



**Endangered Species Import and Export Management Office of
the People's Republic of China
(CITES Management Authority of China)**

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Mr. John E. Scanlon
Secretary General
CITES Secretariat

Re: Conservation of and Trade in Asian Big Cats in China

Dear Mr. John E. Scanlon,

In response to the Notification to the Parties No. 2012/054, China would like to report its implementation of Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP15) and Decision 14.69 as following,

Regarding the Current Status of Big Cats Resources

1. Tiger: There are 4 subspecies of tiger found in China including the Siberian (Amur) tiger (*Panthera Tigris altaica*), South China tiger (*Panthera Tigris amoyensis*), Indo-China tiger (*Panthera Tigris corbetti*) and Bengal tiger (*Panthera Tigris Tigris*) respectively. The total sum of the wild individuals of all 4 subspecies existing in China is estimated to be about 40-50. The Siberian tiger is currently distributed in the mountain area of east Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces where is adjacent to Russian Federation. The distribution area of Indo-China tiger is mainly located in east Yunnan and Guangxi. But there are only some traces of South China tiger reported in the wild and no individuals seen in the wild since 20 years ago. The Bengal tiger is distributed in certain areas of Yunnan province and Tibet autonomous region.
2. Snow Leopard (*Uncia uncia*): The population of snow leopard is estimated about 2000-2500 and its potential habitat is about 1,820,000 square kilometer, including Qinghai, Tibet, Xinjiang, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan.
3. Leopard (*Panthera pardus*): Except Taiwan, Xinjiang, and Ningxia, Leopard used to be distributed widely in the rest provinces of China. It is recorded three subspecies found in China which are South China Leopard (*P.pardus fusea*), Chinese Leopard (*P.p.fontanieri*), and Amur Leopard (*P.p.orientalis*) respectively. The South China Leopard is widely distributed in the most provinces of South China as well as Shaanxi, Henan, and Anhui provinces. The Chinese Leopard can be seen in Shanxi, Hebei, Henan, and northern part of Shaanxi province, and the Amur Leopard is distributed in Daxinganling mountain of Heilongjiang province and the eastern mountain area of Jilin province.
4. Clouded Leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*): Widely distributing in China, the Clouded Leopard can be found in subtropical and tropical forests with an area north to Qinling of Shaanxi, Luoyang of Henan, and south Gansu; west to Chayu of Tibet; south to Hainan province, and east to Zhejiang and Taiwan.

* The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat or the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.

Regarding Conservation Legislation and Domestic Management

5. *The Wildlife Conservation Law of People's Republic of China* was promulgated in 1988 which listed tiger, leopard, snow leopard, and clouded leopard as first class national protection wildlife species.
6. China wildlife authorities have initiated a pilot program to ensure reasonable compensation for losses caused by key national protected wildlife especially by tigers and their prey since 2007 and now, an insurance policy for local community in part of tiger range areas is in trial.
7. A National Wild Tiger Recovery Program, approved by the State Council in 2011, outlined the major fields, priorities and investments of wild tiger conservation in China. In accordance with the program, Chinese authorities are now conducting national survey of wild tiger population, selecting certain landscapes as trial and demonstrating sites to recover the tiger habitats, strengthening the capacity building, keeping dealing with the compensation of human-tiger conflicts, developing community economic development modes which is friendly to wild tigers, carrying forward re-wilding of the captive bred south China tigers and releasing them into the wild, enhancing law enforcement and international cooperation.
8. Incorporating tiger conservation into the *National Plan of the 12th Five-years Forestry Development, China National Strategy and Action Plan for Biodiversity Conservation* and the *National Program for Wildlife Conservation and Nature Reserve Development*.
9. China has invested billions of dollars to implement the programs of Natural Forest Protection, Recovery Farmlands for Forests and Wildlife Conservation and Nature Reserves Development, which has greatly improved wildlife habitats and their management, including tigers.
10. China has set up 33 nature reserves and more than 70 frontline management stations for tiger conservation that form a basic tiger conservation network by means of habitat patrolling, monitoring, and curbing illegal poaching of wild tiger and its prey.
11. 26 nature reserves established in China relating to snow leopard conservation have a total area up to 625,600 square kilometer covering 34.4 percent of snow leopard's habitat. More than 200 nature reserves in China have records of clouded leopard with a total area exceeding 40,000 square kilometer. There are more than 140 nature reserves of China providing habitat and prey for leopard conservation.
12. China has stopped the approval of hunting in tiger range areas and enhanced patrolling and monitoring of wild tiger habitats with the improved governmental funding in the past 10 years.

Regarding Captive Breeding and Trade Policy

13. For the purpose of reintroduction, genetic conservation, public education, exhibition, and performance, captive breeding of Big Cats animals had been conducted in China for some time according to Chinese laws. So far, the total captive population of tiger is over 5,000 individuals which mainly in two facilities. Captive population of leopard is solely in zoos and wild animal parks.
14. The policy on banning of trade in tiger bone had been implemented in China since 1993. The stockpile of tiger bones obtained before 1993 are being kept sealed and the tiger parts coming from captive bred tigers are strictly regulated.
15. China has labeled most of the captive bred tigers with microchips and established a database for those labeled individuals, which enable the captive tigers to be fully monitored by the forestry authority and prevent the captive bred tiger parts from entering the illegal trade from or through such facilities.
16. In order to supervise the dead body of captive bred tigers, two operations in Guangxi and Heilongjiang are requested, under the supervision of local forestry departments, to dismember the frozen carcass in standardized methods, seal the tiger bones, labeled the tiger skins and destroy other tiger parts.
17. China is now organizing research in preparation of a strategic plan for the Development of Traditional Chinese Medicine at the precondition of ensuring beneficial to the conservation of endangered species.

Regarding Law Enforcement

18. China published a law to strictly control the possession and use of hunting rifles in 1997 and uncontrolled firing at wildlife has become almost impossible in China.
19. The death sentence to the smuggling of endangered animals and their products in the *Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China* was abolished at the beginning of 2011, but the life sentence was kept
20. In December 2011, China established a National Inter-agency CITES Enforcement Collaboration Group (NICECG) in order to facilitate the collection and exchange of intelligence, enhance capacity building, and coordinate joint enforcement activities. The Group comprises the State Forestry Administration, the Ministry of Public Security, the General Administration of Customs, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Administration of Industry and Commerce. It is expected to coordinate the domestic CITES enforcement as well as the international wildlife enforcement cooperation. Moreover, there are 14 provinces so far had set up provincial level Inter-agency CITES Enforcement Collaboration Group for similar purpose.
21. More and more resources have been allocated to the wildlife conservation and enforcement agencies at all levels, that has gradually mitigated the financial pressure to the frontline wildlife conservation and enforcement agencies.
22. To crack down tiger crime is always on the top priority of Chinese law enforcement authorities. At the beginning of 2012, the Chinese Forestry Police and Custom authorities under the auspices of NICECG successfully carried out two national wildlife law enforcement operations undertaken across the country and awarded a Certificate of Commendation.
23. Since 2010, the provincial governments of Tibet, Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan were requested by the State Forestry Administration, have been carrying out series of public awareness campaign on tiger conservation and enhancing the management of markets. Subsequently, the illegal trade in Asian Big Cats in those areas has been effectively deterred.
24. According to incomplete statistics, since July 2010, the Chinese forest police had detected 8 tiger cases and seized 5 live tigers, 1 tiger skins, 4 tiger teeth, 1.8kg tiger bones and 9 boxes + 20 bottles tiger-bone liquor. Meanwhile, the Chinese Customs police had detected 5 tiger cases and seized 2 tiger skins and 35kg + 9 pieces tiger bones. Those seizures have already been informed the CITES Secretariat. Meanwhile, China already halts the auction of tiger-bone liquor.
25. All of the wildlife seizures made by the Customs are annually collected and then provided to the CITES Secretariat, TRAFFIC, and other relevant inter-governmental organizations as well as the Parties in the format of eco-message. Furthermore, the relevant domestic authorities are requested to develop or adjust conservation strategy on combating the smuggling of wildlife based on analysis result of the seizure information.
26. An inter-agency CITES enforcement meeting, participated by officials from wildlife, police and Customs of central and provincial governments as well as experts from TRAFFIC, IFAW and WCS, is annually held for introducing the international and national wildlife enforcement trend, exchanging the wildlife law enforcement experience, evaluating the existing problems and difficulties faced by the enforcement agencies and made the operational enforcement recommendations to the priority areas or species.
27. The information provided by TRAFFIC, IFAW and WCS as well as other NGOs, in relation to the illegal trade in genuine or fake tiger parts or their derivatives obtained from Chinese markets or websites, would be verified as soon as possible. If it is true, an investigation would be initiated subsequently.
28. The CITES Management Authority is organizing its 22 branch offices to undertake national surveys on illegal wildlife trade every year and assist relevant agencies in finding and dealing with the problems existed.

Regarding Capacity Building and Public Awareness

29. China has carried out a series of public awareness campaigns, including the celebration of the 1st Global Tiger Day in 29 July, 2010, International Forum on Tiger Conservation and Tiger Culture and China 2010' Hunchun Amur Tiger Culture Festival in August 2010.
30. The vice minister of the State Forestry Administration hosted a press release at the beginning of the Year of tiger of 2010 and fully introduced China's position on tiger conservation which had widely impact domestic and abroad.
31. In an effort to further raise public CITES awareness, a Symposium on celebration of 30th Anniversary of China Accession to CITES will be organized by the CITES Management Authority on 8th April 2011 and the senior officials from the relevant government agencies, medium as well as the CITES Secretary General will be invited to the event.
32. China has increased investment significantly for nature reserves and protection monitoring units in tiger range area to purchase equipments such as vehicle, computer, GPS and telescope, and undertake a series of workshops and training courses in the past ten years so as to improve the capacity.
33. Besides working with the State Customs General Administration and IFAW to display a set of CITES posters at the entry and exit gates of 400 Chinese ports to remind the international passengers not bring in/out endangered species without approval, the CITES Management Authority of China is also cooperating with the Ministry of Commerce and the State Tourism Administration developing CITES leaflets and organizing local forestry, commerce and tourism departments to provide CITES knowledge to the traders, labors and tourists who are already at abroad or will go abroad.
34. The CITES Management Authority of China is holding national level workshop every year on management of international trade in endangered species to train its staff. Meanwhile, its 22 branch offices are also taking part into training courses held for local Customs and police officers and wildlife traders. Furthermore, the staff of the CITES Management Authority and its branch offices are often invited to provide presentations on CITES issues at all kinds of training courses in this regards.
35. Every year, A workshop on control of online trade in wildlife attended by officials from the relevant government agencies and experts from TRAFFIC, IFAW, WCS as well as some websites is held annually for reviewing the progress made in the previous year, introducing the monitor results about the online trade in wildlife, sharing the control experiences drawn from the government agencies and websites, identifying the fields/measures to be focused/taken in the next year. This kind of meeting has played an active role in deterring the rising of illegal online trade in wildlife.
36. With the financial support from CI and technical assistances from WCS, TRAFFIC and IFAW, the CITES Management Authority of China has been working with the State Customs General Administration and the State Forestry Administration to produce thousands copies of *Endangered Species Enforcement Techniques*, that will included the Chinese versions of *Controlled Delivery*, *Questioning Wildlife Smugglers*, *Concealment Methods of smuggled Wildlife*, *Guide for Cooperation between Interpol NCB and CITES Management Authority*, *Guide for Cooperation between Customs and CITES Management Authority*, *ID Manual of Species Commonly in Trade in Southeast Asia* and *Internet Search Toolkit* compiled by Interpol, WCO, CITES, ASEAN-WEN or Environment Canada, for distribution to the frontline wildlife enforcement officers.

Regarding International Cooperation

37. China has signed cooperation documents on tiger conservation with India, Nepal, and Russia, also cooperated with international organization such as WWF and GEF to implement tiger conservation projects.
38. China is enhancing its communication with the other tiger range states and welcomes the delegations from other tiger range states visiting China, in an effort to promote the international cooperation and joint action in conservation of tigers.

39. In order to protect snow leopard, SFA, China Wildlife Conservation Association, IUCN China Office, Beijing Forestry University are now working with WildCRU, SLN, Panthera as well as SLT to develop *China Snow Leopard Conservation Action Plan* and *Snow Leopard Monitoring Technical Regulation*.
40. China is now discussing with Russian Federation to promote the conservation of cross-border endangered species including Amur Leopard (*P.p.orientalis*).
41. China took part in the Operation RAMP, Operation Tiger, and Predator initiated by Interpol in many countries and the Operation GAPIN organized by WCO in Africa, Europe and Asia. It detects hundreds wildlife cases and many wildlife offenders involved in smuggling of reptile, tiger bone, ivory and rhino horn have been punished.
42. China is keeping intimating its relationship with ASEAN-WEN on wildlife enforcement, attended the 5th Annual Working Meeting of the Network, took part into many training courses hosted by the Network, held Sino-ASEAN Dialogue on Wildlife Law Enforcement, hosted Special Meeting for Illegal Trade Investigation, and displayed hundreds of CITES posters designed in local languages at the ports along the Sino-Vietnam, Sino-Laos and Sino-Myanmar borders. Currently, it is evaluating the possibility to sign a MOU with the ASEAN-WEN.
43. China has strengthened its cooperation in wildlife conservation with India and Nepal. The wildlife delegations from India and Nepal were invited to China to sign the relevant minutes or MOU. A trilateral CITES enforcement seminar among China, India and Nepal was held in Chengdu, China to improve the capability in ID of endangered species, exchange CITES enforcement experience and study the ways and measures to strengthen the wildlife enforcement cooperation among three countries, promote the legal wildlife trade, deter the illegal wildlife trade and cooperate in identification of the seized wildlife in this region.
44. China has strengthened its CITES enforcement dialogue with UK by means of sending a delegation constituted by CITES, Customs, police, forestry and drug officers to UK and inviting a UK police and Customs delegation to China for exchanging and observing.
45. China had discussion with GTF representatives last September on the issue of joining GTF, and is promoting relevant process.

Best wishes,

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