

REPORT OF THE THIRTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE ANIMALS COMMITTEE



ASSOCIATION *of*
FISH & WILDLIFE
AGENCIES

19-23 June 2023

2023



INTRODUCTION

Buddy Baker, (SEAFWA), Scott Buchanan (NEAFWA), Carolyn Caldwell (MAFWA), and Stewart Liley (WAFWA) represented the state fish and wildlife agencies and where applicable the Provinces and Territories at the 32nd Meeting of the Animals Committee held in Geneva, Switzerland from 19-23 June 2023. This was the first in-person Animals Committee meeting since 2018. Two hundred sixty-three representatives of Member Countries, Intergovernmental Organizations, Non-governmental Organizations, and the Private Sector were in attendance.

SUMMARY OVERVIEW

The Animals Committee was chaired by Mathias Lörtscher (Switzerland) who kept the meeting on track, navigated several lively discussion items, and formed six in-session working groups and eleven inter-sessional working groups. The CITES Technical Work Group (Team) was actively engaged in the meeting, an in-session working group, and the discussion of 47 substantive agenda items. These included, but were not limited to, the role of CITES in reducing the risk of zoonotic diseases associated with international wildlife trade, review of significant trade, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) assessment of sustainable use of wild species, identifying species at risk of extinction affected by trade, eels, seahorses, coral, queen conch, and the conservation of amphibian. More information concerning agenda items of interest to the states is provided in the Discussion/Outcomes Section.



KEY OUTCOMES

1

No U.S. or Canadian native species were included in the Review of Significant Trade. Both the U.S. and Canadian delegations supported this outcome.

2

The Team joined inter-sessional work groups to provide input on eel conservation, and CITES implementation and zoonotic diseases. They also will work with like-minded NGOs that are members of a work group tasked to consider the relevance of the sustainable use assessment findings to CITES.

3

The Team reconnected with partners and engaged in critical discussions.

DISCUSSION ITEMS/OUTCOMES

AC32 Doc 10. Role of CITES in reducing risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with international wildlife trade

This is an issue the Team continues to engage in and thus joined the inter-sessional working group with a mandate to review the information provided by the Parties, organizations and the United Nations Environment Programme, and prepare recommendations for consideration by the 33rd Animals Committee on; 1) proposed effective and practical solutions for reducing pathogen spillover risk in wildlife supply chains, and 2) identifying opportunities for practical collaboration under the direction of existing Resolutions, Decisions and agreements.

AC32 Doc 12. IPBES Report on the assessment of the sustainable use of wild species

An inter-sessional working group was established to work jointly with the Plants Committee on the IPBES assessment report on the sustainable use of wild species. A Team member joined this working group but ultimately withdrew after the Chair reduced the number of NGOs participating. The Team will monitor the actions of the working group via another sustainable use NGO. We want to ensure there is not over reliance on the IUCN Red List which for some species may be outdated.

AC32 Doc 14. Review of Significant Trade in Appendix II species

Prior to the Animals Committee our Team spent considerable time preparing for the discussions on new species selected for Significant Trade Review. Due to a combination of CITES export data anomalies, a number of North American species were triggered for consideration in the initial analysis. U.S. native species that were recommended for consideration for significant trade review included; bobcats, lynx, River otter, black bear, polar bear, gray wolf, spotted turtle, and Pearl River turtle. Team members met with UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) (who conducts the analysis), the U.S. and Canadian delegations, and the International Fur Federation to ensure an understanding of how these species were triggered. Full support from both countries' delegations was received to recommend against selecting these North American species, which was ultimately avoided. Of interest was the initial selection of the queen conch (*Strombus gigas*) for Saint Lucia due to sharp increases in trade of this highly threatened species. The Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico are within the range of the species. Queen conch was ultimately removed from the list; however, the species is being closely monitored by the biological community.



AC32 Doc 36. Eels (*Anguilla* spp.)

While the current focus is almost exclusively on the European eel, we joined the inter-sessional working group to monitor the discussion and outcomes. During the meeting, Canada announced a joint U.S. wild stock assessment of the American eel is being developed.

AC32 Doc 27. Identifying species at risk of extinction affected by international trade

The chair formed an inter-sessional working group to assemble guidance materials and draft recommendation on a process or mechanism for countries to consider when developing listing proposals for species threatened with extinction but are not yet regulated under CITES.

This is an agenda item that the Team will continue to monitor. The decision to develop species proposals should remain in the hands of the range country(s). Making available informational materials and other tools to assist Parties is appropriate. However, we do not support the development of a global list of species, generated by non-range countries and NGOs, for CITES species listing proposals.

AC32Doc21. Use of coded-microchips implants for marking animals in trade

The Team followed discussions on marking of live CITES specimens in trade, as the guidance from the Secretariat also encouraged consideration for resolutions or guidance for marking or tagging of non-live specimens. Our interest is to ensure that any developed resolutions and requirements do not unnecessarily burden our state agencies or impede sustainable use.

AC32Doc38. Seahorses (*Hippocampus spp.*)/AC32Doc39. Queen conch (*Strombus gigas*)

Reports were given on the recovery and monitoring efforts for these species. We continue to follow the efforts and discussions. The team also held a meeting with the NOAA members of the U.S. delegation to discuss how CITES might better protect these species which occur in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico (queen conch) and Hawaii and Florida (seahorses).



ADDITIONAL MEETINGS, DISCUSSIONS, AND SIDE EVENTS OF NOTE

Scientific samples of CITES listed species crossing the US/Canada

A Team member met with a Canadian delegation member to discuss the complications involved in scientific samples of CITES listed species crossing the U.S./Canada border. The Canadian delegate explained that scientific samples are given special status within their CITES office and that delays are not usually related to Canadian regulatory issues. She also indicated that the Canadian Species at Risk Act (SARA) species listings status generally do not delay transborder shipments – that those regulations only pertain to the collection of scientific samples within Canada. A member of the Canadian management authority took the time to walk a Team member through the Canadian online application process, which was helpful and has resulted in that Team member working with regional colleagues to facilitate a particular shipment.

Progress on the Non-detriment Finding Project

A Team member attended the side event titled “Progress on the Non-Detriment Finding (NDF) Project.” The side event was well-attended and included three presentations detailing broad steps to completing a NDF, transboundary considerations, and specifics of importing country NDFs. It served as an effective information sharing event on the broad and finer points of NDF considerations. A Team member is also a member of the project to develop NDF guidance.

Introducing the International Alliance Against Health Risks in Wildlife Trade

A Team member attended the side event “Introducing the International Alliance Against Health Risks in Wildlife Trade.” The alliance was formed in September 2021. Event organizers stated there are currently 140 members representing governments and NGOs. The main presentation provided a cursory overview of the structure and mission of the Alliance to more than 80 people in attendance. The Alliance’s mission was described as an open, inclusive, and collaborative space where stakeholders join forces to better understand and reduce the threat of future outbreaks, epidemics, and pandemics through a One Health approach. There were also brief presentations from Born Free, Pan African Sanctuary Alliance, International Fund for Animal Welfare, International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC), World Wildlife Fund, WCMC, and Humane Society International describing why they had joined the Alliance. An open discussion followed with several participants asking why CITES does not take a bigger role and describing their desire to have more emphasis placed on domestic wildlife trade.

CIC Reception

Two Team members attended the CIC reception, which provided an excellent opportunity to reconnect with other sustainable use organizations.

CITES Technical Work Group:

Scott Buchanan: NEAFWA CITES Representative
Carolyn Caldwell: MAFWA CITES Representative
Buddy Baker: SEAFWA CITES Representative
Stewart Liley: WAFWA CITES Representative
Deb Hahn [Staff]: Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies



MIDWEST
Association of
Fish & Wildlife
Agencies