

# **2017 MAFWA Committee Report on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**

## **MEETINGS TIME & PLACE**

AFWA Annual Meeting, September 2016; Philadelphia, PA

Joint State/Federal CITES Meeting & AFWA International Relations Committee

CITES 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (CoP17), September 2016; Johannesburg, SA

82<sup>nd</sup> North American Wildlife & Natural Resource Conference, March 2017; Spokane, WA

CITES Technical Work Group Meeting & AFWA International Relations Committee

Trilateral Committee for Wildlife & Ecosystem Conservation, May 2017; Ensenada Baja California

CITES Interagency Coordination Committee, hosted quarterly by USFWS in Washington DC

CITES Technical Work Group also conducted business via numerous conference calls

## **CITES TECHNICAL WORK GROUP REPRESENTATIVES**

Carolyn Caldwell- MAFWA (MAFWA CITES Technical Work Group Representative)

Rick Jacobson- NEAFWA (Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection)

Buddy Baker- SEAFWA (Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries)

Jim deVos- WAFWA (Arizona Game & Fish Department)

Deborah Hahn- Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

Bob Broscheid- U.S. CITES Delegate Representing the State Fish & Wildlife Agencies and  
International Relations Committee Co-Chair (Colorado Parks and Wildlife)

## **CITES OVERVIEW**

International wildlife trade is estimated to be worth billions of dollars annually. Trade is diverse, ranging from live animals to a wide array of products derived from them including food products, fur and leather goods, tourist curios, and medicine. CITES (Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international trade treaty enacted in 1973 to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten species' survival. CITES works by subjecting international trade in specimens of selected species to certain controls. These require that all imports, exports and re-exports of CITES species have to be authorized. The species covered by CITES are listed in three Appendices, according to the degree of protection they need. Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction. Trade in specimens of these species is only permitted in exceptional circumstances. Appendix II includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but for whom trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival. Appendix III contains species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES countries for assistance in documenting trade.

International treaties impact state fish and wildlife agencies and represent a continuous and pressing challenge to resource management. Left unchecked, additional regulations and burdensome oversight will result from restrictions adopted through these international treaties. For example, some state management and harvest decisions for bobcats and river otters stem from domestic restrictions resulting from CITES actions taken more than three decades ago. The original intent of CITES was to ensure globally sustainable use of natural resources. Over the past decade, NGO participation (e.g., HSUS and the Animal Welfare Institute) has greatly increased

and pushed a protectionist/no use approach in CITES for well managed species. Protectionists outnumber sustainable use advocates 6:1.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Office of International Affairs, administers CITES for the United States. The USFWS solicits input and feedback on issues of importance from the state fish and wildlife agencies through the CITES Technical Work Group of AFWA's International Relations Committee. The Technical Work Group consists of one representative from each of the four regional associations who work on behalf of states in concert with the USFWS on CITES matters. This state-federal partnership has been effectively working since 1994.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OVERVIEW**

CITES updates presented in greater detail include: 1) Expediting Black Bear CITES Permits; 2) Native Freshwater Turtle Species in Appendix III; 3) State Coordinators Meeting and Ginseng Symposium; 4) Rick Jacobson Appointed as the NEAFWA CITES Technical Work Group Representative; and 5) CITES 17th Conference of the Parties (CoP17).

## **DIRECTOR ACTION ITEM**

No action Items at this time.

## **DIRECTOR INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **Expediting Black Bear CITES Permits**

In 2014 conversations were initiated between the states and the USFWS Office of International Affairs Division of Management Authority on the practicability of creating state level "blanket" CITES authorizations for the export of black bear parts for commercial purposes such as now occurs for bobcats and river otters. Following extensive surveys of the state wildlife agencies it was determined that the level of interest in commercial trade of black bear was not sufficient to warrant a procedural change in CITES permit issuance processes. However, from these discussion it was determined that there was a need to streamline processes for issuing permits to state fish and wildlife agency research programs which were shipping black bear parts internationally for scientific purposes. As a result the USFWS agreed to set up a "Master File" system similar to that used for turtles and alligators. The Master File system was only marginally successful in reducing the CITES permit turnaround time for state agency researchers. In 2016 the CITES Technical Work Group reentered conversation with the USFWS to determine if there were additional measures that could be implemented to streamline the process. It was revealed that one of the process delays was related to fact that the Division of Management Authority was necessarily required to forward all permit requests to the Division of Scientific Authority for a "non-detriment finding" before processing the application. The Division of Scientific Authority agreed to entertain a request for a "General Advice" on collection of hair samples from live bears. A General Advice would simply be an advanced approval that would eliminate the need for these permit requests to be vetted through the Division of Scientific Authority which would theoretically reduce the permit issuance turnaround time. The Division of Scientific Authority later determined that they preferred to address requests for a General Advice on a state-by-state basis rather than a single General Advice for the entire country. In February of 2017 the Division of Scientific Authority issued its first General Advice for black bear research samples to the state of Louisiana. In April they supplied guidance to the states for how they should individually request a General Advice. While we had hoped for a nationwide General Advice, we are optimistic that the new process will decrease the overall time required for state agency black bear research programs to get CITES permits to ship samples to genetics labs out of the country.

### **Native Freshwater Turtle Species in Appendix III**

There are 57 species of freshwater and terrestrial turtles in the U.S. which constitutes approximately 18% of the global turtle species. While the highest concentration of turtle species is found in southeastern Asia, the diversity of turtle species in the southeastern U.S. alone ranks as the second highest concentration of species in the world.

Turtles are traded primarily for food consumption, traditional medicines, or the pet trade. A significant number of tortoises and freshwater turtles are listed in CITES Appendices I or II and all marine turtles are listed in Appendix I. Including the freshwater turtle species listed by the U.S., a total of 26 species are listed in Appendix III. In 2006, the U.S. listed the alligator snapping turtle (*Macrolemys temminckii*) and all species of map turtle (*Graptemys spp.*) in Appendix III of CITES. Effective November 21, 2016, the common snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*), Florida softshell turtle (*Apalone ferox*), smooth softshell turtle (*Apalone mutica*), and spiny softshell turtle (*Apalone spinifera*) were also listed in Appendix III.

Export of CITES Appendix III species requires a permit issued by the USFWS Office of International Affairs Division of Management Authority. As of March, the USFWS had only received one export permit application for softshells and/or common snapping turtles.

### **State Coordinators Meeting and Ginseng Symposium**

American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) is a CITES Appendix II listed species. Ginseng root is exported in larger volumes than any other native CITES plant species. The majority of American ginseng harvested is exported to China. The USFWS Office of International Affairs Division of Scientific Authority will host a meeting on July 11<sup>th</sup> with State agency coordinators responsible for administering American ginseng programs. The meeting will be followed by a 3-day symposium to present current research and document new information about the conservation, cultivation, and commerce of American ginseng and other Appalachian forest botanicals.

### **Rick Jacobson Appointed as the NEAFWA CITES Technical Work Group Representative**

Since 2008, Jack Buckley the Director of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife served as the NEAFWA representative. In May, Rick Jacobson was appointed as the next NEAFWA CITES Technical Work Group Representative. Rick has worked for the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection since 1987 including as Assistant Director of Fisheries Management (2000-2009) and as Director of Wildlife Management (2009-Present). He holds a B.S. degree in Biology from the University of Wisconsin, an M.S. in Fisheries Ecology from the University of Connecticut and is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Connecticut. He has served as the Chair of the Northeast Wildlife Administrators and President of the Northeast Division of the American Fisheries Society, and currently serves as Chair of the Atlantic Flyway Council and the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture. He is also a Fellow with the National Conservation Leadership Institute.

### **CITES 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (CoP17)**

The MAFWA and SEAFWA CITES Technical Work Group representatives and Deb Hahn (AFWA) represented the state fish and wildlife agencies at the CITES 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (CoP17) held from 24 September to 5 October 2016.

CoP17 was the largest CITES meeting to date, with more than 3,500 participants representing 152 countries and more than 200 intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations as well

as the media. Delegates considered 90 agenda items and 62 species-listing proposals submitted by 64 countries. During CoP17, the CITES Technical Work Group also participated in the North American Region daily briefings, several CITES side events focusing on traceability of wildlife and their products, livelihoods, and the sustainable use of wildlife. At the conclusion of CoP17 we meet with the Chinese Delegation to discuss trade impediments to North American wild fur. We were joined by the Canadian Delegation and by The American Fur Resources Council. The Chinese officials participating in the CoP indicated that they would work with us towards a positive outcome.

Throughout the CoP we strived to enhance global understanding of the role of state fish and wildlife agencies and of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. This is important because of the potential for CITES decisions to directly impact state fish and wildlife agencies.

The CITES Technical Work Group continues to see an erosion of support for sustainable use of wildlife resources which is a fundamental principal of the CITES treaty. In addition, documents presented at the CoP bring “enhancement” measures into the Treaty. So unlike CITES implementation to date which require countries to show trade is not detrimental to the survival of a species in the wild, now some proposals are asking countries to demonstrate a conservation benefit to the species from international trade. It is a subtle but important distinction.

A complete report of the meeting was previously provided to the Directors.

#### **TIME & PLACE OF NEXT MEETING**

CITES 29<sup>th</sup> Animals Committee Meeting, July 2017; Geneva, CH

Respectfully submitted by,

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