

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



Twenty-sixth meeting of the Animals Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 15-20 March 2012 and Dublin (Ireland), 22-24 March 2012

TORTOISES AND FRESHWATER TURTLES (DECISION 15.79)

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 15th meeting (Doha, 2010), the Conference of the Parties adopted the following Decisions on *Tortoises and freshwater turtles*:

**Directed to the Animals Committee**

15.79 *The Animals Committee, at its 25th meeting, shall review the final study from the IUCN Species Survival Commission, Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group (IUCN-TFTSG) mentioned in Decision 14.128 and make recommendations to the Standing Committee and/or at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties as appropriate.*

**Directed to the Standing Committee**

15.80 *The Standing Committee, taking into account the recommendations of the Animals Committee, shall review the pertinent sections, conclusions, and recommendations of the final study mentioned in Decision 14.128 and make its own recommendations at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

**Directed to Parties**

15.81 *The Parties, particularly those engaged in the trade of tortoises and freshwater and terrestrial turtles, are encouraged to review their implementation of Resolution Conf. 11.9 (Rev. CoP13), taking into account the conclusions and recommendations of the IUCN Species Survival Commission, Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group (IUCN-TFTSG) mentioned in Decision 14.128, in order to determine what national actions may be necessary to strengthen their implementation and enforcement of CITES and their trade management and conservation of these species.*

15.82 *The Parties, particularly those engaged in the trade of tortoises and freshwater and terrestrial turtles, are encouraged, as a matter of priority, to develop national tariff Customs codes, based on the World Customs Organization harmonized system of tariff codes, for monitoring the trade in tortoises and freshwater and terrestrial turtles and for products thereof.*

15.83 *In fulfilment of paragraph m) of Resolution Conf. 11.9 (Rev. CoP13), the Parties are encouraged to consider the conclusions and recommendations contained in the final study mentioned in Decision 14.128 in preparation of their biennial (or other periodical) reports.*

3. In compliance with Decision 15.79, the Animals Committee reviewed the study by IUCN-TFTSG in document AC25 Doc. 19 and formulated recommendations at its 25th meeting (Geneva, July 2011). These recommendations were then presented by the Chair of the Animals Committee at the 61st meeting of the Standing Committee (Geneva, August 2011) [see document SC61 Doc. 47 (Rev. 2)].

4. The Standing Committee noted the five recommendations of the Animals Committee in Annex 1 to document SC61 Doc. 47 (Rev. 2) and agreed that these would be taken into account by a Standing Committee intersessional working group. This working group was also tasked with reviewing the pertinent sections, conclusions and recommendations in Annex 2 to the same document, and with preparing draft recommendations for consideration at the 62nd meeting of the Standing Committee in July 2012. The working group comprised: the regional representatives of Africa (the Democratic Republic of the Congo), Asia (the Islamic Republic of Iran and Japan), Europe (Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) and North America (the United States of America), and China, India, Kenya, Switzerland, Thailand, IUCN, Animal Welfare Institute, Conservation International, Eurogroup for Animals, Humane Society International, SSN and TRAFFIC.
5. As requested by the Animals Committee in one of its recommendations, the Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties No. 2011/029 on 23 August 2011 concerning the disposal of confiscated tortoises and freshwater turtles.
6. The recommendations also include the following:
  - a) Subject to external funding and with appropriate assistance, the Animals Committee should engage independent consultants to undertake a study to identify and discuss factors that are of particular relevance to make non-detriment findings for tortoises and freshwater turtles, including (but not limited to) turtle population status and dynamics, trade dynamics, and the trade in parts, products and derivatives. This study should provide guidance for Parties to make non-detriment findings for tortoises and freshwater turtles. The Animals Committee should report on progress at its 26th meeting (AC26) and CoP16.
  - b) The Animals Committee shall review at its 26th meeting the results of the North American Turtle Trade Workshop, held in Saint Louis in September 2010, and the Asian Turtle Conservation Workshop, held in Singapore in February 2011, and additional pertinent information, and make recommendations for the consideration of the Parties to amend the CITES Appendices with regard to turtle species.

Action required from the Animals Committee

7. The Animals Committee is invited to act upon the recommendations mentioned in paragraph 6 above by assessing progress, if any, with the study on the making of non-detriment findings for tortoises and freshwater turtles, and reviewing the results of the two workshops. Ensuing recommendations could be made to the Standing Committee or at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties as appropriate.