

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

TIBETAN ANTELOPE (*PANTHOLOPS HODGSONII*):
REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. Resolution [Conf. 11.8 \(Rev. CoP17\)](#) on *Conservation of and control of trade in the Tibetan antelope*, in paragraph 2 b) directs the Standing Committee as follows:

2. *DIRECTS*

...

- b) *the Standing Committee to undertake a regular review of the enforcement measures taken by the Parties in eliminating the illicit trade in Tibetan antelope products on the basis of the Secretariat's report, and to report the results at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties;*

Implementation of Resolution Conf. 11.8 (Rev. CoP17)

3. The Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties No. 2020/038 of 28 April 2020, inviting Parties to submit to the Secretariat information on their implementation of Resolution Conf. 11.8 (Rev. CoP17). Responses were received from China, a Tibetan antelope range State, as well as Cambodia, Canada, New Zealand and Switzerland. The Secretariat thanks these Parties for the reports submitted. These are compiled in the Annex to the present document, in the language in which they were received.
4. The Secretariat recalls that Decision 17.131 encouraged all Parties concerned by the illegal trade in specimens of Tibetan antelope to draw upon the offer of support from the CITES Management Authority of Switzerland with regard to identification methods and exchange of information and knowledge about this topic. Canada reached out to Switzerland and capacity was established amongst its officers to identify products and derivatives made from Tibetan antelope. Other Parties affected by illegal trade in specimens of Tibetan antelope are encouraged to draw upon the support available through the CITES Management Authority of Switzerland.
5. China reported that the Tibetan antelope is a key protected species and enjoys the highest level of protection under its Wildlife Protection Law. China further reported on a variety of activities undertaken and states that, as a result of these efforts, the population of the Tibetan antelope has well recovered. China notes that it advised the Standing Committee at its 54th meeting (Geneva, Switzerland, October 2006) that the population numbers of Tibetan antelope across China were estimated to have increased to 200,000. The Party further reports that, in the middle of the 2010s, its population was estimated to be 300,000, and that a recent survey reaffirmed the population size and that it shows a steady or slightly increasing trend.
6. New Zealand reported that its legislation makes provision for strict penalties concerning illegal trade, and that no import, re-export or illegal trade in Tibetan antelope specimens has been recorded by New Zealand in the period between 1989 and July 2020.

7. Switzerland reported that it had continued to confiscate a large number of shawls, in recent years primarily from private individuals, and that there have not been any commercial seizures in Switzerland during the last two years. The Party reports that both newer shawls with modern westernized patterns, as well as traditional Shahtoosh shawls were seized, some of very high quality with a high content of Shahtoosh fibres. Switzerland stressed that identification requires a high level of knowledge and expertise among enforcement officials and continues to provide such training to customs officials. The training resulted in increased detections including identification of new hot spots. It is reported that most of the recent seizures occurred in Geneva and the St. Moritz area of Switzerland. The Party further reported that it had exchanged information about that illegal trade with India and Italy, since many of the individuals found in possession of the shawls in recent years were entering Switzerland from these Parties. Switzerland also notes in its report the importance of awareness raising, and states that it has made several media releases, alongside an article published in [National Geographic in April 2019](#). The Swiss Management Authority also publishes a yearly update on the issue and seizure data on its [website](#).
8. In addition to the information provided by Parties in response to Notification No. 2020/038, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) provided the Secretariat with a compilation of CITES annual illegal trade data submitted by Parties during the period 2016 to 2020. Six Parties (India, Nepal, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America) reported in total 194 seizures of specimens of Tibetan antelope, as shown in the table below; 96 % of these seizures were made by Switzerland.

Year	Total No. of seizures	Total No. of seized specimens	Number and type of specimens seized					
			Garment	Medicine	Extract	Cloth	Skin	Horn
2016	19	27	25					2
2017	18	88	73	10		5		
2018	29	94	41			50	3	
2019	67	81	78	1	1	1		
2020	61	90	90					
Total	194	380	307	11	1	56	3	2

9. Seized Tibetan antelope specimens mainly involved garment (81%) followed by cloth (15%), with only a few that involved medicine (3%), skin (0,8 %), horn (0,5%), and extract (0,3%).

Final remarks


10. The efforts made by Switzerland to combat illegal trade in Tibetan antelope specimens resulted in an increase of seizures of Shahtoosh shawls. It is important that Parties continue to build capacity to detect illegal trade in Tibetan antelope specimens, and to raise awareness to prevent such illegal trade.

Recommendations

11. The Secretariat recommends that the Standing Committee:
- encourage Parties affected by illegal trade in specimens of Tibetan antelope to continue to approach the CITES Management Authority of Switzerland for assistance with identification methods and exchange of information and knowledge about this topic;
 - encourage India and Italy to enhance efforts to strengthen the capacity of its border officials concerning the identification of Tibetan antelope specimens, in particular garments and cloth, including by drawing upon the support available from Switzerland, as appropriate; and
 - report on this matter to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties as part of the report of the Chair under paragraph 2 i) in Annex 1 of Resolution Conf. 18.2 on *Establishment of committees*.

Responses from Parties to Notification No. 2020/028 on Tibetan antelope (*Pantholops hodgsonii*)

Cambodia



ព្រះរាជាណាចក្រកម្ពុជា
Kingdom of Cambodia
ជាតិ សាសនា ព្រះមហាក្សត្រ
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ក្រសួងកសិកម្ម រុក្ខាប្រមាញ់ និងនេសាទ
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
សមត្ថកិច្ចគ្រប់គ្រងសាយភ័ក្ត្រកម្ពុជា
CITES Management Authority of Cambodia

No: 050/20 CMAC

Phnom Penh 25 May 2020

Ms. Ivonne Higuero
Secretary-General
CITES Secretariat, International Environment House,
Chemin des Anémones, CH-1219 Châtelaine,
Geneva, Switzerland



Subject: Tibetan antelope (*Pantholops hodgsonii*)

Dear Ms. Ivonne,

Reference is made to the CITES Secretariat Notification to the Parties No. 2020/038, dated 28 April 2020, the CITES Management Authority of Cambodia herewith submits its response to the concerning associated with Tibetan antelope (*Pantholops hodgsonii*) that required under the Resolution Conf. 11.8 (Rev.CoP17). The CITES Management Authority of Cambodia would like to inform you that Tibetan antelope (*Pantholops hodgsonii*) species is not native to Cambodia. The country does not have sufficient information on trade, conservation and law enforcement data of this species, but Cambodia has established a Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team (joint cooperation between government enforcement agencies and the Wildlife Alliance) which have the national remit to suppress wildlife crime in the whole country.

For the implementation of the Resolution Conf. 11.8 (Rev.COP17), Cambodia commits itself to ensure that law enforcement will be conducted in compliance with the country national law and the guidelines that are encouraged to use by the CITES Secretariat.

Please accept our warmest thanks for your cooperation and assurance of our highest regards.

Prof. NAO THUOK, PhD
Secretary of State
Chairman CITES Management Authority of Cambodia
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

CC:

- Cabinet of the Minister
- Forestry Administration
- Cambodia CITES Secretariat
- File

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#200 Preh Norodom Blvd, Sangkat Tonle Basak, Khan Chamkarmorn, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Tel/Fax: +855-17 499 223 Email: cambodiacitesmaff@gmail.com

**Environment and Climate Change Canada - Enforcement Branch input to
CITES Notification #38 - Tibetan antelope (*Pantholops hodgsonii*):**

- The Enforcement Branch (EB) of Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) has taken measures to increase the detection of illegally traded parts and derivatives of Tibetan antelope.
- After CoP17, Switzerland kindly provided shahtoosh samples to our organization to build our enforcement identification capacity.
- EB provided shahtoosh samples and identification kits to our strategic enforcement offices across the country.
- Having real shahtoosh samples enabled our organization to practice with the identification material provided by the other CITES Party (Switzerland) and facilitated the learning of our officers.
- This gave the tools and knowledge to our officers to ensure they have the capacity to identify products and derivatives made from tibetan antelope.
- In the past three years, EB made two inspections of products suspected to be made with shahtoosh. Both were negative.

China

Response to Notification No. 2020/038 Regarding Tibetan antelope (*Pantholops hodgsonii*)

In the international concerted efforts to combat illegal trade in Tibetan antelope, China focuses on cutting off supply of raw materials to manufacturing country by, among other things, taking active and decisive measures to tackle poaching and trafficking.

1. Legislation

Enlisted as a first-class state key protected species, the Tibetan antelope enjoys the highest level of protection possible under China's Wildlife Protection Law (latest amended in 2018) that prohibits the hunting and killing of Tibetan antelope.

2. Combating poaching and trafficking

China takes a holistic approach to tackle rampant and catastrophic poaching and trafficking by addressing every link of the trade chain from poaching to smuggling across the international border. The wildlife rangers patrolled the range of the Tibetan antelope regularly, roadblocks were set up at the main highways to stop the transportation of the illegal Tibetan antelope products, local governments of all levels were obliged to police their individual jurisdiction to educate the general public and to identify and report any signs of poaching and trafficking and to track the whereabouts of potential offenders, markets authorities made every effort to police the markets and bust trading and processing facilities in towns and cities, custom officers and border police were trained in detect and identify Tibetan antelope contraband at airports and border ports, forests police undertook specific law enforcement operation to clamp down on poaching and offenders were promptly prosecuted with deterrent penalty.

The anti-poaching measures were so effective that by 2003 poaching of the Tibetan antelope came to an abrupt stop. By now no report of massive poaching has been registered in the last decade.

3. Inter-agency coordination mechanism.

The National Inter-agency CITES Enforcement Coordination Group (NICECG) was set up in 2011. It is charged with the duties to coordinate CITES enforcement within China and to conduct international enforcement cooperation. Up to now, it consists of 10 departments general in 8 ministries, including forestry, agriculture, police, customs, market regulation, coast guard, post, tourism, and other departments.

The inter-agency joint meeting mechanism against illegal wildlife trade was established in November 2016. With the National Forestry and Grassland Administration as coordinator, it consists of 25 ministries, which play extreme role in combating illegal trade in Tibetan antelope products.

4. Public awareness raising

In all the major social functions such as the annual celebration of the Wildlife Protection Month, World Wildlife Day, International Biodiversity Day, the Tibetan antelope is always a focal species to raise public awareness of the plights facing this endemic species and the need for conservation measures by every walk of the society.

5. Punishment

In the Chinese Criminal Law, poaching of Tibetan antelope, trafficking and smuggling of its products are prohibited. Poachers and traffickers were prosecuted promptly with deterrent punishment. The poaching, trafficking and smuggle of Tibetan antelope are regarded as criminal crimes and subject to steep punishment.

The punishment is measured out by the number of Tibetan antelopes poached, or the economic value of the Tibetan antelope products seized.

At least in the past recent 6 years, there has been no case of smugglings.

6. Population

As a result of the coordinated efforts listed above, especially the elimination of large scale poaching activities, the population of the Tibetan antelope has recovered significantly. China advised the Standing Committee at its 54th meeting (Geneva, Switzerland, 02-06 October 2006) that the population numbers of Tibetan antelope across China were estimated to have increased to 200,000. Its population was estimated to be 300,000 individuals in the middle of 2010s. According to a recent survey that population size is reaffirmed, with a steady or slightly increasing trend.

New Zealand

Tibetan antelope (*Pantholops hodgsonii*)

1) In paragraph 2 b) of Resolution Conf. 11.8 (Rev. CoP17) on Conservation of and control of trade in the Tibetan antelope, the Conference of the Parties directs the Standing Committee to undertake a regular review of the enforcement measures taken by Parties in eliminating the illicit trade in Tibetan antelope products on the basis of the Secretariat's report, and to report the results at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

2) To facilitate the preparation of the Secretariat's report to the 73rd meeting of the Standing Committee, and the work of the Committee, Parties are invited to submit information on their implementation of Resolution Conf. 11.8 (Rev. CoP17) and any other information deemed relevant to the Secretariat by 31 May 2020 at info@cites.org.

New Zealand response (submitted by New Zealand CITES Management Authority)

No import, re-export or illegal trade in *Pantholops hodgsonii* specimens has been recorded by New Zealand in the period 1989 to date (07/07/2020). *Pantholops hodgsonii* is listed as 'endangered' under New Zealand's Trade in Endangered Species Act 1989 and requires CITES permits or certificates for all trade, the exception being commercial trade, which is not permitted.

Trade in *Pantholops hodgsonii* across New Zealand's border without requisite CITES documentation may be subject to enforcement action including prosecution, resulting in fines of up to \$100,000 for individuals and up to \$200,000 in the case of a body corporate, or a term of imprisonment not exceeding 5 years.

Border officials and those appointed as Endangered Species Officers under New Zealand's legislation, have an awareness of Tibetan antelope as a CITES listed species, including the product, *shahtoosh*. As directed to Parties in Resolution 11.8 (Rev.CoP17), all seizures will be notified to the country of origin and transit and further investigation undertaken where possible.

Contact details: New Zealand CITES Management and Scientific Authorities

Department of Conservation, 18-32 Manners Street, Wellington 6011, New Zealand

Email: cites@doc.govt.nz

Switzerland

In response to Notification No. 2020/038 on the Tibetan antelope (*Pantholops hodgsonii*) we would like to submit the following information:

Switzerland continues to confiscate a large number of Shahtoosh shawls. In recent years, the shawls were primarily confiscated from private individuals; there have not been any commercial seizures in the last two years.

We continue to seize newer shawls with modern, westernized patterns as well as traditional Shahtoosh shawls. There have been a number of seizures of shawls with a very high quality, meaning a high content of Shahtoosh fibers.

Through further training of border officials, new hotspots have been identified: Many of the seizures in the last two years have been made in Geneva, alongside the seizures in the St.Moritz area which has been known to be a hotspot for many years. Our experience is that where customs officials are well trained in identifying Shahtoosh shawls, there will be detections. We still suspect that the fact that the identification requires a high level of knowledge and expertise is one of the reasons that many other countries are not making any seizures.

Information on the trade has been exchanged with India and recently also with Italy, one of the countries that many of the people wearing the shawls are entering from.

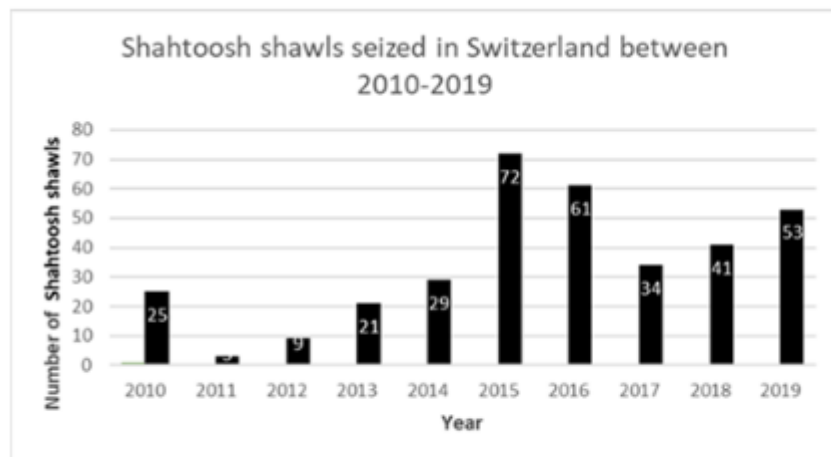
Alongside the training of customs officials and inspections, Switzerland believes that awareness raising is one of the key elements for a consumer country to tackle and there have been several media releases, alongside an article published in national geographics in april of 2019, which hopefully reached a broad audience.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/2019/04/tibetan-antelope-killed-to-make-luxury-scarves/>

The Swiss Management Authority publishes a yearly update on the issue and the seizure data on our website:

<https://www.blv.admin.ch/blv/en/home/das-blv/auftrag/vollzug/artenschutz/illegaler-handel/shahtoosh-schals.html>

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We would be very interested in hearing about any seizures of information from other Parties and remain open for any further collaboration with countries that also experience issues with this trade.