

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

Interpretation and implementation matters

Trade control and traceability

Identification of specimens in trade

TIGER SKINS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. At its 17th meeting (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 17.164 and 17.165 on *Identification (tiger skins)*:

17.164 The Secretariat shall:

- a) *issue a Notification to the Parties, to request the tiger range States to inform the Secretariat whether they have photographic identification databases for tigers, and the capacity to identify tigers from photographs of tiger skins, and if so, the contacts of the relevant National focal points or agencies; and*
- b) *inform the Parties which tiger range states have photographic identification databases for tigers, and the capacity to identify tigers from photographs of tiger skins, and the contacts of the relevant National focal points or agencies;*
- c) *subject to external funding, contract a qualified expert or body to assess the feasibility of establishing, to aid enforcement efforts, a central repository of photographs of wild tigers and seized tiger skins. Such feasibility study shall examine the potential hosts, costs, data management and related issues of such a repository. All tiger range States must be fully consulted as stakeholders;*
- d) *report on the implementation of this Decision to the 69th meeting of the Standing Committee.*

17.165 The Standing Committee shall consider the report of the Secretariat and present its recommendations at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Report on the progress of implementation of Decision 17.164

3. Pursuant to Decision 17.164, paragraph a), the Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties No. 2017/038 of 15 May 2017 and a second Notification the Parties No. 2017/058 of 10 August 2017 requesting the tiger

range States¹ to inform the Secretariat whether they have photographic identification databases for tigers, and the capacity to identify tigers from photographs of tiger skins. As of 10 September 2017, the Secretariat has received a response from one tiger range State, China, who confirmed that there are no photographic identification databases for tigers in China. No other responses were received to date.

4. As was reported at CoP17,² the Secretariat worked with the Environmental Investigation Agency that developed a *field pocket guide for law enforcement agencies to combat illegal trade in Asian big cat specimens* in implementation of Decision 16.70. The guide contains photographs, descriptions of physical characteristics and common end-uses of Asian big cat parts and derivatives, along with references to useful sources of information such as mobile apps for species identification. The guide, while not exclusively covering tiger skins or considered to serve the same purpose as a photographic identification database, may present an example of the extent to which identification materials are available for identifying tiger skins.
5. The Secretariat has not succeeded in securing funds for the implementation of Decision 17.164, paragraph c) to date.

Recommendation

6. The Secretariat invites the Standing Committee to:
 - a) take note of the present document;
 - b) call on the tiger range States to provide the Secretariat with information requested in Notification to Parties No. 2017/058; and
 - c) invite Parties to provide financial support to the Secretariat for assessing the feasibility of establishing a central repository of photographs of wild tigers and seized tiger skins, in implementing Decision 17.164, paragraph c).

¹ Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russian Federation and Thailand; possibly extinct in Cambodia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Viet Nam.

² See document CoP17 Doc. 60.1 on Asian big cats: Report of the Standing Committee (<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/17/WorkingDocs/E-CoP17-60-01.pdf>).