

REPORT OF THE THIRTY-THIRD MEETING OF THE ANIMALS COMMITTEE



ASSOCIATION *of*
FISH & WILDLIFE
AGENCIES

12-19 July 2024

2024



INTRODUCTION

Buddy Baker, (SEAFWA), Gordon Batcheller (NEAFWA), Carolyn Caldwell (MAFWA), and Stewart Liley (WAFWA) represented the state fish and wildlife agencies and where applicable the Provinces and Territories at the 33rd Animals Committee from 12-19 July 2024. Three hundred twenty-eight representatives from 64 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 a packed agenda, and formed 7 in-session working groups. The CITES Technical Work Group (Team) was actively engaged in the meeting, and the discussion of 48 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, 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 amphibians and songbirds. More information concerning agenda items of interest to the states is provided in the Discussion/Outcomes Section.



KEY OUTCOMES

1

The Team connected with partners including the Canadian and European Union delegations about American eel; with NOAA, Project Seahorse, and the pet industry about corals and seahorses.

2

The Team worked to strengthen relationships with sustainable use partners and build connections with Country delegates.

DISCUSSION ITEMS/OUTCOMES

AC33 Doc 8. 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. At the 33rd Animals Committee the CITES Secretariat noted a Memorandum of Understanding between the CITES Secretariat and WOAHA was signed on 1 March 2024 concerning the Guidelines for Addressing Disease Risks in Wildlife Trade released by WOAHA in May 2024.

AC33 Doc 11. IPBES Report on the assessment of the sustainable use of wild species

An inter-sessional working group was established to work on the IPBES assessment report on the sustainable use of wild species. The Team worked with partners who were members of the working group to help ensure that key aspects from the sustainable use assessment that are relevant to CITES implementation are included.

AC33 Doc 14. Review of Significant Trade in Appendix II species

CITES utilizes a process called the Review of Significant Trade (RST) that allows action in the form of trade suspensions for countries that may not be making reliable Non-Detriment Findings for species with high reported export data. Species in the RST are selected by the Animals Committee at its first meeting following a Conference of the Parties. During the current cycle no North American species were included in the RST. However, several countries exporting substantial numbers of *Anguilla anguilla* (European eel) are under review which has increased interest for the management of and trade in other species in the genus.



AC33 Doc 40. Eels (*Anguilla* spp.)

The Team is closely following the eel discussions. The Team is a member of the Standing Committee Eel Working Group that is considering the development of a CITES *Anguilla* spp. Resolution. With the Conference of the Parties in 2025, there are also discussions about whether American eel should be listed in CITES. The Team is in close coordination with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and individual states as needed to ensure the state's have voice in these discussions.

AC33 Doc21. Use of coded-microchips implants for marking animals in trade

The Team followed discussions on marking of live CITES specimens in trade. The Secretariat will review current resolutions that relate to the marking issue and develop guidance on issues related to marking animals in trade. Our interest is to ensure that any resolutions and requirements do not unnecessarily burden our state agencies or impede sustainable use.

AC33 Doc42. Seahorses (*Hippocampus* spp.)

We continue to monitor the current attention to worldwide seahorse trade due to the limited and sustainable trade in Florida of both wild and cultured specimens. The Animals Committee agreed to propose to the Conference of the Parties the renewal of Decision 19.229 to continue to develop national and regional plans of action to improve CITES implementation for seahorses. The US has one of the most robust seahorse management plans and this plan serves as a model for other range states. Monitoring of seahorses in the US is a true collaboration between the states and our federal partners.

Doc 43 Queen Conch (*Strombus gigas*)

As with seahorses, CITES is also engaged in supporting the management and capacity building for implementation of queen conch decisions. The US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rica prohibit take and are heavily engaged in management and restoration. Other range counties, however, do continue to harvest and questions arise about the sustainability of the trade. The US provided funding to aid in the development of simplified Non-detriment Findings (NDF) guidance to assist countries with exports in making robust scientific assessments of trade impacts. No decisions were made at Animals Committee 33 that will be adverse to management or capacity within Puerto Rica or the Virgin Islands.

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS, DISCUSSIONS, AND SIDE EVENTS OF NOTE

IUCN Red List of Threatened Species: Use and application in CITES

Members of the team attended an IUCN side event discussing how the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and its role in the implementation of CITES. Specifically, the side event discussed how the Red List informed the CITES processes and discussed updates to the Red List since CoP19, including the first global reptile assessment, first global tree assessment and the second global shark and ray reassessment. Experts from IUCN, SSC Specialist Groups and Red List Partnership organizations shared information how the Red List is helping to guide and build capacity among CITES policy makers and stakeholders through guidance documents and online tools.

Non-detriment Finding Support Tool

Three of our Team joined more than 70 others at the NDF Support Tool Side Event. A real time demonstration was shared using data from 30 species and trade datasets linked in a single interactive platform. Launched in March 2024, the online NDF interactive tool was created by the UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre and International Union for Conservation of Nature. Prior to the export of CITES Appendix II species a country must assess the impact of trade and ensure it is not detrimental to the survival of a species in the wild before issuing permits. This tool is intended to streamline access to a variety of data and information on the species, including its conservation status, distribution, trade trends, threats, and information on the species relevant to the impact of harvesting and trade, such as its biological characteristics.



Progress toward national plans of action for seahorses

The Team attended this side event to learn more about seahorse trade, engage with Project Seahorse and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration colleagues, and share information about state management and conservation.

CIC Reception

The Team attended the CIC reception, which provided an excellent opportunity to reconnect with other sustainable use organizations and country delegations.



CITES Technical Work Group:

- Gordon Batcheller: 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

