

# CITES Technical Work Group Report



## Report of the CITES 74<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee (7 to 11 March 2022)

### INTRODUCTION:

The CITES Technical Work Group (Team) represented the state fish and wildlife agencies and where applicable the Provinces and Territories at the meetings of the 74<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee (SC). Stewart Liley attended as the WAFWA representative and Deb Hahn attended as a member of the US Government Delegation. This was the first in-person meeting since the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP) in August 2019. There were over 400 delegates and observers. The Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) were diverse from the Humane Society International to Wildlife Conservation Society to Safari Club International Foundation. The SC provides policy guidance concerning the implementation of the Convention and oversees the management of the budget. It also coordinates and oversees the work of the CITES Plants and Animals Committees, carries out tasks given to it by the CoP, and drafts resolutions for consideration by the CoP.



### SUMMARY:

The Standing Committee, chaired by Carolina Caceres, discussed over 80 substantive agenda items including the conservation of eels, paddlefish, seahorses, corals, and freshwater turtles; captive bred and ranched specimens; CITES and zoonotic diseases; and the CITES Strategic Vision. One of the main goals of attending was to reconnect with partners, reestablish relationships, and meet new representatives of Parties (countries) and staff of the Secretariat. To that end, we engaged with over 40 NGOs and Parties and the staff of the Secretariat. There were several important issues addressed by the SC that will be submitted for consideration to the next CoP19 in November 2022. Some of the issues of importance to the state agencies and/or the Provinces and Territories are highlighted below.

### CITES Technical Work Group:

Mike Bednarski, NEAFWA CITES Representative  
Carolyn Caldwell, MAFWA CITES Representative  
Buddy Baker, SEAFWA CITES Representative  
Stewart Liley, WAFWA CITES Representative  
Staff: Deb Hahn - Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies



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## KEY OUTCOMES:

- **Zoonotic Diseases and Trade:** The Team was a member of the working group on the role of CITES in reducing risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with international wildlife trade. The working group recommendations were accepted and include identifying opportunities for collaboration with OIE, WHO, and FAO to develop a joint program of work, developing a resolution on actions CITES Parties could take to advance a One Health approach as it pertains to international wildlife trade, and considering amendments to the CITES guidelines for the non-air transport of live animals and plants to mitigate risks to animal and human health.
- **CITES Strategic Vision 2021-2030:** The SC agreed to submit the draft indicators for the Strategic Vision to CoP19 including indicators that support sustainable use. The Team will follow this issue as we move towards CoP19 to help ensure positive sustainable use language is retained.
- **Cooperation with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES):** The Committee agreed to mandate attendance by CITES representatives at the launch of the *Assessment Report on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species*. This will provide an opportunity to report on its relevance to CITES implementation and identify follow-up activities. The Team will consider ways we can support and encourage engagement.
- **American eel:** The SC asked for a review the study titled *Status of Use and Trade of Anguillid Eels* to support more effective future management of harvests and trade. The input from this review will be considered by the Animals Committee and the SC in 2023. The decisions on eel conservation directed to range states of the American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*) remain voluntary and are simply encouraged. The Team will work with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to consider the study. The Team does not yet know if any Party will submit a listing proposal to CoP19 for American eel.
- **Precious Corals:** The SC recognized the importance of science-based management for conservation and sustainable use and the need for better information on their conservation and sustainable use in a report by FAO and will continue to advance coral conservation.
- **Paddlefish:** The Team shared the study *Identification of species and hybrids, source and geographical origin of sturgeon and paddlefish (Acipenseriformes spp.) specimens and products in trade* with the applicable states and they had no issues or concerns. CITES continues to consider guidelines for a universal labelling system for the trade in and identification of caviar.
- **Seahorses:** CITES commissioned a study to look at the international trade in live seahorse and concluded that almost all live seahorses in international trade are captive bred. Of most concern is the illegal trade in dry specimens mostly from bycatch. There will be an expert workshop on the implementation and enforcement of CITES for international trade in seahorses.
- **Totoaba** (*Totoaba macdonaldi*): The SC decided not to take compliance measures against Mexico, as suggested by the US. Mexico's application to register the captive breeding operation "Earth Ocean Farms S. de R.L. de C.V." to breed totoaba for its meat was controversial. While many Parties supported the application, citing Mexico's reassurances and commitment to having controls on the illegal trade of swim bladders, the US opposed the application noting that illegal trade is ongoing and uncontrolled, that it is jeopardizing the vaquita (*Phocoena sinus*), and that there is no evidence that breeding reduces demand and illegal harvest.
- **Simplified Procedures for Permits and Certificates:** The SC is continuing to consider the need for the development of mechanisms to facilitate the efficient international movement of wildlife samples for diagnostic and/or conservation purposes.



To learn more about the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, visit the CITES website at: <http://www.cites.org/>