

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Twenty-seventh meeting of the Animals Committee
Veracruz (Mexico), 28 April – 3 May 2014

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation

Sturgeons and paddlefish

IMPLEMENTATION BY THE ANIMALS COMMITTEE
OF RELEVANT PROVISIONS IN RESOLUTION CONF. 12.7 (REV. COP16)

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. In Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP16) on *Conservation of and trade in sturgeons and paddlefish*, the Conference of the Parties:

DIRECTS the Animals Committee, in collaboration with the Secretariat, interested Parties, international organizations and relevant experts, to monitor progress on the relevant provisions of this Resolution and to carry out on a three-year cycle starting in 2008, and using information from preceding years, an evaluation of the assessment and the monitoring methodologies used for stocks of Acipenseriformes species subject to the provisions under RECOMMENDS further, paragraph a) above,

and

DIRECTS the Animals Committee to provide to the Standing Committee its recommendations on actions to be taken based upon the above-mentioned monitoring of progress and three-year cycle evaluation.

The Resolution further *Urges range States to cooperate with the Animals Committee and the Secretariat with a view to implementing the provisions under RECOMMENDS further, paragraph a), and the first paragraph DIRECTS the Animals Committee mentioned above.*

3. At the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP16, Bangkok, 2013), the Animals Committee reported on the work that it had undertaken to meet the instruction in the first DIRECTS in paragraph 2 above [see document CoP16 Doc. 60.1 (Rev. 1)]. In close collaboration with the Secretariat, the Committee had focused on the evaluation of the methods for assessing sturgeon stocks and determining the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) in the Caspian Sea. This had involved workshops, studies and consultancies in partnership with, amongst others, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The Animals Committee's recommendations were endorsed by the Standing Committee in 2011 (see document SC61 Doc. 48.2). However, the Animals Committee reported at CoP16 that the Caspian Sea range States had failed to respond to any of these recommendations.
4. In accordance with the Resolution, the Animals Committee should undertake its evaluation of stock assessment and TAC methodologies on a three-year cycle, starting in 2008. The work concerning the Caspian Sea sturgeon fishery used information up to 2010, and a second evaluation should be undertaken in 2013/14. The Animals Committee has yet to commence its evaluation of other stocks of

Acipenseriformes that are shared between different range States. The Secretariat is not aware of external resources that would be available to the Animals Committee for organizing such evaluations. It also draws attention to its observations concerning further evaluations of Caspian Sea sturgeon stocks in paragraph 7 of document AC26 Doc. 15.2. (*While the implementation of the recommendations mentioned above [those referred to in paragraph 3 of the present document] could help to improve the status of sturgeons in the Caspian Sea and restore sturgeon fisheries, undertaking such a new evaluation in two years' time may be challenging or difficult to justify considering: the poor response rates of Caspian littoral States to the recent evaluation; the lack of communication on export quotas in compliance with Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP14), resulting in recent years in zero export quotas for caviar and meat from sturgeons of wild origin from Caspian littoral States; the greatly reduced legal sturgeon fisheries in the Caspian Sea; and the long-term fishing moratoria that seem to be in place.*)

5. The second component of the first DIRECTS in paragraph 2 asks the Animals Committee, in collaboration with the Secretariat, interested Parties, international organizations and relevant experts, to monitor progress on the relevant provisions of this Resolution. The Resolution does not specify what provisions are considered relevant for the Animals Committee to monitor.
6. Finally, the Animals Committee is directed to provide to the Standing Committee its recommendations on actions to be taken based upon the above-mentioned monitoring of progress and three-year cycle evaluation. The most recent report was provided orally by the Chair of the Animals Committee to the Standing Committee at its 62nd meeting (Geneva, 2012). On that occasion, the Standing Committee had regretted the lack of a document from the Animals Committee for this agenda item.

Recommendation

7. The Animals Committee is invited to consider how it wishes to implement its mandates under Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP16), i.e.: monitoring of progress with relevant provisions in the Resolution; three-year cycle evaluations of assessment and monitoring methodologies used for shared stocks of *Acipenseriformes* species that are subject of catch quotas and export quotas for caviar and meat; and reporting to the Standing Committee.