



## JOINT CMS-CITES AFRICAN CARNIVORES INITIATIVE

### 1. Background

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) concluded a Joint Work Programme 2015-2020 which, amongst others, calls for “Joint activities addressing shared species and issues of common interest”. The CITES and CMS Secretariats are to “jointly address overarching species conservation and management issues of common interest, such as promoting regional management of species, community-based management of resources, non-detrimental trade and sustainable use, encouraging best conservation and sustainable use practices for shared species, and monitoring emerging threats such as climate change.” The Secretariats are also required to “respond to any relevant recommendations, resolutions and decisions agreed by Parties or Signatories and that pertain to joint CITES/CMS work, including those resulting from the implementation of CMS instruments (e.g. MOUs).”

The joint work programme further envisages activities to “Ensure collaboration on the conservation and management of big cats, including regular exchange of technical and other relevant information, attendance of each other’s meetings, capacity-building, joint fundraising and collective reach-out to Range States where appropriate” (Activity B5), as well as to “Exchange information on the differences in the criteria for inclusion of species in respective Appendices and the reasons/justifications for which they are listed in order to improve alignment of policies under both treaties” (Activity B20).

At the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (COP17, Johannesburg, 2016), Parties agreed to measures concerning the conservation of African carnivore species, namely the African Lion (*Panthera leo*), Leopard (*Panthera pardus*), Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*) and Wild Dog (*Lycaon pictus*). The need for further conservation activities concerning the Lion, Cheetah and Wild Dog was recognized at the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS (COP11, Quito, 2014).<sup>1</sup> The 45<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CMS Standing Committee (Bonn, November 2016) endorsed the decisions of CITES COP17 relating to Lion and Wild Dog. In line with the Joint Programme of Work and in order to reap synergies, this CMS-CITES African Carnivore Initiative seeks to jointly implement the resolutions and decisions adopted by the CITES and CMS COPs.

### 2. Status of the four species under CMS and CITES

The four species have been under consideration of the CMS and CITES Conference of Parties, either due to their listing in the Appendices of the Conventions, or because the Conference of Parties adopted targeted decisions, recognising the need for attention to these species:

- **African Lion (*Panthera leo*)**

CITES: Included in CITES Appendix II since 1977. At COP17, the listing in Appendix II was amended with the following annotation: “*Panthera leo* (African populations): a zero annual export quota is established for specimens of bones, bone pieces, bone products, claws, skeletons, skulls and teeth removed from the wild and traded for commercial purposes. Annual export quotas for trade in bones, bone pieces, bone products, claws, skeletons, skulls and teeth for commercial purposes, derived from captive breeding operations in South Africa, will be established and communicated annually to the CITES Secretariat.”

<sup>1</sup> See list of resolutions and decisions in Section 9 of this document.

COP17 adopted Decisions 17.241 to 17.245, and Decision 17.313 concerning the African Lion.

(Note: the Asian population of the Lion, *Panthera leo persica*, is included in Appendix I, and subject of Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. COP17) on *Conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix-I Asian big cat species*).

CMS: While the species is currently not listed under CMS, CMS Resolution 11.32 requests a review of the effectiveness of the 2006 IUCN Regional Conservation Strategies, recommends Range States to consider conservation measures for the species and invites Parties to work towards a listing of the species on Appendix II of CMS at COP12 in 2017.

The CMS Standing Committee at its 45<sup>th</sup> meeting endorsed the decisions adopted by CITES COP17 on the conservation of the African Lion.

- **Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*)**

CITES: Included in Appendix I since 1975 with the following annotation “Annual export quotas for live specimens and hunting trophies are granted as follows: Botswana: 5; Namibia: 150; Zimbabwe: 50. The trade in such specimens is subject to the provisions of Article III of the Convention”.

COP17 adopted Decisions 17.124 to 17.130 concerning the illegal trade in cheetahs.

(Note: the Asian populations of *Acinonyx jubatus* are subject of Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. COP17) on *Conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix-I Asian big cat species*).

CMS: Listed on CMS Appendix I since 2009, except for the populations of Zimbabwe (and Botswana and Namibia, which are, however, currently not Parties to CMS).

The species was designated for ‘Concerted Action’<sup>2</sup> through Resolution 11.13 by CMS COP11 in 2014.

- **Leopard (*Panthera pardus*)**

CITES: Included in Appendix I since 1975. The African populations of the species are subject of Resolution Conf. 10.14 (Rev. COP16) on *Quotas for leopard hunting trophies and skins for personal use*. COP17 adopted Decisions 17.114 to 17.117 concerning Leopard hunting trophies.

(Note: the Asian populations of *Panthera pardus* are subject of Resolution Conf. 12.5 (Rev. COP17) on *Conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix-I Asian big cat species*).

CMS: There are many transboundary populations of Leopard across their range in Africa and Asia and a proposal is expected from CMS Parties for the listing of Leopard at COP12 in 2017.

- **Wild Dog (*Lycaon pictus*)**

CITES: Not included in the CITES Appendices.

COP17 adopted Decisions 17.235 to 17.238 concerning African Wild Dog (*Lycaon pictus*).

CMS: Listed on CMS Appendix II since 2009.

The African Wild Dog was designated for ‘Concerted Action’ through Resolution 11.13 by CMS COP11 in 2014.

CMS COP11 also adopted Resolution 11.25 on *Advancing Ecological Networks to Address the Needs of Migratory Species*, inviting and encouraging Parties to collaborate to identify, designate and maintain comprehensive and coherent ecological networks of protected sites and other adequately managed sites of international and national importance for migratory animals.

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<sup>2</sup> Parties and other stakeholders are encouraged to identify and undertake activities aimed at implementing Concerted and Cooperative Actions to improve the conservation status of listed species, including the preparation of species action plans, during the 2015-2017 triennium.

### 3. Conservation status of the four species in Africa

Populations of African Lion (*Panthera leo*), Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*), Leopard (*Panthera pardus*) and Wild Dog (*Lycaon pictus*) are in constant – and sometimes severe – decline across the African continent, according to the IUCN Red List Assessments, except for Lions in Southern Africa, where there has been a slight increase.

As set out in Table 1 below, the [2015 IUCN Red List Assessment](#) of the **African Lion** suggests that Lion populations overall have experienced a decline of 43 per cent between 1993 and 2014. The classification of the species in the IUCN Red List remains Vulnerable, noting that most populations outside of Southern Africa (including Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe) are assessed as Endangered (East and Central Africa) or Critically Endangered (West Africa).

Despite challenges in estimating exact figures for the abundance of the **Cheetah** across Africa due to the scarcity and the naturally wide range of the species, the [2015 IUCN Red List Assessment](#) estimates a 30 per cent population decrease over the past 15 years based on the established parallel decline in Cheetah habitat. The Cheetah is consequently classified as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List and as Critically Endangered in North-West Africa. According to a recent study, the classification of Vulnerable might not be appropriate given that 77 per cent of Cheetahs occur outside of protected areas and are therefore not included in population assessments. Since the Cheetah faces multiple threats outside of protected areas, scenario modelling has shown that the extinction rate might be significantly higher than in protected areas and would require a classification of Endangered for Cheetah on the IUCN Red List.<sup>3</sup>

As regards the **Leopard**, the [2016 IUCN Red List Assessment](#) estimates a decrease of over 30 per cent in populations across Sub-Saharan Africa over the past 21 years, in line with severe declines in prey species and the expansion of agricultural land. The decline in West and East Africa is estimated at more than 50 per cent. The Leopard thus falls within the classification of Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List, having been uplisted from the classification of Near Threatened in 2015.

The **Wild Dog** is classified as Endangered under the [2012 IUCN Red List Assessment](#). Although data deficiency complicates population estimates, the IUCN Assessment estimates that an overall decline of 17 per cent took place between 1997 and 2012. The decline was most pronounced in Central Africa and Southern Africa, where populations decreased by around 26 per cent over the same timeframe.

Table 1. Population development of Cheetah, Leopard, Lion and Wild Dog in Africa according to the latest IUCN Red List assessments. Relative change in abundance refers to a time span of three generations.					
Species	IUCN Red List		Population estimate (Mature individuals)	Trend	Relative change in abundance
	Year	Category			
<b>Cheetah</b> <i>Acinonyx jubatus</i>	2015	VU A2acd;	6,674	Decr.	-30% or more
	<sup>1</sup>	C1	4,190	-	-
			2,572	-	-
			446	-	-
Southern Africa East Africa West, Central & North Africa <sup>6</sup>					
<b>Leopard</b> <i>Panthera pardus</i>	2016	VU A2cd	-	Decr.	-30% or more
	<sup>2</sup>	(CR)	Very few	Decr.	-
		VU A2cd	-	Decr.	-30% or more
North Africa Sub-Saharan Africa					
<b>Lion</b> <i>Panthera leo</i>	2016	VU A2abcd	23,000–39,000	Decr.	-43%
	<sup>3</sup>		10,400–15,900	Incr.	+8%
			7,300–13,300	Decr.	-59%
			600–1700	Decr.	-66%
		CR C2a(ii)	<250	Decr.	-
Southern Africa East Africa Central Africa West Africa					

<sup>3</sup> Sarah Durant et al., 'The global decline of cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* and what it means for conservation' in PNAS, November 2016

	2015				
	4				
<b>Wild Dog</b> <i>Lycaon pictus</i>	2012	EN C2a(i)	1,409	Decr.	-17%
Southern Africa	5		550	Decr.	-50%
East Africa			743	Decr.	-26%
Central Africa			61	Decr.	-3%
West Africa			15	Decr.	-27%
<p><sup>1</sup> Durant, S., Mitchell, N., Ipavec, A. &amp; Groom, R. 2015. <i>Acinonyx jubatus</i>. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2015: e.T219A50649567. <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2015-4.RLTS.T219A50649567.en">http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2015-4.RLTS.T219A50649567.en</a>. Downloaded on <b>02 December 2016</b>.</p> <p><sup>2</sup> Stein, A.B., Athreya, V., Gerngross, P., Balme, G., Henschel, P., Karanth, U., Miquelle, D., Rostro, S. &amp; Kamler, J.F. and Laguardia, A. 2016. <i>Panthera pardus</i>. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2016: e.T15954A50659089. <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2016-1.RLTS.T15954A50659089.en">http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2016-1.RLTS.T15954A50659089.en</a>. Downloaded on <b>02 December 2016</b>.</p> <p><sup>3</sup> Bauer, H., Packer, C., Funston, P.F., Henschel, P. &amp; Nowell, K. 2016. <i>Panthera leo</i>. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2016: e.T15951A97162455. <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2016-1.RLTS.T15951A97162455.en">http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2016-1.RLTS.T15951A97162455.en</a>. Downloaded on <b>02 December 2016</b>.</p> <p><sup>4</sup> Henschel, P., Bauer, H., Sogbohossou, E. &amp; Nowell, K. 2015. <i>Panthera leo (West Africa subpopulation)</i>. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2015: e.T68933833A54067639. <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2015-2.RLTS.T68933833A54067639.en">http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2015-2.RLTS.T68933833A54067639.en</a>. Downloaded on <b>02 December 2016</b>.</p> <p><sup>5</sup> Woodroffe, R. &amp; Sillero-Zubiri, C. 2012. <i>Lycaon pictus</i>. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2012: e.T12436A16711116. <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2012.RLTS.T12436A16711116.en">http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2012.RLTS.T12436A16711116.en</a>. Downloaded on <b>02 December 2016</b>.</p> <p><sup>6</sup> The north-west African subspecies <i>A. j. hecki</i> is listed as CR C2a(i) in the IUCN Red List. Belbachir, F. 2008. <i>Acinonyx jubatus</i> ssp. <i>hecki</i>. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2008: e.T221A13035738. <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2008.RLTS.T221A13035738.en">http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2008.RLTS.T221A13035738.en</a>. Downloaded on <b>02 December 2016</b>.</p>					

#### 4. Similar threats and conservation needs for all four species

The basic reasons for the declines and overall threats are similar for all four species, as set out in the IUCN Red List Assessments mentioned above:

- **Habitat loss and fragmentation**

As human populations in Africa rapidly grow and expand their settlements and agricultural activities they occupy increasingly the habitats of wildlife. As a result, the Lion only occurs in 17 per cent, the Cheetah in 9 per cent<sup>4</sup>, the Leopard in 51 per cent<sup>5</sup> and the Wild Dog in 6 per cent of their historic range across Africa. Apart from habitat loss, the fragmentation of habitat poses serious challenges to the conservation of large carnivores in Africa. In fact, range fragmentation is the principal threat to Cheetah and Wild Dog. Due to the low density of Cheetah and Wild Dog populations across their range the species require large areas of connected habitat to maintain demographically functional and genetically viable populations and, ultimately, survive. Since both species predominantly occur outside protected areas, the fragmentation of their populations is cause for great concern. As their habitat is fragmented through infrastructure developments, such as roads, railways, mining and pipelines, their contact with people and domestic animals increases, resulting in additional threats, namely poaching, human-wildlife conflict and the transmission of infectious disease. As response, large scale land management planning, including the creation of wide ecological corridors beyond protected areas is required.

- **Conflict with humans**

As a consequence of shrinking habitats and human encroachment, large carnivores and humans are increasingly entering into conflict with each other. The result is that carnivores are killed by humans living in their proximity in defence of themselves and their livestock. Different methods used by humans to kill the carnivores means that the various species are affected in different ways. For Lions and Leopards deliberate killing is the primary threat to their survival outside protected areas. All four species suffer from untargeted poisoning, e.g. of water holes, but Leopards and above all Lions are being killed, when they return to their (livestock) kills which have been laced with poison. Mitigation strategies such as livestock fencing, compensation and insurance programmes, alterations in trophy hunting permit distribution, and public awareness

<sup>4</sup> Sarah Durant et al., 'The global decline of cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* and what it means for conservation' in PNAS, November 2016

<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.panthera.org/cat/leopard> on 19 January 2017

are required to assist local communities in avoiding loss and damage and to increase their tolerance for living with Cheetahs, Lions and Leopards.

- **Depletion of the prey base**

The decline in populations of large carnivores is directly mirrored in the decline of their prey base, both within and outside protected areas. There are two drivers for the depletion of the prey base of large carnivores: Firstly, increasing numbers of livestock, which outcompete wild herbivores and ultimately lead to overgrazing of areas inhabited by wild ungulates and their consequential decline due to insufficient feeding. Secondly, wild ungulates are hunted by local communities to satisfy their own protein needs as well as engage in trade. These indirect threats affect all four carnivore species, but are aggravated for Cheetahs, which in their competition for prey usually succumb to Lions and Leopards. To address these threats, there is a need for habitat protection as well as the support to local communities to change their dietary habits away from bushmeat and towards small-scale livestock.

- **Unsustainable or illegal trade practices**

Unsustainable and illegal trade in specimens of large carnivores mainly occurs within Africa and from Africa to the Gulf States and Asia. It concerns the trade in live Cheetahs predominantly from Eastern Africa but also from Botswana, Namibia and South Africa to the Gulf States and Leopard skins from North, West and Central Africa within Africa and Asia. As a substitute for Tiger bone, increased levels of trade in Lion and Leopard bones and other body parts for traditional medicine have been established within Africa and from Africa to China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam. While the use of bones from captive Lions for medicinal wines has been permitted by Chinese authorities, the origin of those bones is not always clear, giving rise to concerns that specimens of wild animals may be traded. There is a need to ensure that all illegal killing of the species of concern is consistently suppressed, and all legal offtake of animals is sustainable, with special attention given to offtakes within small subpopulations, which are under a particular threat.

In light of the similarity of the threats faced by the four species, similar conservation measures are required. Taking measures for one species will therefore also help the other species. While the focus on iconic African carnivores will ensure visibility of the action, their conservation will also have positive spill-over effects on other species and ecosystems at large, such as higher populations of wild ungulates.

## **5. Objectives of the initiative**

The African Carnivores Initiative seeks to contribute to the enhanced conservation of the four species across their range in Africa through the implementation of adopted CMS and CITES COP resolutions and decisions by:

- developing concrete, coordinated and synergistic conservation programmes for all four carnivore species, with local and regional projects implemented across their African range;
- developing policy guidance and recommendations for Range States, CITES and CMS Parties concerning the four species; and
- organizing the collaboration with other conservation initiatives and organizations, such as IUCN.

## 6. Activities table

The African Carnivores Initiative jointly supports Parties to CMS and CITES in implementing conservation measures agreed by the Conferences of Parties of each Convention in their respective Resolutions and Decisions:

Conservation activity	African Lion	Cheetah	Leopard	Wild Dog	Body
Collecting, analyzing and sharing robust data and information, through joint inventories and databases <sup>6</sup>	v				CMS CITES
Conserving habitat and establishing ecological corridors		v		v	CMS
Undertaking studies of population trends and conservation and management practices	v	v	v	v	CMS CITES
Identifying and agreeing on common conservation strategies and action plans <sup>7</sup>	v	v		v	CMS CITES
Undertaking studies on legal and illegal trade, developing a resource kit, reviewing quotas	v	v	v	v	CITES CMS
Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of measures and action plans	v	v	v	v	CMS
Submitting implementation reports for review by relevant CMS and CITES bodies	v	v	v	v	CMS CITES
Capacity-building in conservation and management, including the making of non-detriment findings	v		v		CMS CITES
Fundraising and international cooperation	v				CMS CITES
Public awareness raising and education programmes	v	v			CMS CITES
Creating a web portal	v	v			CMS CITES

## 7. Value added

Against the backdrop of declining populations, similar threats and conservation needs, the African Carnivore Initiative intends to act coherently upon the various instructions of the Conferences of Parties to CMS and CITES concerning African Lion, Cheetah, Leopard and Wild Dog.

CMS, on the one hand, focuses on the protection and conservation of migratory species and their habitats, as well as on enabling the free movement of species by establishing connectivity of their habitats. Taking is strictly prohibited for species listed on Appendix I of CMS except where it is for scientific purposes, traditional subsistence use, to enhance the conservation status of a species or other extraordinary purposes. CMS Parties acknowledge the need to take action to avoid any migratory species becoming endangered.

<sup>6</sup> Using IUCN Red List standards

<sup>7</sup> Using IUCN's strategic planning standards

CITES, on the other hand, regulates the international trade in wild species to ensure that the offtake is sustainable and non-detrimental to wild populations, legal and traceable.

By cooperating and collaborating, the two Conventions can complement each other by contributing responsibilities and expertise. As both are UN treaties, they have the ability to bring together governments that can make legal commitments for specific conservation measures, enshrined in resolutions and decisions adopted by Parties. Their legal basis furthermore allows the regular monitoring of implementation through Convention procedures, mechanisms that are not available in non-governmental fora.

The Initiative is not intended to duplicate existing work, but to better pool and utilize existing resources, such as the IUCN strategic planning for species conservation. Furthermore, the Initiative seeks to streamline efforts, including that of many conservation NGOs. It is intended to build more coherence in the work that CMS and CITES are devoting to four species that share common threats and pressures. The added value of addressing the four iconic species together and joining forces of CMS and CITES in this effort is expected to be multiple and include:

- Increased conservation means for all four species by pooling funds and expertise;
- More equitable deployment of resources amongst the four species;
- Avoidance of duplicative activities and associated costs;
- Coordinated and consolidated support to Range States in implementing conservation measures;
- More effective and immediate conservation actions across the range of the four species;
- Synergetic and holistic conservation approaches; and
- Increased opportunities for donors to allocate resources to well-coordinated and internationally recognized conservation actions.

## 8. Partners

While CMS and CITES can provide the governance frameworks of the African Carnivores Initiative, collaboration and cooperation with partners from Range States, IGOs and NGOs, the scientific and conservation community, donors, and other stakeholders are essential to its functionality. As identified in resolutions mentioned and decisions adopted by CMS and CITES Parties on the four species, IUCN and its species specialist groups are the recognized main partners of the Initiative. Further partners will be invited to cooperate in relation to specific topics, where they have a proven record of expertise.

## 9. Resolutions and decisions covered by the Initiative

As set out above, this Initiative seeks to support the implementation of resolutions and decisions of the Conferences of the Parties to CITES and CMS. This means that following meetings of the COPs the list of resolutions and decisions comprised by the Initiative will require to be amended. The current resolutions and decisions covered are:

- CITES [Decisions 17.241 – 17.245](#) on the African Lion (*Panthera leo*)
- CITES [Decisions 17.114 – 17.117](#) on Quotas for Leopard hunting trophies
- CITES [Decisions 17.124-17.130](#) on Illegal trade in Cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*)
- CITES [Decisions 17.235 – 17.238](#) on the African Wild Dog (*Lycaon pictus*)
- CMS [Resolution 11.13](#) on Concerted Actions
- CMS [Resolution 11.32](#) on Conservation and Management of the African Lion (*Panthera leo*)

## 10. Resource needs

The conservation measures adopted or being proposed for adoption by the Conferences of the Parties to CMS and CITES are very comprehensive. This means that substantial resources are required for their implementation. The estimated resource needs for the next three years are:

- Lion: US\$ 1,500,000
- Cheetah and wild dog: US\$ 1,210,000 (pending decisions taken by CMS COP12)
- Leopard: US\$ 500,000 (pending decisions taken by CMS COP12)
- Promoting coexistence, sustainable land management and maintaining connectivity for all carnivores: US\$ 53,100,000

In addition, implementation and coordination of the Initiative will require substantial human resources from the Secretariat. It is thus suggested that Parties provide in-kind (through a Junior Professional Officer or secondment of a Government official) or financial resources to allow the Secretariats jointly to recruit an Associate Programme Officer, based with the CMS Secretariat in Bonn, who can support the implementation of the Initiative.