

2022 MAFWA Committee Report on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

MEETINGS TIME & PLACE

(meetings attended by one or more CITES Technical Work Group Representative)

111th AFWA Annual Meeting, September 2021; Providence, RI

Joint State/Federal CITES Meeting & AFWA International Relations Committee;
virtual

Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises CITES Listings and the Implications to State Agency
Conservation and Management Webinar, February, 2022; virtual

87th North American Wildlife & Natural Resource Conference, March 2022; Spokane,
WA

AFWA International Relations Committee, May 2022; virtual

CITES 74rd Standing Committee, March 2022; Lyon, FR

CITES Interagency Coordination Committee, hosted quarterly by USFWS; virtual

CITES Technical Work Group regularly conducts business via phone and virtual
platforms

CITES TECHNICAL WORK GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

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

Scott Buchanan- NEAFWA (Rhode Island Rhode Island DEM, Division of Fish and
Wildlife)

Buddy Baker- SEAFWA (SEAFWA CITES Technical Work Group Representative)

Stewart Liley- WAFWA (New Mexico Department of Game and Fish)

Deborah Hahn- Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

TBD- U.S. CITES Delegate Representing the State Fish & Wildlife Agencies and
International Relations Committee Co-Chair

CITES OVERVIEW

The Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) is an international trade agreement among 182 countries (and the European Union) 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, re-exports, and introductions from the sea of species covered by CITES 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.

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 the International Relations Committee of AFWA. 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) Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises Possible CITES Appendices Listings and the Implications to State Agency Conservation and Management; 2) CITES 19th Conference of the Parties; 3) CITES 74rd Standing Committee held in March, 2022; and 4) Scott Buchanan, NEAFWA Technical Work Group Representative.

DIRECTOR ACTION ITEM

No action items at this time.

DIRECTOR INFORMATION ITEMS

Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises Possible CITES Appendices Listings and the Implications to State Agency Conservation and Management

Thirty-eight staff representing 22 State Fish and Wildlife Agencies joined the CITES Technical Work Group February 23rd virtually to discuss freshwater turtle and tortoise listings in the CITES Appendices and the implications to their conservation and management. The goal of the meeting was to gain a better understanding of the state agencies' views on the resource management implications from possible additional CITES freshwater turtle or tortoise listings. Anticipating significant numbers of potential species additions to the CITES Appendices, the Team felt it important to discuss the matter with the state agencies. The discussion highlighted information gaps, a need to maintain communication on the issue, and state fish and wildlife agency concerns.

CITES 19th Conference of the Parties

The signatory countries to CITES are collectively referred to as the Conference of the Parties (CoP). Every two to three years, the Conference of the Parties meets to review the implementation of the Treaty. The next CITES CoP will be in November. The CoP is the most important meeting in the context of the CITES Treaty, as Parties take on a significant body of tasks, including:

- Recommending measures to improve the effectiveness of the Convention, including the drafting and adoption of Resolutions and Decisions to be implemented by all Parties, the Standing Committee, the Scientific Committees and the Secretariat;
- Debating proposals to amend the lists of species in Appendices I and II;
- Reviewing progress in the conservation of species included in the Appendices;
- Discussing documents and reports from Parties, the Standing Committee, the Animals Committee, the Plants Committee, and the Secretariat.

Proposals to amend the species listed in Appendix I or II must be submitted by at least one range country six months prior to the CoP and approved during the meeting by 2/3

majority. Developing species proposals here in the U.S. is initiated following a series of public input requests published in the Federal Register. During the first phase of this cycle, the USFWS received comments for the addition, removal, or transfer of over 600 animal species and 200 plant species from the CITES Appendices. Of these, the USFWS scrutinized the recommendations based on current CITES criteria resulting in species that were “Likely” (3 taxa), “Unlikely” (173 taxa), or “Undecided” (75 taxa) to be submitted as proposals to the CoP. In April, the USFWS requested additional input. Our Team solicited input from the States, with assistance from the Amphibian and Reptile Committee for the herpetofauna, for nearly all of the “undecided” species and submitted formal comments on May 26th through AFWA. Final species proposals must be submitted to the CoP on June 17th and cannot be altered after that date.

CITES 74rd Standing Committee held in March, 2022

The CITES Technical Work Group (Team) routinely represents the state fish and wildlife agencies and, where applicable, the Provinces and Territories at the CITES Standing Committee (SC). In March, Stewart Liley attended as the WAFWA representative and Deb Hahn attended as a member of the US Government Delegation. This was the first in-person meeting since the 18th Conference of the Parties (CoP) in August 2019. There were over 400 country delegates and observer organizations. The Non-Governmental Organizations were diverse from the Humane Society International to Wildlife Conservation Society to Safari Club International Foundation. The SC provides policy guidance concerning the implementation of the Convention and oversees the management of the budget. It also coordinates and oversees the work of the CITES Plants and Animals Committees, carries out tasks given to it by the CoP, and drafts resolutions for consideration by the CoP.

The SC discussed over 80 substantive agenda items including the conservation of eels, paddlefish, freshwater turtles, seahorses, corals, and American ginseng; CITES and zoonotic diseases; captive bred and ranched specimens; and the CITES Strategic Vision. A key component of attending was to reconnect with partners, reestablish relationships, and meet new country delegates and the staff of the Secretariat.

An inter-sessional working group was formed through the CITES Standing Committee in 2020 to discuss and develop recommendations concerning the role of CITES in reducing the risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with international wildlife trade. There was overwhelming interest by countries and many NGOs to participate. Working Groups had to have an equal ratio of country representatives to NGOs. The Team was invited to be a member of the working group whose recommendations were submitted to the Standing Committee. The recommendations were accepted and include identifying opportunities for collaboration with OIE, WHO, and FAO to develop a joint program of work, developing a resolution on actions CITES countries could take to advance a One Health approach as it pertains to international wildlife trade, and considering amendments to the CITES guidelines for the non-air transport for mitigating risks to animal and human health.

Scott Buchanan, Ph.D., New NEAFWA CITES Technical Work Group Representative

Dr. Buchanan has been with the Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife since 2018 as a herpetologist where he is principally responsible for coordinating all conservation and management projects for amphibians and reptiles in the state. In April, Scott was appointed as the NEAFWA CITES Representative replacing Mike Bednarski (Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources).

SCIENCE-BASED MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

CITES deals with the legal and sustainable international trade of plants and animals listed in its three appendices. For this reason, the CITES Technical Work Group will not be proposing any science-based management priorities at this time.

TIME & PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be the CITES 19th Conference of the Parties, November 14-25, 2022; Panama City, PAN.

Respectfully submitted May 27, 2022,

Carolyn Caldwell
MAFWA CITES Technical Work Group Representative
Division of Wildlife, ODNR
2045 Morse Road, G-3
Columbus, Ohio 43229-6693
MAFWACITES@gmail.com
614.403.3756 (Cell)