

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



Sixty-fifth meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 7-11 July 2014

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Compliance and enforcement

ILLEGAL TRADE IN CHEETAHS (*ACINONYX JUBATUS*)

1. This document has been submitted by Kuwait*.
2. General information: this document was prepared with the consultation of the Gulf States countries that respond to communication: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates on "Measures to combat illegal trade in Cheetah"
3. Activities within each party:

3.1 Bahrain:

Kingdom of Bahrain has recently accessed to CITES. However, the Kingdom of Bahrain have legislative tools from ministry of Interior that restrict the import of all types of predators including Cheetah. This action has been enforce by the customs affairs before Bahrain has become a party to CITES convention.

Kingdom of Bahrain is in the process to finalize the national legislation, which will be send to the secretariat for further consultation and advisory.

Since the convention become into force in 17th of November 2012, there was no cheetah were import legally to the Kingdom of Bahrain. Added to that, a request to import cheetah to the Kingdom of Bahrain was rejected from Ethiopia in the last year. Furthermore, several actions have been undertaken by the Kingdom of Bahrain to better control the importing of CITES listed species including Cheetah,

3.2 Kuwait

CITES enforcement effort in Kuwait:

Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs & Fish Resources (PAAF) Resolution 17/1987 regarding ban on Import of Monkey and wild Carnivores.

EPA has an enforcement Committee "National Committee for implementing the Decision No. 93/2003 regarding sale and trade in endangered wildlife species and Decision No. 1 /2005 regarding the ban on hunting of terrestrial and marine, endemic and migratory birds". The main responsibility of the committee is to inspect the sale and trade operations of CITES species in wildlife market places and shops. The team is coordinating with other enforcement teams in Public Authority of Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources, Kuwait Municipality and the police, which have related mandate regarding inspections of market places.

* *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.*

“The National Standing Committee for Regulating Trade in Endangered Species “to follow up the implementation of CITES at the national level.

Agencies represented in the National standing Committee for Regulating Trade in Endangered Species:

- Environment Public Authority (EPA) – Chairing
- Public Authority of Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAF)
- Directorate General of Civil Aviation.
- Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- Kuwait Municipality.
- General Administration of Customs
- Kuwait Airways Corporation.
- Kuwait Institute for scientific researches (KISR).
- Kuwait University

Memorandum of Understanding between Environment Public Authority (EPA) and Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs & Fish Resources (PAAF) concerning fulfilling the Obligations of CITES and coordinate efforts between the two organizations that was affective from 1/6/2003

Customs Instructions No. 44/2003 & No. 94/2004 Concerning reinforcing control and inspection procedures with respect to the import of endangered wildlife species in respect with decision No. 93/2003.

Within 3 month, The Environment Public Authority is in process to issue in the official gazette “Kuwait al-Youm” the new Environmental Law which include the modified CITES national legislation for “Resolution No.93/2003 regarding Sale and Trading in Endangered Wild Species”, to fulfill the requirement for classification the current legislation to grade I.

In November 2013 Kuwait Organized a national training course on CITES listed species for the Customs and related authorities, with the cooperation of IFAW and CITES Management Authorities of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, to focus on the different issues related to the illegal trade in the region.

Kuwait organized with the cooperation of CITES Secretariat and UNEP-ROWA Workshop on Strengthening Regional Cooperation to Combat Wildlife Crime in West Asia 29-31 October 2013 Kuwait city. The objective of the workshop is to consult with relevant government law enforcement officers (police, Customs, etc), CITES Management and Enforcements Authorities and relevant experts from the countries in West Asia to consider the feasibility of establishing a regional mechanism for the coordination of enforcement of laws regulating wildlife trade. Participants from CITES Management, Enforcement Authorities and custom officials: Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates were attended as well as from the following Governmental organization: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, World Custom Organization and RILO, Wildlife Enforcement Network – ASEAN, Wildlife Enforcement Network – Horn of Africa.

Combating illegal trade in Cheetah:

Kuwait communicate with the CITES Management Authority of Saudi Arabia to increase cooperation and efforts concerning combating illegal trade in Cheetah in the region.

High level meeting took place on October 2013 chaired by the director general of the Environment Public Authority and attended by Kuwait Customs, Ministry of interior and Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs & Fish Resources to strengthen efforts for combating illegal trade on CITES listed species.

Customs Instructions No 73/2013 regarding increase of control on the customs at borders in CITES listed species in general and on Cheetah illegal trade.

The Kuwait CITES Management Authorities with the cooperation of General Administrative of Customs had several cases of Cheetah confiscation, and the legal action were taken.

Kuwait's lead CITES Management Authority the Environment Public Authority work on aim to increase effort and cooperation with the ministry of Interior, to focus on illegal trade of CITES listed species and specifically on Cheetah, also cooperation is taking place with the Electronic Crimes department – General Directorate of Criminal evidence, to combat illegal trade on the social media and Internet.

3.3 Oman

Oman is currently at the final process of announcing the national law for the implementation of the International Trade on Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora "CITES".

The law of Nature Conservation No.6/2003 in Oman is prohibits to have all type of predators animals including cheetah and all Animals and Plants which is classified as endanger at the red list sheet.

3.4 Qatar

The State of Qatar has a law on regulation of trade in specimens of endangered wildlife species, and is seriously, strictly and effectively implementing it. It has established offices for CITES Management Authority, being CITES implementation authority in cooperation with Customs authorities, to control entry and exit of all species of wildlife to and from Qatar. These offices are located in the main passageways of the country, Hamad International Airport. Doha Seaport and Abu Samra Land Exit. With regard to control of illegal trade in Cheetahs, Qatar has imposed total ban on import of Carnivores into the country, including Cheetahs. This action had been taken as more strict measure to discourage trade in such endangered species. And at the level of implementation of the law, CITES Management Authority respond quickly to any information about presence of any Cheetah being displayed anywhere , seize and place it in Doha Animal Zoo , and take legal proceedings against the concerned person.

3.5 Saudi Arabia

Saudi procedures to prevent the smuggling cheetah:

Saudi Arabia prohibits the import of all predators, including cheetah to the Kingdom.

Where the Saudi Customs to monitor border crossings with the latest equipment and techniques for the detection of cases of smuggling.

Add to the border guards who watch the land and sea borders to prevent smuggling and adjust hackers in general.

The Saudi wildlife Authority appointed observers in all customs ports air, land and sea, has been tuning different wild animals as a result of these actions.

3.6 United Arab Emirates

Introduction:

The species *Acinonyx jubatus* (Cheetah) used to be distributed from Africa through Middle East to Asia. In 1900 there were more than 100,000 cheetahs throughout Africa and Asia. Today this number has fallen to less than 12,000. However, in the past 50 years, the species has become extinct from those areas, except for Southern Africa, and smaller number in North and East Africa and Iran (Myers, 1976). The cheetah is not adaptable to human interference. The fact that it is also caught for live trade, hunting game, fur trade and protection of livestock contribute more to its decline. The species is recognized by the IUCN as "vulnerable" and is listed on appendix I of the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

UAE recognized the importance of protecting wildlife; therefore, it established different programs, such as Breeding Centre for Endangered Arabian Wildlife (BCEAW) in Sharjah. Such institutions are fundamental for the protection of Cheetahs, Falcons and Bustards. In fact, BCEAW is home for more than 30 northeast African cheetah that were confiscated when they were illegally imported into the UAE.

UAE, Also, recognized the importance of tackling illegal wildlife trade early on, in line it's keenness on protecting the environment, becoming the first nation in the Middle East to ratify CITES. The UAE regularly assesses the effectiveness of the country's abilities to implement the Convention successfully and has positioned itself as a leading nation within the region for these efforts. The nation's legislation on CITES were issued and became came into force in 2002, entitled Federal Law 11, which later qualified UAE for a category (A) status in the national legislation project. This meant that UAE's legislation pertaining to illegal wildlife trade completely fulfilled all requirements to implement CITES.

Legalizations:

□ Due to the geographical and strategic location of UAE as a link between the east and the west regions, it is considered to be a critical area for illegal wildlife trade trafficking. UAE government is aware of such matter, in efforts of controlling this issue; UAE enacted a number of legislations which includes the Federal Law No. (11) for the year 2002 concerning the regulation and control of CITES, and includes 40 articles governing the scope of implementation, the functions of the authorities, administrative and scientific authorities, international trade and documentation, exceptions, identifying the ports of entry, how to deal with non-member states, registration of establishments and companies, transit, cooperation with the concerned authorities, and sanctions. It also includes, penal articles and sanctions for offenders which varies from fines up to 50 thousand dirhams and imprisonment up to six months. The penalties vary depending on the Appendixes to the Convention.

□ Furthermore, the Ministry of Environment and Water issued a number of regulations within its administrative capacity. The Ministry issued ministerial decision No. (346) of year 2012 regarding the import of wild animals, which prohibits the importation of wildlife species non-bred in captivity for personal and commercial purposes unless it was for authorized agencies such zoo parks and breeding centers that are included in Appendix (a) of that decision, as well as animals included in the lists of the Federal Law No. (24) for the year 1999 concerning the protection and development of the environment, its amendments, and its regulations . Cheetahs are included in those two ministerial decisions and they are not allowed to be owned by the public except for authorized agencies.

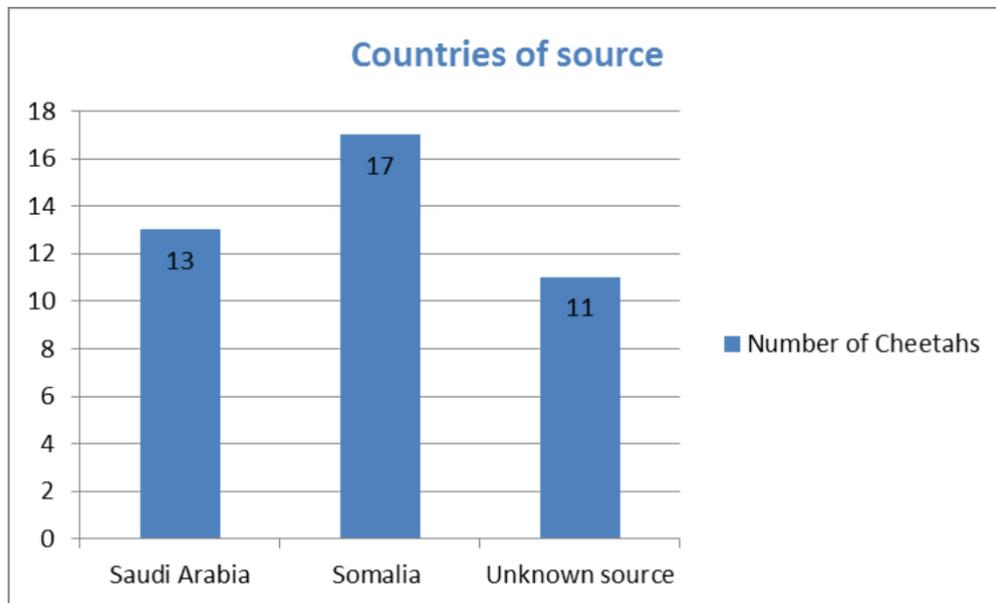
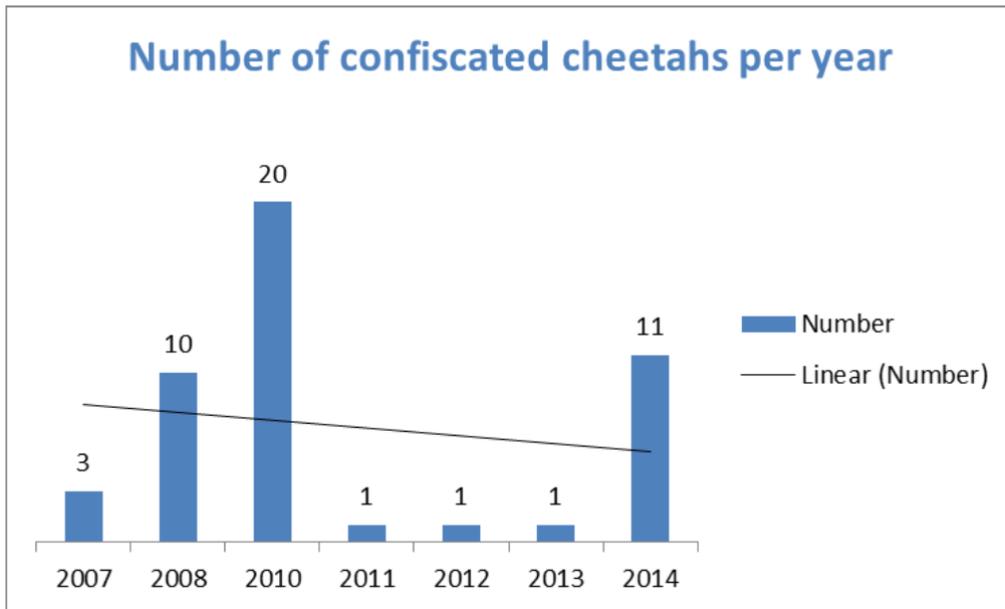
□ Local authorities in UAE also issued different legalizations to control illegal trade in wildlife and ownership of such species. An example, Municipality & Planning Department in Ajman issued an administrative decision No. 54 of 2011 on Regulation of Ban breeding wild animal, husbandry and non-domesticated animals and reptiles at the houses. Anyone who violate this decision get a fine of 10 thousand dirhams and the animal get confiscated. Dubai Municipality issued an administrative resolution No. 30 of year 2007 which consider raising animals in homes and housing areas is prohibited and considered as a health risk. Moreover, UAE is working to issue a new federal law about regulating Possession of predators.

Furthermore, CITES authorities in UAE in collaboration with security agencies and NGOs are evaluating the effect of CITES enforcement in UAE and improving the efforts of CITES implementation regularly.

Access point control:

United Arab Emirates monitor all main border crossing points and equips ports with the latest techniques that would help to control illegal shipments. Customs all across UAE uses the latest advanced cargo container scanning technology. Meanwhile, the government of UAE is tracking the latest technologies used in customs to be applied. Such efforts result in controlling and better monitoring of UAE's access points for goods and passengers, which result in confiscation illegal wildlife items.

The number of confiscated Cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*) from 2007 to 2013 across different UAE access points is 32 live cheetahs and 4 items of cheetah's skin. The number of confiscated cheetahs dropped drastically in recent years, i.e. 2011- 2013. It dropped from 20 cheetahs in 2010 to 1 cheetah on 2011. However, in 2014, the number of confiscated cheetahs until July was 11 live cheetahs all entered from Ghowaifat borders coming from Saudi Arabia (see Figure 1). These confiscated cheetahs differ in their origin; although most of them are from known origin but there is a number of cheetahs which are from unknown origin (see Figure 2).



Illegal trade of cheetahs in the Middle East including UAE is more significant than other areas. The young cheetahs may be taken from unknown areas to conservationists, but possibly from known resident populations as well (CITES, 2014).

Online control:

United Arab Emirates also cooperates with international governmental and non-governmental organizations; to take advantage of the expertise and develop them is in line with the UAE strategy. In addition, the Ministry of Environment and Water prevented the electronic illegal trade of endangered animal and plant species listed in the Convention, and in coordination with the authorities responsible for electronic communication sites on the internet, through the follow up on advertisements for the sale of endangered animals, where most of these ads were posted by fake communication channels outside the state, and 60% of such sites were removed, i.e. 800

sites, since such websites are unreliable sources of information which might carry a lot of exaggerations. The issue of uncontrolled keeping of large cats including Cheetahs is expounded by the advent of social media where large cats are shown in vehicles or as pets being walked around.

The rapid transfer of such images via popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc. results in pictures being made available to a wide part of the population in a very short time. This can make the problem look acute in this digital age because of the speed at which information can travel between people within and outside countries. There are enough relevant laws to prosecute anyone found in violation of the laws mentioned previously. The External Audit Department in the Ministry in coordination with the local environmental authorities conducts many inspection programs on pet shops and the related businesses, and takes the appropriate action against the violator of CITES legalization. There are many reported cases for confiscation of such species from at the local level in cooperation with the competent authority in each emirate.

Awareness

Training courses:

The Ministry of Environment and Water provides special training courses on a regular basis for veterinarians, agricultural engineers working in Enforcement Authorities such as: Ministry of Environment and Water, Ministry of Internal ,Airports security and Customs, and those who are assigned to implement federal law no. (11) for the year 2002 on the organization and control of international trade on endangered Fauna and flora . There are more than 21 training courses conducted for the different concerned authorities from year 2007 to 2013. Moreover, the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) office in Dubai is playing an important role in cooperating with the Management CITES Authority in increasing the capacity building and awareness for the inspection officers and the community in general. These training sessions keep such individuals up to date with what is latest updates and to be in line with the best practices worldwide.



Public awareness:

UAE also concerned with increasing public awareness through the distribution of leaflets, posters and guiding brochures regarding CITES and the species listed in the appendixes of the Convention in different places in the UAE such as shopping malls, local markets, airports, schools and universities; to demonstrate the risks and dangers of illegal trafficking of rare and endangered species. The CITES scientific Authority in UAE , Environmental Agency Abu Dhabi, published a handbook titled "UAE CITES Handbook" which include common CITES & Non-CITES species involved in UAE trade. This handbook is distributed to all the people who's interested in wildlife trading such as pet shops, animal markets and the public.

Awareness campaign were carried out in 2009 till now, titled "What You carry May Harm You", which was aimed to spread awareness to travelers through border crossing points. Furthermore, many electronic awareness campaigns are carried through social networking channels such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.



Resources:

- Myers, N. (1976) Status of leopard and cheetah in Africa. In: Eaton, R.L. (ed) *The World Cats 3 (1) Carnivore Research Institute, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington: 53 – 69.*
- Secretariat of CITES. (2014). *Illegal Trade In Cheetahs (Acinonyx jubatus). Convention On International Trade In Endangered Species Of Wild Fauna & Flora. Geneva, Switzerland. P. 44.*