

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



Sixty-first meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 15-19 August 2011

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation

TIBETAN ANTELOPE

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 13th meeting (Bangkok, 2004), the Conference of the Parties adopted Resolution Conf. 11.8 (Rev. CoP13) (*Conservation of and control of trade in the Tibetan antelope*), in which it directs the Standing Committee to:

undertake a regular review of the enforcement measures taken by the Parties in eliminating the illicit trade in Tibetan antelope products on the basis of the Secretariat's report, and to report the results at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
3. The Resolution contains a wide range of actions that Parties, and the Secretariat, should undertake. It does not, however, place any reporting requirement upon Parties. The Secretariat does not suggest any change, but the absence of such a requirement places a potentially significant burden on the Secretariat in terms of contacting all relevant Parties to seek information.
4. The Secretariat suggests, therefore, that the Standing Committee consider what level of detail it wishes to be provided with by the Secretariat and whether it wishes, for example, that the Secretariat issue Notifications to the Parties prior to each meeting of the Committee, calling for information. The Committee may also wish to consider whether it requires a detailed report at each of its meetings, or whether such reports should seek simply to highlight current or urgent issues, whilst a comprehensive report is prepared for the Conference of the Parties.
5. For the present meeting of the Committee, the Secretariat has restricted its focus to the most immediate threats to the Tibetan antelope, which appear to be poaching and illegal trade.
6. The Secretariat understands that, whilst poaching of Tibetan antelope in western China continues to occur, it is considerably reduced from the serious levels of the late 1990s and early 2000s. Similarly, although products made from the wool of the Tibetan antelope (shahtoosh) can still be found in parts of the world, seizure rates have slowed considerably and it is some time since the Secretariat was advised of any significant seizure.
7. Sales of shahtoosh shawls have, however, always tended to be conducted in a secretive manner and, consequently, it would be imprudent to believe that such trade has been eliminated.
8. The Secretariat learned of one interesting seizure, made recently in the United States of America, where a shawl had a label attached that distinctly identified it as being shahtoosh and using Tibetan antelope wool. However, forensic examination subsequently showed this to be false. The shawl had been purchased in a country in the Middle East, which is the region in the world where the most significant seizures of genuine shahtoosh shawls have occurred in recent years.

Recommendation

9. The Standing Committee is asked to note this report and provide guidance to the Secretariat in relation to future reporting by the Secretariat.