanisms and opportunities that can be provided through CITES to assist Parties in marine turtle conservation, to the 31st meeting of the Animals Committee and the 73rd meeting of the Standing Committees as appropriate, and to the Conference of the Parties at its 19th meeting.

18.211 Directed to Parties

Parties are urged to:

- a) review the findings of the study presented in information document CoP18 Inf. 18 and use these to inform targeted conservation and management efforts;
- b) fully implement the provisions of CITES that are relevant to the seven species of marine turtles listed on Appendix I;
- c) develop and/or update management and action plans for the conservation of marine turtles inclusive of the recommendations in information document CoP18 Inf. 18;
- d) use CITES fora, including the Animals Committee and Standing Committee, to raise and discuss challenges relating to illegal trade in marine turtles;
- e) collect in a standardized manner, including at different governance levels, illegal wildlife trade data, that can be used for monitoring trade in CITES-listed marine turtles; and submit comprehensive and accurate information on illegal trade in marine turtles in their annual illegal trade reports to the Secretariat;

- f) improve monitoring, detection and law enforcement activities related to marine turtles in coastal areas and at transaction points (e.g. in the marketplace, online, maritime areas, and at air- and seaports);
- g) collect samples of marine turtles for DNA analysis, including from seized specimens, to determine species involved and populations of origin and provide these to forensic and other research institutions capable of reliably determining the origin or age of the samples in support of, for example, research, investigations and prosecutions;
- h) improve intra- and interregional cooperation, collaboration and exchange of actionable intelligence regarding illegal take of and trade in marine turtles;
- i) ascertain key trade routes, methods, volumes, and trade 'hot-spots' using available technologies, and enforce national and international regulations or other mechanisms that apply to marine turtles take and trade;
- j) improve accountability for the practices undertaken by all vessels and improve the monitoring and control related to CITES-listed marine turtles at landing sites;
- k) support fisheries management authorities in implementing turtle mitigation and safe handling practices;
- l) coordinate efforts at the regional level, involving Parties and bodies with relevant mandates, to identify and address trade, use and other threats, such as fisheries' interactions with marine turtles (particularly bycatch), with a view to supporting multilateral environmental agreements; and
- m) respond to the Notification issued by the Secretariat per Decision 18.210, paragraph f) on the implementation of Decisions 18.210 to 18.214.

18.212 *Directed to Parties that are marine turtle range States*

Parties that are marine turtle range States are urged to:

- a) develop, and where such legislation already exists, conduct a thorough review of legislation that protects marine turtles, taking account of its effectiveness in enforcement and management including direct and incidental harvest, and standardization or alignment with other national and sub-national legislation, neighbouring states, as well as international regulations and commitments;
- b) where domestic harvest of specimens of marine turtles, including eggs, is legal, ensure any domestic harvest quotas are established based on robust science-based methods and the principles of sustainability, including accounting for existing quota or no-take quotas in other States' that share marine turtle stock(s), taking into account national enforcement capacity;
- c) respond to the Notification issued by the Secretariat pursuant to Decision 18.210 paragraph f) on the implementation of Decisions 18.210 to 18.215.

18.213 *Directed to Parties, governmental, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations and other entities*

Parties, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other entities are invited to provide financial or technical assistance for, inter alia:

- a) training and capacity building of relevant authorities at the national and regional level, including on the implementation and enforcement of national and international regulations that apply to marine turtles, and on identification, monitoring, reporting and wildlife enforcement capability;
- b) build community and political awareness on the conservation status of marine turtles and on the importance of promoting the conservation of the species through compliance with CITES at the national level;

- c) research into the socioeconomics associated with the legal and illegal harvest and use of specimens of marine turtles, including eggs, including assessments of the sustainability of alternative livelihood options for communities depending on marine turtles and the motivations for their use;
- d) research that establishes a baseline for the status and distribution of marine turtles in the different countries/regions; and
- e) research into the scale and impact that national (and its international) artisanal, semi-industrial and industrial fisheries, including illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, have on marine turtle populations and their linkage to illegal trade.

18.214 *Directed to the Secretariat, Parties and other organizations*

Parties, the Secretariat and relevant multilateral agreements such as the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), its Indian Ocean and South-East Asia Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding (IOSEA), the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC), and the Ramsar Convention and the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) are encouraged to communicate and collaborate with each other on the management and sustainable use of marine turtles to ensure the compatibility of activities, optimize resources, promote research, and enhance synergies concerning the conservation of marine turtles.

18.215 *Directed to the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC)*

The International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) is encouraged to, as appropriate, use data on illegal trade in marine turtles submitted under Decision 18.211, paragraph e) to the Secretariat in Parties' annual illegal trade reports in its activities.

18.216 *Directed to the Animals Committee*

The Animals Committee is asked to:

- a) review, at its 31st meeting, the study contained in information document CoP18 Inf. 18 and any additional information received by the Secretariat in response to the Notification issued under Decision 18.210, paragraph f); and
- b) submit recommendations, as appropriate, for consideration by the Standing Committee.

18.217 *Directed to the Standing Committee*

The Standing Committee is asked to:

- a) review, at its 73rd meeting, the study contained in information document CoP18 Inf. 18 and any additional information received by the Secretariat in response to the Notification issued under Decision 18.210, paragraph f), and the recommendations of the Animals Committee; and
- b) submit its recommendations to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, as appropriate.