

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

Sixty-fifth meeting of the Standing Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 7-11 July 2014

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Trade control and traceability

IDENTIFICATION MANUAL

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. In accordance with Resolution Conf. 11.19 (Rev. CoP16) on the *Identification Manual*, paragraph h) under "DIRECTS", the present report has been prepared to inform Parties of progress made with the production of the Identification Manual.
3. The Identification Manual is one of the Convention's longest-running initiatives, having been initiated in 1977. First published in print format and now available as an online WIKI, the CITES Identification Manual is publicly available on the CITES website.
4. At the time of writing (April 2014), there were 784 registered users, 21 of whom have requested editing rights. No user edits or additions have been made to the animal or plant sheets since the publication of the Manual on the CITES website.
5. A report on the *Review of identification and guidance material* was presented by the Secretariat at the joint session of the 27th meeting of the Animals Committee (Veracruz, April-May 2014) and at the 21st meeting of the Plants Committee (Veracruz, May 2014)<sup>1</sup>.
6. The present report summarizes the work accomplished by Parties and the Secretariat up to the joint session of the Animals and Plants Committees (Veracruz, May 2014) in support of Decisions 16.59 to 16.61. This includes the contributions and submissions by Parties in response to Notification to the Parties No. 2013/036 which invited Parties, organizations and experts to contribute information, in paper or electronic format, on available identification and guidance materials, particularly those materials used by enforcement and inspections officers.
7. Information received from Parties and other interested bodies or persons relating to the identification of CITES species is currently being compiled in the relevant section the CITES Virtual College.<sup>2</sup> This information is being organized according to the submitting Party or institution, as well as by species, family or special topic.
8. The Secretariat has formed an internal task team to address a variety of identification and traceability issues, and has adopted a multidisciplinary approach to meet the objectives under the many different Decisions and Resolutions related to the identification of specimens of CITES-listed species. This new approach involves the development of new identification software, devices and technologies, including forensic technologies, which provide new opportunities to trace and identify specimens in trade more effectively.

<sup>1</sup> AC27/PC21 Doc. 14 (<http://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac-pc/ac27-pc21/E-AC27-PC21-14.pdf>)

<sup>2</sup> See: <https://cites.unia.es/cites/mod/resource/view.php?id=57#ID-manuals>

9. The Secretariat has noted, in a report prepared for the joint session of the Animal and Plants Committee (AC27/PC21 Doc. 14), that the WIKI Identification Manual could be enhanced through the introduction of new functions and technologies to hold the many existing identification and guidance materials, as well as those currently being planned or developed.
10. The Secretariat hopes that, in accordance with paragraph a) of Decision 16.59, an intersessional working group will be established at the joint session of AC27/PC21 to assist in identifying CITES-listed taxa, taking account of existing CITES identification and guidance material, as well as other material produced by Parties, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.
11. Possible items for discussion by such an intersessional working group could include:
  - a) enhancement of the CITES WIKI Identification Manual to accommodate the hosting of identification and guidance materials produced by Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, research institutes and universities, among others;
  - b) use of the CITES WIKI Identification Manual as a repository for identification and guidance materials produced by such entities; and
  - c) subject to the availability of external resources, enhancement of the CITES WIKI Identification Manual to accommodate different types of media, increase opportunities for collaboration and be available through hand-held devices and tablets.
12. The Secretariat will provide an oral update of recommendations made during the joint session of AC27/PC21 on the *Review of identification and guidance material*.

#### Recommendation

13. The Committee is invited to note this report.