

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



Seventieth meeting of the Standing Committee
Rosa Khutor, Sochi (Russian Federation), 1-5 October 2018

Species specific matters

ASIAN BIG CATS (*FELIDAE* SPP.):
REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. In Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP17) on *Conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix-I Asian big cat species*, paragraph 2 a), the Conference of the Parties instructs the Secretariat to:
 - a) *report to the Standing Committee and the Conference of the Parties on the status of Asian big cats in the wild, their conservation, and trade controls in place in Parties, using information provided by the range States on measures taken to comply with this Resolution and related relevant Decisions and any relevant additional information provided by relevant countries.*
3. At its 17th meeting (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 17.224 to 17.231 on *Asian big cats (Felidae spp.)*, as follows:

Directed to Parties

- 17.224 *All Parties identified as being of concern in Decision 17.229 are invited to welcome a mission from the Secretariat to visit facilities keeping Asian big cats in captivity.*

Directed to Parties, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations

- 17.225 *Parties, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to provide financial and technical support to Parties requesting additional capacity and resources to implement Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP17) on Conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix-I Asian big cat species effectively. Parties are also encouraged to implement the relevant recommendations from relevant international forums and tools, including but not limited to the Zero Poaching Symposium outcomes and Zero Poaching toolkit and the relevant Global Tiger Initiative/Global Tiger Forum processes addressing resources that are needed to combat poaching, trafficking and illegal trade.*

Directed to Parties with Asian big cat captive facilities

- 17.226 *All Parties in whose territory there are facilities keeping Asian big cats in captivity are requested to:*
- a) *review national management practices and controls that are in place for such facilities, to ensure that these management practices and controls are adequate to prevent Asian big cat specimens from entering illegal trade from or through such facilities;*

- b) *ensure strict application of all management practices and controls implemented to regulate the activities of facilities that keep Asian big cats in captivity, including with regard to the disposal of specimens from Asian big cats that die in captivity; and*
- c) *report to the Secretariat on progress with regard to the implementation of this Decision.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

17.227 *The Standing Committee shall review the report and recommendations of the Secretariat concerning the implementation of Decisions 17.226, 17.228, 17.229 and 17.230, and determine whether any further time-bound, country specific actions are necessary to ensure implementation of these Decisions.*

Directed to the Secretariat

17.228 *Subject to external funds, the Secretariat shall, in consultation with range and consumer States, and in cooperation with partner organizations in the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) and, as appropriate, other experts and organizations, continue the review of implementation of Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP17) and associated Decisions and prepare a report in consideration of legislative and regulatory measures; national law enforcement; demand reduction, education and awareness; prevention of illegal trade in parts and derivatives from facilities for keeping Asian big cats in captivity; and management of national and privately-held stocks of parts and derivatives.*

17.229 *Subject to external funding, the Secretariat shall:*

- a) *conduct a review of the number of facilities keeping Asian big cats in captivity in the territories of Parties and the number of Asian big cats kept in these facilities;*
- b) *liaise with ICWC and other partners, as appropriate, to review legal and illegal trade in Asian big cats from or through such facilities, identifying those which may be of concern; and*
- c) *undertake a mission to those Parties in whose territories there are facilities of concern with the purpose of gaining a better understanding of the operations and activities undertaken by them.*

17.230 *Subject to external funding, the Secretariat shall work with ICWC partner organizations, in particular INTERPOL, to further build upon the work already conducted through initiatives such as Operation PAWS II, by supporting key Parties affected by trafficking in Asian big cat specimens, to initiate, plan and carry out joint intelligence-driven national and transnational investigations, to disrupt and dismantle the criminal groups involved in trafficking in Asian big cat specimens.*

17.231 *The Secretariat shall report to the Standing Committee on progress with regard to the implementation of Decisions 17.226, 17.228, 17.229 and 17.230, and on the basis of the report, formulate recommendations for consideration by the Standing Committee.*

4. At its 14th meeting (CoP14, The Hague, 2007), the Conference adopted Decision 14.69 on Asian big cats, which remains in effect, as follows:

Directed to the Parties, especially Appendix-I Asian big cat range States

14.69 *Parties with intensive operations breeding tigers on a commercial scale shall implement measures to restrict the captive population to a level supportive only to conserving wild tigers; tigers should not be bred for trade in their parts and derivatives.*

Implementation of Decisions 14.69, 17.224, 17.226, 17.227, 17.229 and 17.231 with respect to Asian big cats in captivity

5. Concerning Decision 17.226, the Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties [No. 2018/002](#) of 11 January 2018, calling on Parties to report to the Secretariat on the progress they have made with regard to the implementation of Decision 17.226 paragraphs a) and b). Responses were received from nine Parties: Australia, Brazil, Germany, Spain, Slovakia, Thailand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern

Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam. These responses are compiled in a single document presented in Annex 1 to the present document, in the language in which they were received.

6. Although some of the responses were brief and not all addressed all the matters raised in Decision 17.226, paragraphs a) and b), the Parties that responded were generally satisfied that their national management practices relating to facilities that keep Asian big cats in captivity were sufficient to prevent Asian big cat specimens from entering illegal trade from or through such facilities, including through controls on the disposal of specimens from Asian big cats that die in captivity.
7. Regarding Decision 17.229, paragraph a), with funding generously provided by the European Union, the Secretariat commissioned the non-for-profit organization, Species360, to conduct a review of the number of facilities keeping Asian big cats in captivity in the territories of Parties and the number of Asian big cats kept in these facilities. A summary report of their findings (in the language in which it was submitted) is attached to the present document, as Annex 2. In brief, the estimated statistics are as follows:

	Number of facilities keeping the species in captivity	Number of specimens kept in these facilities	Number of Parties in which the facilities are found
Tiger <i>Panthera tigris</i>	1,038	12,574	68
Leopard <i>Panthera pardus</i>	369	1,208	59
Snow leopard <i>Uncia uncia</i>	179	438	33
Clouded leopard <i>Neofelis nebulosa</i>	93	315	29
Asiatic lion <i>Panthera leo persica</i>	71	383	23

8. As explained in Annex 2, Species360 provided the Secretariat with a database containing further details about each of these facilities. The Secretariat has used this database as the primary basis for identifying facilities which may be of concern in the context of Decision 17.229 paragraph b).
9. In light of the policies decided by the Conference of the Parties, the Secretariat concluded that facilities keeping Asian big cats in captivity could be of concern for two reasons:
 - a) Parties with intensive operations breeding tigers on a commercial scale which might be failing to implement measures to restrict the captive population to a level supportive only to conserving wild tigers; tigers should not be bred for trade in their parts and derivatives [Decision 14.69]
 - b) Parties which may be failing to ensure that adequate management practices and controls are in place to prevent parts and derivatives from Asian big cats from entering illegal trade from or through such facilities [paragraph 1 g) of Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP17)]
10. Concerning Decision 14.69, the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) is the principle membership body for zoos around the world and its World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy¹ (endorsed by the former Secretary-General of CITES) demonstrates its commitment to engage in activities designed to conserve species. Forty-nine tigers are held by the WAZA member which possesses the most specimens of this species, and in the absence of other benchmarks, the Secretariat has considered that there must be query over the extent to which any other facility holding more than this number is doing so for the purposes of conserving the species. Thirty-six facilities in four Parties, holding around 4,297 tiger specimens in total, fulfilled this criterion.
11. Concerning the facilities from or through which parts and derivatives of Asian big cats might be entering illegal trade, the Secretariat used its experience of cases which have come its attention in the course of its regular work, together with three other sources of information in line with Decision 17.229 b): consultation with ICCWC partners, literature review and a direct request to all CITES observer organizations that have spoken on this topic at recent CITES meetings. Any facility for which any information indicated that it might be involved in illegal trade was included. From this exercise, 36 facilities in six Parties were identified which may be of concern. Some of these overlapped with facilities referred to in the previous paragraph of the present document.

¹

http://www.waza.org/files/webcontent/1_public_site/5_conservation/conservation_strategies/committing_to_conservation/WAZA%20Conservation%20Strategy%202015_Landscape.pdf

12. Combining the results of these two exercises together resulted in the number and location of facilities keeping Asian big cat species in captivity, which may be of concern, being as follows:

Species	Party	Number of facilities
Tiger <i>Panthera tigris</i>	China	36
	Czech Republic	2
	Lao PDR	6
	Thailand	10
	South Africa	1
	United States of America	6
	Viet Nam	5
	Total	66
Leopard <i>Panthera pardus</i>	Total	0
Snow leopard <i>Uncia uncia</i>	Total	0
Clouded leopard <i>Neofelis nebulosa</i>	Total	0
Asiatic lion <i>Panthera leo persica</i>	Total	0

13. The Secretariat will be writing to the seven Parties involved to present them with details of the facilities identified and the reason for the concern and proposing, where appropriate, that the Secretariat conduct a mission to visit identified facilities to gain a better understanding of their operations and activities. The Secretariat will update the Committee orally on these arrangements at the present meeting, and intends to be in a position to formulate recommendations in accordance with Decision 17.231, for consideration by the Committee at its 71st meeting (SC71, Colombo, May 2019), to enable the Committee to determine whether any further time-bound, country specific actions are necessary in accordance with Decision 17.227. Concerning the Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), the Secretariat will work to ensure that there is coordination between this exercise and the processes related to the application of Article XIII for that Party detailed in document SC70 Doc. 27.3.1.

Implementation of Decision 17.228 – Review of the implementation of Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP17)

14. In mid-March 2018, the Secretariat received external funding to conduct the review on the implementation of Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP17). The Secretariat would like to thank the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for the generous funding it provided to support the implementation of Decision 17.228. The Secretariat contracted a consultant to conduct the review, and the executive summary of the review, available in English, French and Spanish, is presented in Annex 3 to the present document. The full review is presented in Annex 4 to the present document, and is available in English only.
15. As required by Decision 17.228, the review was conducted in consultation with Appendix-I Asian big cat range and consumer States, and in cooperation with ICCWC partner organizations and other experts and organizations. The present review follows upon the review conducted in 2014, presented in Annex 1 to document [SC65 Doc 38](#). It focuses on the period 2015 to mid-2018, and was conducted with a particular focus on Parties identified as being affected by illegal trade in Asian big cat specimens. It addresses the following matters: conservation status; illegal trade; legislative and regulatory measures; national law enforcement; reduction of demand for illegal specimens; and education and awareness.
16. Decisions 17.224, 17.226, and 17.229, currently being implemented through a separate process as reported in paragraphs 5 to 13 of the present document, address Asian big cats in captivity, while the matter of management of national and privately-held stocks of parts and derivatives falls under the mandate of the Standing Committee's working group on stocks and stockpiles. The working group reports on its work in document SC70 Doc. 41. For these reasons, the prevention of illegal trade in parts and derivatives from facilities for keeping Asian big cats in captivity, and the management of national and privately-held stocks of parts and derivatives, as included in Decision 17.228, were not among the areas of focus for the present review. In addition, Decision 14.69 is discussed in document SC70 Doc. 31.1 on *Review of ambiguities and inconsistencies in the application of Article VII paragraphs 4 and 5 and related resolution*.
17. As mentioned in paragraph 15 above, the present review was conducted with a particular focus on Parties identified as being affected by illegal trade in Asian big cat specimens. By consulting a number of different sources such as documents prepared for previous meetings of the Standing Committee and the Conference of the Parties, the 2016 World Wildlife Crime report developed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) under the auspices of ICCWC, literature studies, and others, the consultant identified China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, the United States of America and Viet Nam as the ten key Parties to engage with for the review of the implementation of Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev

CoP17). The consultant contacted these ten Parties individually, requesting information on their implementation of the Resolution. Five Parties responded (India, Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand and the United States of America), and contributed information which was incorporated into the review. In addition, 17 inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations² with relevant expertise contributed information that was incorporated into the review. The Secretariat also provided the consultant with a compilation of the 2016 annual illegal trade data on Asian big cats received from Parties, for consideration as part of the review, as elaborated upon in paragraph 23 of the present document.

18. Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP17) instructs the Secretariat to report to the Conference of the Parties on the conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix-I Asian big cat species and the implementation of the Resolution. The Secretariat plans to review the provisions of the Resolution in light of the review presented in Annex 4 to the present document and a similar review undertaken in 2014 and presented in Annex 1 of document SC65 Doc 38.
19. The Secretariat draws the attention of the Committee to the following findings in the review, and also offers some observations:

Conservation status

20. Regarding the conservation status of Asian big cat Appendix I species, the report highlights that all Asian big cats are categorized under the Red List of Threatened Species™, of the International Union for Conservation of Nature with the tiger categorized as “Endangered”, and the remaining species as “Vulnerable” (the snow leopard moved from “Endangered” to “Vulnerable”).
21. The report indicates that the leopard is the only large felid of which the conservation status deteriorated significantly in recent years, with the species moving from Near Threatened (2008 assessment) to Vulnerable (2015 assessment), noting particularly strong declines in Asia.
22. Concerning the small, highly threatened populations of Asiatic lion (*Panthera leo persica*) in India and of Asiatic cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus venaticus*) in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the report informs that intensified governmental conservation planning efforts for both sub-species were announced in 2018.

Illegal trade

23. An analysis of the 2016 data on illegal trade in Asian big cats contained in annual illegal trade reports submitted Parties to the Secretariat showed that 14 Parties³ (out of 55) included information on a total of 132 seizures of Asian big cat specimens. These seizures consisted mostly of medicinal derivatives (42%) claiming to contain specimens of tiger and leopard, followed by skins (26%) of leopards, tigers and snow leopards. Most of the seizures were made in non-range States. The majority of medicinal products claiming to contain Asian big cat specimens, for which origin were included in the reports received from Parties, originated from China, followed by Viet Nam and Cambodia (for medicinal products claiming to contain tiger).
24. Information on the ten focal Parties of the review, covering the period 2015-2017, provided to the consultant by non-governmental organizations, and mostly derived from open sources, suggest that, for this period, a total of 196 seizures of Asian big cat specimens occurred. These seizures reportedly consisted mostly of bodies or body parts including skins, bones, claws and teeth. Seizures of tiger specimens were the most numerous (111 seizures). In particular worth noting is one large scale seizure in October 2016 in Tibet Special Autonomous Region (SAR), of 20 snow leopard skins along with two tiger skins, two leopard skins, and a clouded leopard skin.
25. The report identifies consumer demand and poaching as the two main drivers behind illegal trade in tiger specimens, and highlights two parallel supply routes for illegal trade in tiger specimens, with the primary destinations being China and Viet Nam: a trans-Himalayan route for wild tigers from South Asia (primarily from India as well as Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal); and a Southeast Asian route for captive-bred and wild

² Brookings Institute, Eco-Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement (EAGLE), Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), Fauna and Flora International (FFI), Forum Harimau Kita, Freeland, Global Tiger Forum (GTF), International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), S.P.E.C.I.E.S., Sintas Indonesia Foundation, TRAFFIC, United Nations Development Programme/Small Grants Programme (UNDP/GEF Indonesia), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Wildlife Justice Commission (WJC), Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Zoological Society of London (ZSL)

³ Austria, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America

tigers from Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand. The report also indicates that other Asian big cat species may be trafficked through these routes. Furthermore, the report suggest that illegally traded wild tigers are entering China from the Russian Federation, that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has emerged as a major source of alleged tiger bone wine, and that Indonesia has a largely underground domestic market for tiger skins, canines, claws and whiskers.

26. The report highlights that illegal trade in leopard parts and derivatives are flagged by experts as of particular concern in Afghanistan, Cambodia, China, India, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Nepal. Regarding India, this is supported by information provided by the Wildlife Protection Society of India indicating that over four times as many leopards (447) were poached in India from 2015-2017 compared to tigers. Skins of leopards appear to be the most common item seized, noting that the report indicates that there is growing demand for leopard bones, particularly in China and Viet Nam.
27. Regarding illegal trade in clouded leopard, the report highlights that the most illegally traded specimens are skins, but also bones, meat and live animals, and most frequently from range States to China.
28. Although captive breeding was not a focus of the review, it highlights incidents of specimens bred in captivity entering illegal trade. The review for example provides information on good law enforcement action taken at a captive breeding facility in Thailand. In 2016, more than 500 officers participated in a raid during which a large amount of tiger specimens were seized (including 60 frozen tigers, 1,000 amulets containing tiger skins, whole tiger skins and tiger teeth) and 137 tigers were removed from the facility. According to open source information, 22 suspects were charged with wildlife trafficking and illegal possession, but as of February 2018, the case had not yet reached the prosecution stage.
29. Although not included in the review, worth noting is that the Czech Republic in mid-July 2018 informed the Secretariat that Czech authorities conducted a joint operation which exposed an illegal trade network linked to a legal tiger and lion breeder in Czech Republic. During the operation, law enforcement officials found an illegal tiger slaughterhouse, where the body of a freshly killed tiger, tiger skins, bones, claws and tiger products such as bouillon cubes and tiger wine were found. Officials also found equipment used for the production of tiger products such as a boiler for preparation of tiger glue (bouillon). The freshly killed tiger seized by the authorities was, according to the CITES Management Authority of Czech Republic, microchipped and bred in captivity in France and legally sold to Czech Republic. The tiger products produced in Czech Republic are alleged to be sold within the European Union and illegally traded to Viet Nam. This again shows the need for Parties to be vigilant in their implementation of Decision 17.226, paragraphs a) and b).

Legislative and regulatory measures

30. The review states that all ten focal Parties either enacted amendments to their national legislation governing international and domestic trade in Asian big cat specimens, or announced that they were in the process of doing so. All ten Parties also require some form of permit, generally issued only for non-commercial purposes, for both international and domestic trade in Asian big cat specimens. Three of the ten Parties offer the same level of domestic trade protection to all CITES-listed big cat taxa; nine generally have the same domestic trade controls for wild and captive Asian big cat specimens; the legislative and regulatory measures implemented by three of these Parties incorporate the interpretation of the term 'readily recognizable part or derivative', as provided in paragraph 1 of Resolution Conf. 9.6 (Rev. CoP16) on *Trade in readily recognizable parts and derivatives*; and one of the focal Parties lacks a statutory basis for regulating possession of protected species (apart from licensing requirements for captive breeding).
31. Several best practices regarding legislative and regulatory measures are suggested in the review report, which could guide relevant Parties in their efforts to implement further measures to protect Asian big cat species. Examples of such best practices include:
 - a) trade controls that offer equal protection to native and non-native big cat taxa is suggested as a best practice to close loopholes which could allow parts and derivatives of non-native big cats to be traded illegally as specimens of native species;
 - b) the United Arab Emirates prohibit private possession of wild cat species, and this is highlighted as a best practice to address the use of Asian big cats as pets; and
 - c) the incorporation of the interpretation of the term "readily recognizable part or derivative" as provided in Resolution Conf. 9.6 (Rev. CoP16) into national legislation and regulations, is highlighted as a best

practice to facilitate the implementation of paragraph 1 b) in Resolution 12.5 (Rev. CoP17) and addresses products labelled as, or claiming to contain Asian big cat parts or derivatives.

National law enforcement

32. The review highlights that a number of ten Parties took enforcement actions to address identified criminal networks involved in illegal trade in wildlife, including illegal trade in Asian big cat specimens in the period 2015 to mid-2018. The report further indicates that all focal Parties, except Lao PDR and Myanmar, in this period prosecuted offenders in cases of illegal trade in Asian big cat specimens. In China in particular, sentences were imposed in accordance with the maximum penalties permitted by the law, and Thailand used anti-money laundering legislation to initiate one of the biggest asset forfeitures in the world to date, against a criminal network involved in illegal trade in wildlife, including tigers (USD 36.5 million).
33. The review points out that, despite enforcement actions, illegal wildlife trade tourism markets continue to exist in particular in Lao PDR and Myanmar. The report suggests that greater cross-border law enforcement cooperation between authorities in Lao PDR, Myanmar, and China is needed to target illegal traders, as well as illegal cross-border tourist trade driving these markets.
34. Noting the difficulty of species identification when processed products claim to contain big cat specimens, the Czech Republic in January 2018 launched a genetic research project named TigrisID, focused on the development of methods for the analysis of heavily processed products claiming to contain tiger specimens. Interested Parties are encouraged to engage with the Czech Environmental Inspectorate to learn more about this work, and to pursue similar initiatives.
35. The review provides information on a number of national law enforcement best practices to address poaching and illegal trade in Asian big cat specimens which could guide Parties in their efforts to implement measures to combat such crime. These include for example:
 - a) community-based programmes to gather intelligence and increase anti-poaching effectiveness;
 - b) joint work between criminal and financial intelligence agencies to address wildlife trafficking and support intelligence-led investigations;
 - c) collaboration with Internet and social media companies; and
 - d) the national identification databases for tiger skins developed by India and Thailand to identify the origin of seized tiger skins.

Reduction of demand for illegal specimens

36. The review highlights best practices and challenges related to the reduction of demand for illegally traded Asian big cat specimens, and includes a review of poacher and consumer motivations and recent developments towards reducing consumer demand for illegal wildlife products, which could guide Parties in their efforts to implement demand reduction strategies to address illegal trade in wildlife. The main challenges regarding demand reduction pointed out in the review are the diverse consumer groups and motivations to use a wide array of Asian big cat products such as food, medicine, ornaments, decorations and pets. The review suggests that different market segments require different messaging.

Education and awareness

37. The report reviews recent education and awareness campaigns as described in Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP17), paragraph 3 b), including campaigns that targeted rural and urban communities; traditional medicine communities, practitioners and users; and enforcement, prosecution and judicial authorities. The report suggests that the implementation of paragraph 5 a) in Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP17) which recommends that consumer States of specimens from the tiger and other Asian big cats species “work with traditional medicine communities and industries to develop and implement strategies for gradually reducing and eventually eliminating the use of Asian big cat parts and derivatives”, could be further strengthened.
38. As best practices regarding education and awareness campaigns directed at urban and rural communities and other target groups, the review highlights campaigning by actively encouraging the public to report crimes associated with Asian big cats, e.g. Thailand's Wild Watch and TRAFFIC's Wildlife Witness offer examples of initiatives where the public is encouraged to report wildlife crime. In this regard, the Secretariat

also takes the opportunity to draw the attention of Parties to document SC70 Doc. 18 on *Community awareness on wildlife trafficking*. The report also highlights the importance of providing tools for human/animal conflict mitigation and training to local people living near big cats.

39. The report highlights that a continuing challenge is to ensure that awareness campaigns actually result in illegal trade reduction and behavioural change.
40. [World Wildlife Day 2018](#) was celebrated under the theme *Big Cats: Predators under threat*. The review report highlights that, in line with the recommendation on *Asian big cats* adopted by the Committee at its 69th meeting, Parties and organizations seized the opportunity to initiate public awareness campaigns to promote the conservation of Asian big cats, and to reduce illegal offer of, and demand for illegally traded Asian big cat specimens (see document SC70 Doc. 23).

Implementation of Decisions 17.225 and 17.230

41. In accordance with Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP17), paragraph 2 b), and to progress the implementation of Decision 17.230, the Secretariat continued to work closely with its ICCWC partners in the current reporting period, including by supporting Operation Thunderstorm,⁴ a month-long law enforcement operation conducted in May 2018, that resulted *inter alia* in ten seizures of Asian big cat specimens, in particular of tiger and leopard. The Secretariat reports in more detail on Operation Thunderstorm in document SC70 Doc. 30.2 on the *International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime*.
42. In accordance with Decision 17.225, INTERPOL continued to support Asian big cat range States to enhance law enforcement responses to combat illegal trade in Asian big cat specimens. Such support focused, *inter alia*, on providing investigative and analytical support, e.g. through several Regional Investigative and Analytical Case Meetings (RIACM), for instance in Malaysia in March 2018 and in India in April 2018; operational support, e.g. by organizing the global Operation Thunderstorm in 2018; capacity building to facilitate better information collection, management and analysis. This is elaborated upon in more detail, in Annex 5 to the present document.
43. The review report demonstrates that a number of activities that support the implementation of Decision 17.225 have been delivered by Parties, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations in particular in the context of awareness raising and demand reduction. Parties, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to continue to provide financial and technical support to Parties requesting additional capacity and resources to implement Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP17) on *Conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix-I Asian big cat species* effectively.

Asian Big Cat Field Pocket Guide

44. On 30 January 2018, the Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties [No. 2018/014](#) inviting Parties to request from the Secretariat hard copies of the field pocket *Guide for law enforcement agencies to combat illegal trade in Asian big cat specimens*, available in English and Chinese. The Secretariat would like to take this opportunity to thank the non-governmental organization, Panthera, that translated pro bono the field pocket guide into Russian. A limited number of the Russian version of the field pocket guide was made available to Parties at the CITES Workshop for Central Asian Parties (Bishkek, May 2018) co-hosted by the Secretariat. At the time of writing, the Secretariat is seeking funding to produce further Russian versions of the field pocket guide. The Secretariat continues to welcome requests from Parties that would like to receive hard copies of the field pocket guide.

Recommendations

45. In accordance with Decision 17.231, the Secretariat recommends that the Standing Committee:
 - a) note the report in Annex 4 of document SC70 Doc. 51 and the intention of the Secretariat to review the provisions of the Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP17) in the light of it and similar reviews undertaken in the past;

⁴ https://www.cites.org/eng/news/month-long-trans-continental-operation-hit-wildlife-criminals-hard_20062018

- b) concerning the implementation of Decisions 17.226 and 17.229 with respect to Asian big cats in captivity, note the progress reported in paragraphs 5 to 13 of the present document;
- c) encourage all Parties, in particular Parties affected by illegal trade in Asian big cat specimens, to draw upon the information contained in the review on the implementation of Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP17), presented in Annex 4 to document SC70 Doc. 51, to:
 - i) inform their decision making when they develop appropriate law enforcement responses to address illegal trade in Asian big cat specimens, in particular taking note of the information concerning crime trends and illegal trade routes in the review; and
 - ii) take note of the best practices highlighted in the review and consider how these may be applied to their own circumstances to further strengthen measures and activities implemented to address illegal trade in Asian big cats,
- d) request Parties, in particular Afghanistan, Cambodia, China, India, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal and Viet Nam, to take note of the concerns regarding illegal trade in leopard parts and derivatives, as outlined in paragraph 26 and Annex 4 of document SC70 Doc. 51, and to take this information into account when developing work programmes and undertaking law enforcement operations;
- e) encourage Parties in whose territory there are facilities keeping Asian big cats in captivity, to be vigilant in their implementation of Decision 17.226, paragraphs a) and b); and
- f) encourage Parties affected by illegal trade in Asian big cats, in particular consumer States, to consider illegal trade in Asian big cats in their implementation of Resolution Conf. 17.4 on *Demand reduction strategies to combat illegal trade in CITES-listed species*.