

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



Thirty-first meeting of the Animals Committee
Online, 31 May, 1, 4, 21 and 22 June 2021

TRAFFIC UPDATE ON BIG CAT TRADE STUDY

This document has been submitted by the Secretariat at the request of TRAFFIC in relation to agenda item 28 on *African lions* (*Panthera leo*).*

* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

UPDATE ON BIG CAT TRADE STUDY

1. Based on generous funding from the Netherlands and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland under the ICCWC/UK project the Secretariat has contracted TRAFFIC to undertake a trade study on the legal and illegal trade in lions and other big cats in support of Decision 18.246 a). In addition, TRAFFIC will contribute to the implementation of paragraphs c) and d) of the same Decision.
2. The terms of reference for the study are as follows:

TRAFFIC will conduct a study on the legal and illegal trade in big cats to determine the following:

 - the major source, transit and consumer countries of legally and illegally traded big cat products, including any trends over time
 - the major species in trade, and commodities in trade which contain (or claim to contain) big cat and their derivatives, including any changes over time
 - any linkages between legal and illegal trade in big cat species.
3. This project aims to bring together recent work along with new research. Interviews with in-country experts, non-governmental organisations, wildlife authorities, law enforcement officials and other relevant parties will be the primary source of information collected for this project. Extensive interviews will take place in key major consumer/transit countries (China, Viet Nam, and Lao PDR) as well as key African big cat range States. Experts in other range States and consumer/transit countries will also be consulted virtually (via email/Zoom). In addition, TRAFFIC will conduct an extensive literature review, and compilation and analyses of trade statistics from sources including the CITES Trade Database, CITES Annual Illegal Trade Reports (with permission from the CITES Secretariat), industry, TRAFFIC's seizures database, law enforcement and others. The literature reviews will be conducted in English and local languages where relevant.
4. The focal regions of the research will be Africa and Asia. The role of other regions is a secondary focus, therefore research on these will be limited.
5. "Big cats" in this context includes lion, tiger, jaguar, leopard, snow leopard, clouded leopard, cheetah and cougar. Cougar is a secondary focus, therefore research on this species will be limited.
6. TRAFFIC will liaise with the consultant tasked with delivering on Decision 18.251 to obtain information on the trade in jaguar.
7. The research will be submitted to the CITES Secretariat in the form of a written trade study (in English only). A draft study will be submitted by 17th January 2022 and the final study by 15th March 2022.
8. TRAFFIC is pleased to support the Secretariat in delivery of Decision 18.246 paragraph a) by conducting this study on the legal and illegal trade in lions and other big cats, and by contributing to paragraphs c) and d).
9. TRAFFIC invites those that wish to express interest in being an interviewee, have illegal trade data to share, or have any questions on the planned study, to please contact Willow Outhwaite willow.outhwaite@traffic.org.

Annex - Decision 18.246

The Secretariat shall, subject to external resources:

- a) conduct further research and analysis on the legal and illegal trade in lions and other big cats to better understand trends, linkages between trade in different species, and the commodities in trade which contain, or claim to contain, such specimens;*
- b) assess whether the trade in lion specimens reported under purpose code "H" follows the guidance in Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP18) on Permits and certificates, paragraph 3 h), and whether additional reporting specificities or descriptions are needed;*
- c) develop guidance materials for the identification of lion and other big cat specimens in trade in consultation with relevant experts;*
- d) develop and support, in consultation with relevant experts, the use of appropriate forensic-type techniques for identifying lions and other big cat species in trade;*
- e) share relevant information generated through the implementation of this Decision with the CITES Big Cats Task Force; and*
- f) report on the implementation of the present Decision to the 32nd meeting of the Animals and the 74th meeting of the Standing Committees as appropriate, and to the Conference of the Parties at its 19th meeting.*