



Panthera Recommendations
74th Meeting of the CITES Standing Committee
7-11 March, Lyon FRANCE

Please find these statements online in English and Spanish at panthera.org

About Panthera

Panthera, founded in 2006, is devoted exclusively to preserving wild cats and their critical role in the world's ecosystems. Panthera's team of leading biologists, law enforcement experts, and wild cat advocates develop innovative strategies based on the best available science to protect cheetahs, jaguars, leopards, lions, pumas, snow leopards, tigers, and the 33 small cat species and their vast landscapes. In 39 countries around the world, Panthera works with a wide variety of stakeholders to reduce or eliminate the most pressing threats to wild cats—securing their future and ours.

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Item 36: [Asian big cats \(Felidae spp.\): Report of the Secretariat \(Decision 18.109\)](#)

Panthera thanks the CITES Secretariat for its report and welcomes the efforts by many Parties to provide timely updates on their progress on Decisions 18.100-18.108. However, we were disappointed by the lackluster response from Asian big cat range States; only four of the 13 tiger range States submitted progress reports in response to Notification to the Parties No. 2020/039. This lack of reporting undermines the Standing Committee's ability to fully assess the Parties' progress on implementation of Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP18) and related Decisions and make evidence-based recommendations.

While it's encouraging to see some progress on conservation efforts and enforcement measures to tackle illegal trade in Asian big cats, we agree with the Secretariat's conclusion that much more needs to be done. To that end, we would like to see recommendations that urgently and explicitly address the ongoing illegal trade activity highlighted in the report, which evidence shows continues to threaten wild cat populations. Therefore, we urge the Standing Committee to consider going further, as directed to it under Decision 18.109, with time-bound, country-specific measures aimed at eliminating poaching and illegal trade of Asian big cats. We recommend the formation of an in-session working group to draft these measures for CoP 19.

Regarding Decision 18.108, we encourage the Standing Committee to request the Secretariat to undertake the delayed missions to visit facilities of concern identified in SC70 Doc. 51 as soon as travel and funding allow. We appreciate the willingness expressed by the Czech Republic, Thailand, the United States and Viet Nam to welcome these missions and encourage the other countries listed as having facilities of concern to follow suit.

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In this “Year of the Tiger,” celebrations of tiger increases in parts of their range are muted by continued losses, especially in Southeast Asia, primarily due to poaching and illegal trade. Since the turn of the century, tiger populations have been eliminated in three tiger range States.

The first phase of the Global Tiger Recovery Program shows that tiger numbers can be restored, but also that progress is hard won and fragile – tiger conservation needs to be urgently strengthened if it is to achieve long-term success. As the second phase gets underway, Panthera proposes that tiger range States adopt a zero-tolerance approach to trade in tigers, their parts and derivatives. Adopting this high-level strategy will go a long way toward helping tiger range States to meet their commitments under CITES to implement Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. CoP18) and related Decisions on Asian Big Cats.

Item 53: [Quotas for leopard \(*Panthera pardus*\) hunting trophies: Report of the Animals Committee \(Decision 18.170\)](#)

Panthera appreciates the Animals Committee’s report and the efforts of Botswana, Central African Republic, and Ethiopia to complete their reports in compliance with Resolution Conf. 10.14, Rev. CoP 16, Decision 18.165. However, as an organization that has extensively studied and monitored leopards for more than 15 years in Southern Africa, Panthera questions whether Resolution Conf. 10.14, Rev. CoP 16 is still fit for purpose, especially given that its underlying data is now 30 years old. Recent, large-scale camera trap studies in numerous countries in Southern Africa have shown lower densities of leopards than had been previously estimated. For this reason, we recommend a regular review of quotas to ensure they are science-based and remain at levels that are non-detrimental to the species’ survival in the wild. In the absence of robust population data (and particularly trend data) in most leopard range states, an adaptive management approach with robust monitoring is the best way to ensure that legal leopard hunting is sustainable. We support at a minimum amending the current Resolution to provide for reviews of quotas by the Animals Committee at regular intervals.

Item 62: [Illegal trade in cheetahs \(*Acinonyx jubatus*\)](#)

Panthera appreciates this report by Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Yemen, which highlights the continued and cumulative pressure on wild cheetah populations in East Africa from the illegal pet trade, particularly in live cubs. The unique characteristics and complexities of the live cheetah trade warrant enhanced attention from CITES, range, transit and destination States, and other relevant stakeholders, to design and implement effective interventions.

We encourage the Standing Committee to raise this challenge to the Parties considering the recommendations suggested by Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Yemen in paragraphs 19 a. to 19 d., to encourage a robust, coordinated and urgent response.

In this regard, we recommend including specific language regarding the trade in live animals in the Terms of Reference of the Big Cats Task Force to ensure that the Task Force is prepared and equipped to address this issue.



Item 69: [CITES Big Cats Task Force \(Felidae spp.\): Report of the Secretariat \(Decision 18.248 paras a and d\)](#)

Item Panthera welcomes the Terms of Reference for the Big Cats Task Force and appreciates the opportunity afforded to provide input to the current draft. As a global conservation organization focused on wild cats, Panthera has specialized expertise in the illegal trade in big cats and is engaged in a wide range of counter-wildlife crime activities in hotspots around the world. Among its major initiatives, Panthera is developing a transnational Big Cat Information Network to collect and connect data on wild cat trade across six regions. In partnership with the United States Department of State and other institutions, we monitor global threat patterns and help law enforcement agencies to fill knowledge and capacity gaps in order to disrupt illegal trade.

In that capacity, and with respect to the exchange of intelligence and information discussed in Activity 1.d, we stress that all data shared through this platform should be verified and validated under a consistent, recognized system. In the absence of a designated intelligence handling facility, a mechanism should be sought to ensure effective intelligence handling through a recognized international Law Enforcement Agency. We recommend that the Modus Operandi include specific language describing the method that will be used for handling of intelligence.

Additional Recommendations:

- The list of priority countries should include Colombia and Venezuela, both of which were listed in the recent study on Illegal Trade in Jaguars as having evidence of recent illegal international trade.
- Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are all impacted by illegal trade in snow leopards, and should be added to the priority countries list.
- Under Activities, paragraph 1. h), we recommend including specific language regarding the trade in live animals to ensure that the Task Force is prepared and equipped to address this issue.

Panthera supports the establishment of a diverse and inclusive Big Cats Task Force and stands ready to contribute as needed to ensure that it delivers on its important remit.

Item 75: [Jaguars \(Panthera onca\): Report of the Secretariat \(Decision 18.253\)](#)

Jaguar 2030 Roadmap Coordination Committee Joint Statement

This statement is on behalf of Jaguar 2030 Roadmap Coordination Committee members: Costa Rica Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE), Panthera, John Polisar, PhD, Zamorano University, UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Environment Programme (UNEP), UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF). The CITES and CMS Secretariats are also represented on the Committee.

The Jaguar 2030 Roadmap Coordination Committee thanks the CITES Secretariat for its report and commends the collaborative effort undertaken to complete the study on illegal trade in jaguars. In light of the findings, we support the revision and extension of the Draft Decisions on jaguars and their call for



range States to urgently adopt comprehensive measures to eliminate jaguar poaching and trafficking in their parts, including online trade. We agree that multi-lateral, multi-sectoral cooperation is essential to combat emerging and existing threats, secure connectivity and the Jaguar Corridor, and maximize the ecosystem benefits of conserving jaguars throughout their range.

The Jaguar 2030 Roadmap, now endorsed by 17 of the 18 jaguar range States, calls for region-wide coordination on jaguar conservation, including harmonization of monitoring and evaluation protocols. We support the development of a long-term monitoring system on illegal jaguar killing and trade, as recommended by the CITES Secretariat, as a means to better understand existing and emerging threats to jaguars and the links between them, and to help range States better manage them. Harmonization of the methods and metrics used will be crucial to producing data that are comparable across nations.

The Jaguar 2030 Coordination Committee looks forward to working with the CITES and CMS Secretariats to facilitate a meeting among jaguar range States to review options for an official intergovernmental platform aimed at supporting jaguar conservation and combating poaching and illegal trade, including designing and implementing the above-mentioned monitoring system.

Preserving the jaguar's crucial role as an umbrella species throughout its range is still within reach. We stand ready to assist range States in designing their priorities under the Jaguar 2030 Roadmap in alignment with CITES and their national commitments on biodiversity, sustainable development, and climate, while considering the critical role that criminal justice plays in complementing conservation efforts. Shoring up these national priorities is critical in anticipation of GEF-8, adoption and implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, and key Decisions on jaguars at CoP 19.

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