

CITES CoP19 Highlights: Monday, 21 November 2022

The Committee Chairs opened the morning with a moment of remembrance for the victims of the earthquake that struck Java, in Indonesia, on 20 November.

Committee I

Proposals to amend Appendices I and II: *Ceratotherium simum simum*: NAMIBIA introduced CoP19 Prop.2 to transfer the Namibian population of southern white rhinoceros (*C. simum simum*) from Appendix I to Appendix II, with an annotation to allow international trade exclusively in live animals for *in-situ* conservation and in hunting trophies.

SENEGAL, PANAMA, KENYA, ISRAEL, BENIN, NIGER, and the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO opposed downlisting the Namibian population, citing the ongoing vulnerability of the southern white rhinoceros. ZIMBABWE, BOTSWANA, SOUTH AFRICA, and other parties supported the proposal, arguing that the Namibian population no longer met the biological criteria for inclusion in Appendix I.

The EU, supported by UGANDA, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, and MEXICO, supported allowing trade in live animals for *in-situ* conservation purposes, but only within the species' natural and historical range in Africa, and did not support allowing international trade in hunting trophies. The proponents agreed to the EU's amendments.

Committee I accepted the proposal as amended by the EU, with 83 in favor, 31 against, and 13 abstaining.

Eswatini's *C. simum simum*: ESWATINI presented the amended CoP19 Prop.3 to remove the existing annotation on the Appendix II listing of Eswatini's southern white rhino (*C. simum simum*), so as to enable Eswatini to realize full Appendix II status for its population.

PANAMA, SENEGAL, ISRAEL, the EU, GHANA, and NIGERIA objected to the proposal, highlighting that country-level precautionary safeguards are not in place. JAPAN, BOTSWANA, TANZANIA, LESOTHO, and MOZAMBIQUE supported the proposal.

Committee I rejected the proposal with 85 votes against, 15 for, and 26 abstained.

***Cynomys mexicanus*:** MEXICO presented CoP19 Prop.6 for the transfer of Mexican prairie dog (*C. mexicanus*) from Appendix I to Appendix II, noting that the species has recovered.

Committee I agreed to the proposal by consensus.

***Branta canadensis leucopareia*:** The US introduced CoP19 Prop.7 to transfer the Aleutian cackling goose (*B. canadensis leucopareia*) from Appendix I to Appendix II following the Periodic Review process, highlighting its "remarkable recovery" after the imposition of extensive conservation measures.

NEW ZEALAND, COSTA RICA, MEXICO, and others supported the downlisting, with many parties congratulating the US for this species' "great recovery."

Committee II agreed to the proposal by consensus.

***Kittacincla malabarica*:** MALAYSIA and SINGAPORE introduced CoP19 Prop.8 (Rev.1) to include the white-rumped shama (*K. malabarica*) in Appendix II, highlighting the detrimental volume of international trafficking and illegal trade in this songbird.

SENEGAL, PANAMA, SEYCHELLES, MEXICO, and the PHILIPPINES supported the proposal. INDONESIA, supported by MALAYSIA and CHINA, requested an 18-month delay in implementation.

Committee I agreed by consensus to the original proposal.

***Pycnonotus zeylanicus*:** SINGAPORE presented CoP19 Prop.9 (Rev.1) to transfer the straw-headed bulbul (*P. zeylanicus*) from Appendix II to Appendix I, highlighting that the species has experienced a rapid population decline across Southeast Asia.

The EU, GUATEMALA, CHINA, THAILAND, and LAO PDR supported the proposal. INDONESIA opposed it, but as a compromise, asked for a 24-month delay. SINGAPORE proposed a 12-month delay.

Committee I agreed to the proposal with a 12-month delay by consensus.

***Phoebastria albatrus*:** The US introduced CoP19 Prop.10 to transfer the short-tailed albatross (*P. albatrus*) from Appendix I to Appendix II.

GUATEMALA, MEXICO, CAMBODIA, NEW ZEALAND, and CANADA supported the proposal.

Committee I recommended by consensus that this proposal be adopted.

***Caiman latirostris*:** BRAZIL introduced CoP19 Prop.11 to downlist the broad-snouted caiman (*C. latirostris*) of Brazil from Appendix I to Appendix II, amended with an annotation establishing a zero annual export quota for wild specimens traded for commercial purposes.

BAHRAIN, the EU, GUATEMALA, CUBA, PERU, and KENYA supported the proposal as amended. ARGENTINA, IUCN, and TRAFFIC supported the amended proposal but requested information on management mechanisms to be implemented once the species is listed in Appendix II.

Committee I recommended that this proposal as amended be adopted.

***Crocodylus porosus*:** The PHILIPPINES introduced CoP19 Prop.12 to transfer the Philippine population of Saltwater crocodiles (*C. porosus*) in Palawan Islands, Philippines, from Appendix I to Appendix II, amended with a zero annual export quota for wild specimens traded for commercial purposes. SOLOMON ISLANDS, CHINA, the EU, and others supported the proposal as amended. IUCN and TRAFFIC cautioned that a split listing in the Philippines might create implementation problems.

Committee I recommended that this proposal as amended be adopted.

***C. siamensis*:** THAILAND introduced CoP19 Prop.13 to transfer the Thai population of the Siamese crocodile (*C.*

siamensis) from Appendix I to Appendix II, amended with an annotation for a zero annual export quota for wild specimens traded for commercial purposes.

ZIMBABWE, LAOS, CAMBODIA, CHINA, and others supported the proposal as amended. The EU, the UK, ISRAEL, AUSTRALIA, and BENIN opposed it.

Committee I voted to reject the proposal, with 27 in favor, 76 opposed, and 20 abstaining.

Cyrtodactylus jeyporensis: INDIA presented CoP19 Prop.15 to include Jeypore hill gecko (*C. jeyporensis*) in Appendix II, highlighting that demand for the species by reptile breeders outside India has increased and that the population is threatened due to habitat loss.

Committee I agreed to the proposal.

Physignathus cocincinus: VIET NAM presented CoP19 Prop.14 to include the Indo-Chinese water dragon (*P. cocincinus*) in Appendix II. Many parties from the Central African and West African region opposed the proposal.

Committee I agreed to the proposal with 81 votes for, 27 against, and 20 abstained.

Committee II

CITES and forests: The Secretariat introduced CoP19 Doc.19. CANADA, supported by the US and MEXICO, rejected the proposed decisions, which she argued were beyond the scope of CITES. AUSTRALIA and the EU supported them.

Committee II established a working group, chaired by the UK, to consider the matter.

General Compliance and Enforcement: Review of Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP18) on Compliance and Enforcement: The US introduced CoP19 Doc.32.

Committee II agreed to the document.

Wildlife crime enforcement support in West and Central Africa: Report of the SC and Wildlife crime and CITES enforcement support in West and Central Africa: CoP19 Doc.36.1 and 2 were considered together. After some discussion, Committee II Chair established a working group to review the amendments proposed by the Secretariat.

Asian Big Cats: The Secretariat introduced CoP19 Doc.68. The UK, US, EU, BANGLADESH, INDIA, and TRAFFIC did not support deletion of decisions calling on parties affected by illegal trade in Asian big cat specimens to: pursue enforcement efforts to address illegal trade and strengthen law enforcement cooperation with neighboring parties; and take serious consideration of the concerns regarding illegal trade in leopard parts and derivatives.

Committee II agreed to the document, including the recommendation not to delete the decisions as discussed.

Wildlife crime linked to the Internet: The Secretariat introduced CoP19 Doc.37.

Committee II agreed to the revised document and draft decisions with minor amendments.

Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae spp.): The Secretariat introduced CoP19 Doc.75. (Rev.1), which proposes a number of draft decisions on the illegal killing of rhinoceroses and illegal trade in rhinoceros specimens. The UK, opposed by ZIMBABWE, SOUTH AFRICA, KUWAIT, and BOTSWANA, and supported by the US, KENYA, and TOGO, proposed amending the draft decisions to request a number of specific countries, including Botswana and South Africa, to report relevant information on illegal rhinoceros trade.

Parties approved draft decisions on scaling up efforts to facilitate forensic analysis, develop demand reduction programmes for key audiences, as well as facilitate contact between relevant agencies on rhinoceros poaching and illegal trade.

Committee II established a working group to consider select draft decisions.

Pangolins (Manis spp.): CoP19 Doc.71.1 and 2 were considered together.

The EU supported the merger of the two documents and the draft decisions contained therein. The US, the UK and BURKINA

FASO, supported by IUCN opposed the Secretariat's deletion of language in Resolution Conf. 17.10 on *Conservation of and trade in pangolins* urging parties to submit reports annually to the Secretariat, noting reporting continues to be critical. CHINA opposed the reporting requirements. TRAFFIC emphasized that progress on the issue is poor and welcomed the UK's amendment to the Resolution.

Committee II agreed to prepare an in-session document for further consideration on Tuesday.

Jaguars (Panthera onca): CANADA introduced document CoP19 Doc.73.1. COSTA RICA introduced document CoP19 Doc.73.2, which proposes a number of amendments, including: encouraging parties to strengthen their capacity to monitor and end illegal jaguar trade; and establishing an intersessional working group on jaguars. The US, BRAZIL, PANAMA, CMS, and PANTHERA supported the proposal with these amendments.

Committee II agreed to the documents as amended.

Seahorses (Hippocampus spp.): CoP19 Doc.69.1 and 2 were considered together. CANADA and GUINEA BISSAU, NIGERIA, and the EU, opposed by JAPAN, supported the draft decisions as merged in CoP19 Doc.69.2.

Committee II agreed to the documents with some changes.

CITES Big Cats Task Force (Felidae spp.): CANADA presented CoP19 Doc.67.

Committee II agreed to the documents as amended.

Illegal trade in cheetahs (Acionyx jubatus): ETHIOPIA presented CoP19 Doc.59. The US proposed a new paragraph in the draft decisions whereby parties affected by illegal trade in cheetahs would report their activities in advance of an SC meeting. SENEGAL and TANZANIA supported the draft decisions. BAHRAIN, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES and KUWAIT questioned some of the sources of information.

Committee II agreed to the amended draft decisions.

Interpretation and implementation matters

Regulation of trade: Specimens produced through biotechnology: CHINA introduced CoP19 Doc.47. The US supported the amendment to the resolution, but made a number of suggestions. She, supported by MEXICO, also strongly opposed tasking the SC with defining "biotechnology", arguing that a definition already exists.

Committee II accepted the document as amended.

Introduction from the sea: CANADA introduced CoP19 Doc.49. Parties broadly accepted the document. SEA SHEPHERD LEGAL made textual suggestions, including that the Secretariat make recommendations to CoP20 regarding the possible amendment of the Annex to Resolution Conf. 14.6 (Rev. CoP16) on Introduction from the sea.

Committee II adopted the draft decisions with these amendments.

In the Corridors

The clock is ticking at CITES—"literally," a delegate said, pointing at a five-foot high timer that was projected on the screen in Committee II to count down, with mathematical bluntness, the two minutes the Chair has allotted each intervention. "Milliseconds are more elusive and endangered at this CoP," another delegate grumbled, "than many of the species we've come here to discuss." But what choice did the Chair have, given parties repeatedly ignored her pleas, in week one, to abandon the usual pro-forma diplomatic courtesies and get straight to the point? The same was true in Committee I, where the Chair politely begged the room not to congratulate him on his appointment as Chair for the ten thousandth time. Fortunately, being week two, fewer parties began their statements with, "Since this is the first time we are taking the floor..." As a result, a sense of momentum could be felt building inside the venue as thunderclouds were gathering outside it, and listing proposals were completed as rapidly as rain fell on the roof, making a sound one delegate swore was "tick, tock, tick, tock."