

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Sixty-ninth meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 27 November – 1 December 2017

Species specific matters

AFRICAN LION (*PANTHERA LEO*)

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 17th meeting (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016), the Conference of the Parties adopted the following Decisions on the *African lion* (*Panthera leo*):

Directed to the Secretariat

17.241 *Subject to external funding, the Secretariat shall, in collaboration with African lion range States, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN):*

- a) *investigate possible mechanisms to develop and support the implementation of joint lion conservation plans and strategies, taking into consideration existing lion conservation plans and strategies;*
- b) *develop an inventory of African lion populations across its range, taking due consideration of existing inventories developed by African lion range States;*
- c) *support the development of relevant databases by African lion range States;*
- d) *develop strategies to reinforce international cooperation on the management of lions;*
- e) *undertake studies on legal and illegal trade in lions, including lion bones and other parts and derivatives, to ascertain the origin and smuggling routes, in collaboration with TRAFFIC and/or other relevant organisations;*
- f) *undertake a comparative study of lion population trends and conservation and management practices, such as lion hunting, within and between countries, including the role, if any, of international trade;*
- g) *support capacity building in lion conservation and management, including where appropriate the making of non-detriment findings where a range State requests it;*
- h) *support public awareness raising as well as education programmes in African lion range States, in order to support co-existence between humans and lions and to promote measures for the conservation and recovery of African lion populations;*
- i) *promote fundraising as part of its overall fundraising initiatives, to support the effective implementation of conservation and management plans and strategies for African lion and for a CITES Task Force on African lions;*

- j) *create a portal on the CITES website to permit, among other things, the posting and sharing of information and voluntary guidance on the making of non-detriment findings for African lion; and*
- k) *report on the progress relating to paragraph a) – j) to the 29th and 30th Animals Committee meetings.*

Directed to the Animals Committee

17.242 *The Animals Committee shall consider the report of the Secretariat and submit recommendations to the 69th and the 70th Standing Committee meetings and the African lion range States, as appropriate.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

17.243 *The Standing Committee shall, at its 69th and 70th meetings:*

- a) *consider the reports submitted by the Animals Committee in terms of Decision 17.242;*
- b) *recommend further actions to be taken; including the possible need for the development of a Resolution on the conservation of African lion;*
- c) *establish a CITES Task Force on African lions, inviting the participation of all African lion range States, consumer states for lion parts and derivatives, and relevant enforcement bodies, including the members of the Task Force of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC);*
- d) *provide terms of reference and modus operandi for this Task Force; and*
- e) *consider the establishment of a multi-donor technical trust fund to attract funding and direct resources for the work of the CITES Task Force on African lions and to support the effective implementation of conservation and management plans and strategies for African lion.*

Directed to African range States

17.244 *African lion range States are encouraged to collaborate in implementing the decisions contained in Decisions 17.241 paragraphs a) - j) and 17.243 paragraph c).*

Directed to all Parties, governmental, intergovernmental, non-governmental organizations, donors and other entities

17.245 *All Parties, governmental, intergovernmental, non-governmental organizations, donors and other entities are encouraged to support the African lion range States and the Secretariat:*

- a) *in their efforts to conserve and restore this iconic species across the continent, taking into consideration existing land-use practices; and*
- b) *in implementing the decisions contained in Decision 17.241 paragraphs a) - j).*

Background

3. Decisions 17.241 to 17.245 were adopted at CoP17 following discussions of documents [CoP17 Doc. 39.1](#) on *Hunting trophies of species listed in Appendix I or II* and [CoP17 Doc. 39.2](#) on *Trade in hunting trophies of species listed on Appendix II*, and proposal [CoP17 Prop.4](#) (*Transfer of all African populations of Panthera leo from Appendix II to Appendix I*).
4. In 2016, the CITES Secretariat and the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) jointly convened an African lion range States' meeting (modelled after Resolution Conf. 14.5 on *Dialogue meetings*) to discuss the continent-wide conservation of the African lion and the listing of the species under CITES and CMS Appendices, while at the same time implementing CMS Resolution 11.32 on the *Conservation and*

*Management of the African Lion, (Panthera leo)*¹. The joint meeting was kindly hosted by the Government of Uganda in Entebbe and made possible through the generous funding of the Governments of Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The conclusions and recommendations of the meeting are reflected in the Entebbe Communiqué², and were taken into consideration at CoP17 when developing the Decisions presented in paragraph 2 above [see documents [CoP17 Inf. 73](#) and [CoP17 Com. I Rec. 12 \(Rev. 1\)](#)].

5. At CoP17, the Conference of the Parties agreed to maintain *Panthera leo* (African populations) in Appendix II with the following annotation:

For Panthera leo (African populations): a zero annual export quota is established for specimens of bones, bone pieces, bone products, claws, skeletons, skulls and teeth removed from the wild and traded for commercial purposes. Annual export quotas for trade in bones, bone pieces, bone products, claws, skeletons, skulls and teeth for commercial purposes, derived from captive breeding operations in South Africa, will be established and communicated annually to the CITES Secretariat.

Implementation of Decision 17.243, paragraph a): report by the Animals Committee

6. At the 29th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC29, Geneva, July 2017), the Secretariat introduced document [AC29 Doc. 29](#). The Secretariat regretted that, because of the lack of adequate funding, it had not been able to submit a report on progress as directed under paragraph k) of Decision 17.241, to allow the Animals Committee to implement Decision 17.242. The Secretariat emphasized its collaboration with CMS and the development of a Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative, with support of IUCN. Under this Initiative, CITES and CMS are grouping the implementation of measures required from both CITES and CMS concerning the African lion (*Panthera leo*), leopard (*Panthera pardus*), African wild dog (*Lycan pictus*) and cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*), with the advantages of pooling of funds, expertise and resources; coordination of implementation measures, and more effective conservation actions.
7. In the absence of a substantive report by the Secretariat on progress relating to paragraphs a) to i) of Decision 17.21, the Animals Committee noted document AC29 Doc. 29 and the comments made during the plenary. On this occasion, the Animals Committee did not formulate recommendations for the Standing Committee and African lion range States.

Implementation of Decision 17.243, paragraph b): possible further actions

8. The Standing Committee is to recommend 'further actions to be taken', for which it will be important to take the outcomes of the implementation of Decisions 17.241 and 17.242 into account, and work closely with the Animals Committee and the Secretariat.
9. The Secretariat notes that, among possible further actions, the Standing Committee is invited to consider the need for the development of a resolution on the conservation of African lions. The Standing Committee, through a working group (see below), could examine the many provisions in existing Resolutions that already directly or indirectly relate to the conservation of and trade in African lions, and assess whether any additional specific guidance from the Conference of the Parties is needed, either as amendments to existing Resolutions or eventually in a separate resolution. Resolutions that may be of relevance to African lions include Resolutions Conf. 17.4 on *Demand reduction strategies to combat illegal trade in CITES-listed species*, 17.7 on *Review of trade in animal specimens reported as produced in captivity*, 17.9 on *Trade in hunting trophies of species listed in Appendix I or II*, 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) on *Non-detriment findings*, 15.2 on *Wildlife trade policy reviews*, 14.7 (Rev. CoP15) on *Management of nationally established export quotas*, 14.8 (Rev. CoP17) on *Periodic review of species included in Appendices I and II*, 13.2 (Rev. CoP14) on *Sustainable use of biodiversity: Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines*, 13.11 (Rev. CoP17) on *Bushmeat*, 12.5 (Rev. CoP17) on *Conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix-I Asian big cat species*, 12.8 (Rev. CoP17) on *Review of Significant Trade in specimens of Appendix-II species* and others.
10. In case a separate resolution on the conservation of, and trade in African lions is considered necessary, it could for example be structured after Resolution Conf. 17.12 on *Conservation, sustainable use of and trade*

¹ All documents relating to the meeting can be found at: <http://www.cms.int/en/meeting/joint-cms-cites-african-lion-range-state-meeting-closed-meeting>.

² http://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/African_Lions_Meeting_Communique_E.pdf

in snakes, with sections regarding non-detriment findings (NDFs), management of wild populations, monitoring and trade controls, and traceability.

11. In view of the success of the first African lion range States' meeting, consideration could also be given to organizing a second meeting prior to CoP18 *inter alia* to assess overall progress in the implementation of the CoP17 Decisions.

Implementation of Decision 17.243, paragraph c) and d): CITES Task Force on African lions, terms of reference and *modus operandi*

12. At this or its next meeting, the Standing Committee is required to establish a CITES Task Force on African lions, inviting the participation of all African lion range States, consumer states for lion parts and derivatives, and relevant enforcement bodies, including "the members of the Task Force" of ICCWC. The Secretariat notes that ICCWC has no 'Task Force'. Perhaps what was meant is for the Standing Committee to reach out to the ICCWC partners (the CITES Secretariat, INTERPOL, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Bank and the World Customs Organization).
13. In the context of CITES, Task Forces for other species have been established under paragraph 9 h) of Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP17) on *Compliance and enforcement*, focusing only on enforcement issues, and mostly relating to Appendix-I listed species. However, as the enforcement challenges faced by the African lion are not yet well understood (see paragraph 14 below), the need or possible tasks for a CITES Task Force on lions are unclear. Instead, the Standing Committee could therefore consider establishing an intersessional working group on African lions with a broader composition and mandate that, in its terms of reference, incorporates the enforcement aspect of a Task Force.
14. In accordance with Decision 17.241, paragraph e), the Secretariat is undertaking a study on the legal and illegal trade in lions, including lion bones and other parts and derivatives, in order to ascertain *inter alia* the origin and smuggling routes of that trade. The Secretariat thanks the European Union for the generous funding it provided to initiate this study. The results of the study should become available prior to the 30th meeting of the Animals Committee in July 2018. The Animals Committee has to consider the report, and submit its recommendations to the Standing Committee, as per Decision 17.242. The Standing Committee may wish its intersessional working group to review the study and the recommendations of the Animals Committee prior to 70th meeting (SC70) of the Standing Committee in October 2018.
15. Decision 17.243 contains a number of additional issues for consideration by the Standing Committee: the possible development of additional specific guidance on trade in and conservation of lions in existing Resolutions or through a separate Resolution (see paragraphs 9 and 10 above); and the possible establishment of a multi-donor technical trust fund to attract funding and direct resources for the work of the CITES Task Force on African lions and support the effective implementation of conservation and management plans and strategies for the African lion (see paragraphs 17 to 22 below). The intersessional working group on African lions could be asked to examine these.
16. The terms of reference of the Standing Committee's intersessional working group on African lions could include the following:
 - a) support the Secretariat or its consultants in undertaking a study on the legal and illegal trade in lion specimens called for in Decision 17.241, paragraph e), by, *inter alia*, sharing relevant information and facilitating research;
 - b) review prior to SC70 the study conducted in accordance with Decision 17.241, paragraph e), and the recommendations by the Animals Committee, and draft recommendations for consideration by the Standing Committee;
 - c) review prior to SC70 other aspects of the report of the Secretariat to the 30th meeting of the Animals Committee (including implementation of paragraphs a), d) and f) of Decision 17.241) and the recommendations by the Animals Committee, and draft comments and recommendations as appropriate for consideration by the Standing Committee;
 - d) consider further actions to be taken, including the possible development of additional specific guidance on trade in and conservation of African lions by amending existing Resolutions or through a dedicated resolution, and the appropriateness for organizing a second African lion range States' meeting, and draft recommendations as appropriate for consideration by the Standing Committee;

- e) assess whether existing grants programmes and funding opportunities can support, or be strengthened to support, the effective implementation of conservation and management plans and strategies for African lions, as envisaged in Decision 17.243, paragraph e); and taking account this assessment, consider the need and challenges for establishing an additional multi-donor technical trust fund; and
- f) report on the results of these activities, including draft recommendations, at SC70.

It is proposed that the Standing Committee's working group on African lions works intersessionally and via electronic means.

Implementation of Decision 17.243, paragraph e): Multi-donor technical trust fund for African lions

17. The Standing Committee is asked to consider the establishment of a multi-donor technical trust fund "to attract funding and direct resources for the work of the CITES Task Force on African lions and to support the effective implementation of conservation and management plans and strategies for African lion."
18. At this stage, it is not clear if resources would be required for the work of a CITES Task Force on African lions, and if so how much. The financial support that is needed to effectively or fully implement the exiting regional conservation and management plans and strategies for African lions³ has not been detailed, noting that many conservation activities are taking place on the African continent that directly or indirectly contribute to these strategies and plans. The implementation of the various components in sub-paragraphs a) to j) of Decision 17.241 (including '*investigate possible mechanisms to develop and support the implementation of joint lion conservation plans and strategies, taking into consideration existing lion conservation plans and strategies*') are estimated to cost well over one million USD.
19. The experience with the African Elephant Action Plan and the African Elephant Fund (see Resolution Conf. 16.9 on *African Elephant Action Plan and African Elephant Fund*) shows that species-specific multi-donor funds can be reasonably successful, but take a long time and considerable efforts to be established; are heavy and costly to manage and operate; and may remain relatively modest in scope and size, *de facto* operating much like a small-grants fund. It should also be noted that currently, separate regional strategies for lion conservation in Africa exist⁴, but not a continent-wide agreed African Lion Action Plan.
20. Early in September 2017, the CITES and CMS Secretariats met with several organizations that have specific interest in conducting and supporting lion conservation work in Africa⁵. It became apparent that these intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations support many activities that directly or indirectly contribute to the implementation of components of Decision 17.241, as called for in Decision 17.245. It also seems that several existing grants programmes can contribute to funding the implementation of conservation and management plans for African lions, as envisaged in Decision 17.243, paragraph e). These include IUCN SOS – Save Our Species⁶, the Big Cats Initiative⁷ and the Lion Recovery Fund⁸. It was noted at the meeting that these three funds operate in a compatible manner, are experienced in funding projects in Africa, and have complementary knowledge of particular activities, organizations, threats to lions and conservation priorities. They intended to further share and exchange this knowledge to improve synergies and effectiveness.
21. In support of the implementation of Decision 17.243, paragraph e), the Standing Committee may ask its intersessional working group to examine existing funding opportunities for supporting African lion conservation activities, and evaluate to what extent they could cover, or be made to cover, requirements expressed in the Decision. Based on its findings, the working group may then assess the usefulness of an additional African lion fund, and the challenges and timeframes for creating such a fund.
22. In the meantime, the Standing Committee could request the Secretariat to disseminate information on existing funding opportunities for undertaking lion conservation activities in line with those outlined in

³ *Regional Lion Conservation strategies for West Africa, Central Africa, and Eastern and Southern Africa (IUCN, 2006)*

⁴ See <http://catsg.org/index.php?id=686> for links to *Conservation strategy for Eastern and Southern Africa (IUCN, 2006)*, *Conservation strategy for West and Central Africa (IUCN, 2006)* and *Review of conservation strategies (CMS, 2015)*

⁵ *IUCN SOS – Save Our Species; IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group; Big Cats Initiative, NGS; Rangewide programme, WCS, ZSL; Lion Recovery Fund, WCN;*

⁶ <https://www.iucn.org/theme/species/our-work/action-ground/sos-save-our-species>

⁷ <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/projects/big-cats-initiative/>

⁸ <https://www.lionrecoveryfund.org/>

Decision 17.241, and encourage African lion range States, Parties and other stakeholders to make use of these possibilities as appropriate.

Recommendations

23. The Standing Committee is invited to:

- a) take note of this document;
- b) establish an intersessional working group on African lions, inviting the participation of all African lion range States and other relevant stakeholders;
- c) consider the terms of reference and *modus operandi* of the working group proposed in paragraph 16; and
- d) request the Secretariat to disseminate to the Parties relevant information on existing funding opportunities that can support the implementation of conservation and management plans and strategies for the African lion, and the actions outlined in Decision 17.241, paragraphs a) to j).