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WEST AFRICA BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE (WA BiCC)

Understanding Threats to West African Biodiversity and Linkages to Wildlife Trafficking (Volume 2)

A West Africa Regional Perspective: A Review of Threats to Biodiversity in West Africa, Current Status of Wildlife Trafficking, Ongoing or Planned Actions or Programs to Combat Wildlife Trafficking, and CITES Implementation in the Focal Countries and across West Africa

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AMCEN	African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
BRLR	Bureaux régionaux de liaison chargés du renseignement (douanes)
CEDEAO	Communauté économique des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora / Convention sur le commerce international des espèces de faune et de flore sauvages menacées d'extinction
CMAE	Conférence ministérielle africaine sur l'environnement
CNUCC	Convention des Nations Unies contre la corruption
COMIFAC	Commission of Central African Forests/ Commission des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale
CTOC	Convention des Nations Unies contre la criminalité transnationale organisée
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECOWEP	ECOWAS Environmental Policy / Politique Environnementale de la CEDEAO
ICCWC	International Consortium on Combatting Wildlife Crime / Consortium international de lutte contre la criminalité liée aux espèces sauvages
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
OMD	Organisation mondiale des douanes
ONUDD	Office des Nations Unies contre la drogue et le crime
PNUE	Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement
RILO	Regional Intelligence Liaison Offices (Customs)
UNCAC	United Nations Convention Against Corruption
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNTOC	United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime
USAID	United States Agency for International Development / Agence des États-Unis pour le développement international
RLCES	Réseau de lutte contre la criminalité liée aux espèces sauvages en Afrique de l'Ouest
SLCES	Stratégie de lutte contre la criminalité liée aux espèces sauvages en Afrique de l'Ouest
WAN	West Africa Network to Combat Wildlife Crime
WCO	World Customs Organization

WEN Wildlife Enforcement Network
WASCWC West Africa Strategy on Combating Wildlife Crime

INTRODUCTION

Section 1: Background on Threats to Biodiversity in West Africa

Often the status of a particular species is reviewed individually and in isolation from other species within the same ecosystem. Wildlife crime, however, does not impact a single species in West Africa – it impacts multiple species simultaneously. This is having a catastrophic impact on West Africa’s biodiversity.

This report attempts to review a number of species that inhabit the same region of West Africa, and the impact that wildlife crime is having on biodiversity in the region. Specifically, the report focuses on biodiversity in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Togo.

The conclusions of this analysis are stark: species are being decimated at unprecedented rates and, in some cases, irreversible population decline may have already occurred. The region’s biodiversity is, quite literally, being plundered.

For the terrestrial fauna species reviewed as part of this report, the two predominant threats that are common to almost all species are habitat loss and poaching. In the majority of cases, the most immediate threat of the two is poaching, such as for grey parrots – where trapping for the pet trade is having by far the most harmful impact in the short term. Therefore, whilst efforts need to be taken to tackle both overarching threats, first and foremost it is wildlife crime that needs to be halted. Otherwise ‘empty forest syndrome’ could occur long before the habitat itself vanishes. Indeed, as this report shows, without the pollinators and seed dispersers, the ecosystems of West Africa cannot persist into the future, even if the trees and savannahs themselves are protected. Without elephants or great apes, some trees will simply cease to reproduce.

With this in mind, it is extremely alarming for the biodiversity and ecosystems of West Africa that certain species are so precariously balanced on the edge of survival. When multiple species are looked at together, the whole picture is nothing short of disastrous. Populations are collapsing and localized extinctions are a common theme.

The recommendations of this report address both habitat loss and illegal killing or capture, but stress that controlling wildlife crime must be the priority to save species and (such as in the case of rosewood) habitats too. This report has no intention of ‘re-inventing the wheel’. In many instances, reports and action plans, together with initiatives by CITES, have already been developed (such as the African Elephant Action Plan). The problem is that these plans are often not receiving the attention and resources they deserve. This document therefore seeks to highlight gaps in implementation and attempts to identify where effort is most urgently needed.

Section 2: Review of Legal Frameworks and Policies

A strong framework for combating illegal wildlife trafficking through the supply, transit, and demand chain requires a robust suite of synergistic laws, policies, and enforcement strategies at domestic, regional, and international levels. For example, the Declaration delivered as the outcome from the London Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade comprehensively addresses the relationship between addressing wildlife trafficking and the role of law, calling on signatories to implement international obligations, adopt or amend domestic legislation, and cooperate fully across borders on enforcement

and prosecution of wildlife trafficking offences. It also calls on signatories to tackle the issue of wildlife trafficking through multidisciplinary enforcement and synergistic legal actions, as is often employed in cases of organized crime. Similarly, U.N resolutions and other international statements on illegal wildlife trade recognize the importance of assessing wildlife crime law through as wide a lens as possible so that all potential tools are deployed in an efficient manner to effective ends.

This report provides reviews of domestic legislation for 13 ECOWAS member States, specifically Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo, followed by an overview of trends gleaned from the domestic legal analyses completed as part of this project and priority recommendations for regional consideration. This report provides a basis for region-wide conversations regarding both international, continental, and regional wide opportunities and priorities and domestic-level legislative change that serves the region-wide objective of combating wildlife crime.

Section 3: Wildlife Crime Threat Assessment Methodology

1. Objectives of the assessment

The wildlife crime threat assessment had the following two complementary objectives:

- Objective 1: To assess the status and effectiveness of the implementation of existing legal frameworks and policies in order to identify loopholes that limit the ability to fight wildlife-related crime in West Africa.
- Objective 2: To analyze the impact, perceived or evidence-based, of wildlife-related crime on biodiversity in West Africa, and to highlight potential activities to strengthen capacity and mitigate threats.

Under Objective 1, the project team undertook a review of legal frameworks and policies around the environment, forest management, and combatting illegal trade in wildlife to understand their strengths and flaws and recommend options for enhanced effectiveness.

Under Objective 2, the project team focused on the overall understanding of wildlife trafficking (targeted species, sources, traffickers involved, possible linkage to other illegal trafficking) by conducting data collection and field assessment activities. Information gathered during the data collection and field assessment phase was used to develop recommendations for future mitigation and capacity-building programming throughout the region. These recommendations were validated by national authorities.

2. Data Collection and Field Assessments

A team of experts, including customs and enforcement experts, travelled to 13 ECOWAS member States including Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo between 2017 and 2020. The aim of these Threat Assessment missions was to gather data on the location, scale and structure of wildlife trafficking activities across West Africa.

Threat Assessment Missions were organized and led by the local CITES Focal Point/CITES Management Authority. In the majority of cases, the focal point or Management Authority also accompanied the experts throughout the mission. Local authorities were asked to schedule interviews and send relevant questionnaires in advance of the missions, with representatives of the following: Customs; Police; INTERPOL National Bureau; Fisheries authorities, Wildlife authorities, Environment authorities; Judiciary; CITES Management and Scientific Authority and relevant local NGOs.

The assessment team collected both qualitative and quantitative data during its missions. The following data collection tools were developed to provide a series of core questions:

- A questionnaire for wildlife law enforcement authorities developed using the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime Indicator Framework for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime.¹
- A questionnaire for customs authorities. This was refined and divided into two series of questions that encompassed the following types: open-ended questions of a general nature, multiple-choice questions of a more specific nature, Yes or No responses, and numbers-based questions.
- A questionnaire for non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders working on conservation issues.
- A checklist for market visits, including undercover investigations as appropriate.

Experts visited main airports and ports, at least one border crossing post, at least one major market and any other strategic entry/exit or transit points for wildlife products. In Burkina Faso for example, the team also interviewed Customs representatives at the railway station.

Responses received to questionnaires and during the interviews with stakeholders were synthesized in reports on law enforcement capacity and effectiveness including: trafficker profiles, linkages to other forms of trafficking (including humans, drugs, weapons), performance of enforcement approaches, (community-based, policy-based and/or technology-based) options for enhancing law enforcement measures within each focal country, and a database of available tools, seizure data, enforcement institutions / networks, and resource persons for the focal countries.

¹ <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/prog/iccwc/ICCWC-Ind-FW-ASSESSMENT-GUIDELINES-FINAL.pdf>

1.0 MAIN THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY IN WEST AFRICA

1.1 BIODIVERSITY OVERVIEW

West Africa's diverse ecosystems, ranging from dry savannas to mangrove swamps, coastal estuaries and moist tropical broadleaf forests, are of international conservation importance. West Africa is home to the Guinean Forest Hotspot which extends from Guinea through Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria and into Cameroon. It also includes the islands of Sao Tome and Principe and Equatorial Guinea. With an estimated 9,000 vascular plants, 917 birds, 416 mammals and 107 reptiles, the hotspot is recognized as one of the richest and most threatened areas of flora and fauna on the planet. The Guinean Forests are renowned for their diversity of mammals, particularly primates, and the high levels of species endemism.

West Africa is also important in terms of freshwater and marine biodiversity. The region has six major river systems which are a fundamental part of the region's ecosystems and the marine areas are fed by two major currents, the Guinea current and the Canary current, the latter of which sustains one of the richest marine ecosystems in the world (USAID, 2013)

These extraordinary and unique environments have been subject to catastrophic levels of biodiversity loss. Only 10% of West Africa's Upper Guinean forest cover is believed to remain, a significant proportion of which continues to be threatened by hunting, logging, mining and growing human populations. This ecosystem has been described as one of the most critically fragmented ecosystems on earth. The loss of these and other ecosystems across the West African region is having an impact not only on biodiversity but on the ecosystem services they provide to the human communities living in these regions. Furthermore, the loss of biodiversity will undermine the ability of the area to adapt to climate change, particularly when species such as African rosewood are being felled at unsustainable rates.

A major contributor to biodiversity loss, in West Africa and beyond, is wildlife crime and trafficking. This is becoming increasingly recognized by the international community and led to the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly (July 2015) of its first resolution on wildlife trafficking (A/RES/69/314, *Tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife*), followed by the United Nations General Assembly September 2017 Resolution on *Tackling Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife*. Wildlife trafficking was also incorporated into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the UN Sustainable Development Summit, in which target 15.7 of Goal 15, states: "*Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products.*"

This recognition is timely, as removal of species, particularly keystone species such as elephants and great apes, is having a severe impact on the long-term viability of ecosystems in West Africa. Transnational organized crime syndicates, targeting both fauna and flora, are operating in the region and are causing irreversible damage. These syndicates are known to link poachers in West Africa to buyers and sellers in Asia, Europe and the US (Nelleman et al., 2013). Addressing this problem is of importance to the global community and requires urgent attention from the global community if any further damage is to be prevented.

I.2 SPECIES AFFECTED BY WILDLIFE CRIME

West Africa is home to more than 900 threatened species. This section examines representative examples of threatened fauna and flora affected by wildlife crime within the West African region. These species are key components of their ecosystems and their loss is having a significant deleterious impact on biodiversity across the region.

I.2.1 TERRESTRIAL FAUNA

I African Elephant

African elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) are facing severe and ongoing threats across their range. In West Africa, which has fewer than 2% of Africa's known elephants distributed among 13 countries, there have been dramatic population declines. Since 2006, there have been 12 populations of elephants lost entirely from West Africa, including one each from Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone and Togo, two populations from Guinea and five from Nigeria (Thouless et al., 2016). The majority of West Africa's remaining populations are small, isolated, fragmented and under severe threat of localized extinctions (Breuer et al., 2016).

African elephants are a keystone species in their environment and play a substantial role in protecting the biodiversity of an area, by shaping their environment and dispersing seeds. Forest elephants in particular are one of the most effective seed dispersal agents in the tropics, dispersing large numbers of seeds from a wide diversity of plants (Campos-Arceiz & Blake, 2001). Changes in the density of forest elephants can disrupt ecological processes. Furthermore, there are several tree species which are "elephant-obligate" or "elephant-facilitated" when passed through a forest elephant's gut. Consequently, the removal of elephants due to poaching can alter the structure of plant communities and upset natural forest ecosystem functions, ultimately leading to profound and irreversible effects on whole ecosystems (Breuer et al., 2016).

The illegal international trade in elephant ivory has been widely acknowledged as an extremely serious threat to the survival of elephants across their range. The scale of this threat is increasing each year and is facilitated by organized criminal networks (Nellemann et al., 2014). The West African region's significance in this illicit trade seemingly does not correlate with its relatively small elephant populations. Togo, for example, has been identified by ETIS as a significant ivory entrepôt and exporter. DNA testing of seizures has found that Togo is a major hub, exporting ivory from Central African forests, East African savannahs and elephant populations from other countries in West Africa (Wasser, et al., 2015). This shows that ivory trade routes through Africa, though not fully understood, are extremely complex and involve multiple transit and exit points, which shift from year to year (Miliken, 2014).

Such a complex picture requires the attention and action of all elephant range states as well as transit and consumer states. A focused effort targeting West Africa could contribute significantly to reducing the illicit trade, protecting elephants (and ecosystems) both within the region and beyond.

I.1 Status and Distribution of Elephants in West Africa.

Genetic research has indicated that there are two separate species of African elephants, the savannah elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) and the forest elephant (*Loxodonta cyclotis*), which are functionally distinct (Rohland et al., 2010). Both occur in West Africa with areas of overlap and hybridization. A third species, the West African elephant, has also been postulated. However, the IUCN Red List indicates that further research is required and as such the African elephant is considered a single species by the

IUCN, *Loxodonta africana*. The status of the species was last assessed in 2008 when it was classified as Vulnerable (Blanc, 2008). The regional analysis additionally identifies the West African populations as Vulnerable.

The African Elephant Database (AED) is maintained by the IUCN SSC African Elephant Specialist Group (AfESG). It is a collaborative project, providing open source information (via www.elephantdatabase.org) on population data and vegetation types, provided by conservation agencies and researchers.

For areas surveyed within the last ten years in West Africa, the total population figure is 11,489 +/- 2,583. For areas not surveyed there may be an additional 2,886 to 3,376 elephants (Thouless et al., 2016). This reflects a significant level of uncertainty concerning numbers of elephants remaining in several West African populations, due to a lack of up to date population surveys. In this region, 28% of the estimated range for elephants have no population estimates available at all. Additionally, a number of areas in Benin, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Niger, Guinea and Togo have been re-categorized from 'known range' to 'possible' or 'doubtful' range (Thouless et al., 2016). Despite this level of uncertainty about population size, what is known for certain is that, across the region, elephant populations are small, fragmented and under pressure. Indeed, it is feared that some populations may no longer be viable and are in irreversible decline (Mallon et al., 2015). However, it is encouraging to note that some populations that were already very small 20 years ago are still surviving (Thouless et al., 2016). Population figures for West Africa, taken from the IUCN AfESG African Elephant Status Report 2016, are provided in the table, below:

TABLE 1: WEST AFRICAN ELEPHANT POPULATION FIGURES

Country	Number of Elephants		Guesses		Range (km ²)
	Estimate	±	Min	Max	
Benin	2,984	1,460	0	0	9,112
Burkina Faso	6,850	2,123	67	69	15,110
Côte d'Ivoire	189	135	647	652	14,578
Ghana	994	67	238	288	15,181
Guinea	0	0	64	138	1,557
Guinea Bissau	0	0	7	7	1,346
Liberia	124	99	1,425	1,425	28,950
Mali	253	0	51	51	25,495
Niger	0	0	17	17	2,333
Nigeria	94	0	169	463	20,088
Senegal	1	0	9	14	1,090
Sierra Leone	0	0	135	155	1,353
Togo	0	0	74	114	6,307
Totals	11,489	2,583	2,286	3,376	142,500

Source: African Elephant Status Report 2016

A more detailed analysis of elephant populations in the West African region indicates the following:

- **Benin:** Elephants are almost exclusively found in the northern part of Benin, within the transboundary WAP complex, particularly the Pendjari Biosphere Reserve. The populations within the forests of Alibori Supérieur, Goungoun and Trois Rivières as well as the Donja Hunting Zone are likely to have been extirpated and these areas have all been downgraded to Doubtful Range;

- **Burkina Faso:** The WAP complex is a transboundary ecosystem across Burkina Faso, Benin and Niger, incorporating Parc W, Arly National Park and Pendjari National Park. This population is the most viable remaining in West Africa. Burkina Faso itself has by far the largest number of elephants remaining in the region and is therefore of critical importance in terms of long-term protection of elephants in West Africa. The WAP complex formed part of the Great Elephant Census and was surveyed in 2015, with results showing 8911 elephants (Chase et al., 2016). Although this population appears to have increased, there was a high ratio of fresh carcasses recorded, giving a warning of increased poaching levels (Chase et al., 2016). During the survey, 76% of the carcasses were discovered in the Burkina Faso portion of the transboundary park (Chase et al. 2016);
- **Côte d'Ivoire:** There is only one population of elephants remaining in Côte d'Ivoire that number more than 100 individuals. The status of other populations, including within Comoé National Park, is largely unknown. The population of Marahoué National Park used to be one of the country's largest elephant populations but has now been extirpated. Surveys are urgently required across the country (Thouless et al., 2016);
- **Ghana:** Ghana lost most of its elephants from the 1970s to the 1990s due to ivory poaching and human elephant conflict (Martin, 2010). Ghana has a mix of forest and savannah populations, with a total estimate of 994 elephants (± 67), however, several of Ghana's elephant habitat-blocks have not been surveyed for many years. The population in the Red and White Volta range is believed to have been extirpated, following a 2006 survey which showed no signs of elephants. Mole National Park and Digya National Park contain the largest elephant populations, at 401 and 357 (± 54) respectively (Thouless et al., 2016);
- **Guinea:** Only one habitat-block in Guinea, the Ziama Strict Nature Reserve, still contains elephants, but there has been no verifiable survey data returned for over a decade. It is believed that these elephants may move between Liberia and Guinea. Best guess estimates suggest 64-138 elephants may remain. The Reserve is under severe pressure from expanding human populations and agricultural conversion along its borders. The Ouré Kaba population has been lost (Thouless et al., 2016);
- **Liberia:** A 2009 dung count in Liberia's Sapo National Park, gave a population estimate of 124 elephants (Boafo, 2010). This is the only population to have been surveyed recently, and although area of known elephant range has increased in Liberia, the population figures are largely based on guesses. The newly published National Elephant Action Plan for Liberia (2017), produced with support from the Elephant Protection Initiative, includes provision for a baseline survey of forest elephants across the country (Phys.org 2017);
- **Mali:** Mali's elephants are uniquely adapted to arid environments, and are the continent's most northerly population, primarily residing in the arid Sahel region of Gourma. The annual migration of the Gourma elephants covers an area of more than 32,000 square kilometers, ranging between the Niger river in the north down to the Mali border with Burkina Faso in the South. This small population has been subject to relatively high levels of poaching and elephants are highly vulnerable to drought (Thouless et al. 2016);
- **Niger:** Within Niger, elephants only exist in Park W du Niger, but during the 2015 Aerial Count (Chase et al., 2016) no elephants were recorded in the park. However, this may not indicate the loss of the population, given the transboundary nature of the park. Historically, a population also existed on the Niger-Nigeria border, but there is no recent information concerning this population, and the area has been classified as Doubtful Range (Thouless et al., 2016);
- **Nigeria:** Elephants were once widespread across northern Nigeria. However, the population is in rapid decline, with a reduction of more than 50% in the last 20 years (WCS Nigeria, 2017). The AfESG African Elephant Status Report 2016 records the loss of 5 elephant populations in Nigeria since 2006. Overall, Nigeria has a definite population of just 94 elephants. Guesses have been made indicating that there may be an additional 169-463 but further surveys are required. Yankari National Park is reported to have the best protected elephant population in Nigeria but,

nevertheless, it is under threat from poaching. The population estimates and guesses cover just 56% of the known and possible range of elephants, leaving an unknown situation for 44% of the range (Thouless et al., 2016);

- **Senegal:** the only remaining habitat for elephants in Senegal is Nikolo Koba National Park. In 2013, one elephant was sighted in the park, and there may be an estimated 9-14 elephants remaining in total. However, levels of disturbance in the Park are high, including poaching and illegal logging (Thouless et al., 2016);
- **Sierra Leone:** The size and number of Sierra Leone's elephant populations are unknown as, for more than ten years, survey effort and/or survey data have been inadequate. It is believed that the civil war (1991 – 2001) had a serious detrimental impact on elephant populations in the country, with a collapse of forest elephant numbers recorded in Gola Forest Reserves (Lindsell et al.; 2011). Guesses have been made indicating there are three populations remaining in the country, with a total of 135-155 elephants (Thouless et al., 2016);
- **Togo:** Many elephants were lost during civil disturbances in Togo (1990 – 1992) (Okoumassou et al., 1998). Several former areas of elephant range have now been taken over by human populations. There have been no robust surveys of Togo's few remaining elephants in more than ten years. Some have postulated that perhaps 74-114 elephants remaining spread over three populations, but these figures can only be considered guesses (Thouless et al., 2016).

1.2 National Elephant Action Plans

Although all West African elephant range States have produced Elephant Strategies/Action Plans, several are very out of date:

1. **Benin:** A Strategy for the Conservation of Elephants in Benin was developed in 2005 (Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Élevage et de la Pêche, 2005);
2. **Burkina Faso:** An Elephant Management Strategy was prepared in 2003 (Belemsobgo et al., 2003);
3. **Côte d'Ivoire:** A Management Strategy for Elephants in Côte d'Ivoire (2005 – 2014) was prepared in 2004 (Ministère des Eaux et Forêts, 2004);
4. **Ghana:** A National Elephant Conservation Strategy for Ghana was developed in 2000 (Wildlife Division, 2000);
5. **Guinea:** Guinea produced a National Elephant Management Strategy in 2007 (Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Élevage, de l'Environnement, des Eaux et Forêts (2007);
6. **Guinea Bissau:** A National Elephant Action Plan was produced in 2000 (Ministère de l'Agriculture et Développement Rural, 2000);
7. **Liberia:** A National Elephant Action Plan was adopted by Liberia in 2017, with support from Fauna and Flora International, Stop Ivory and the Elephant Protection Initiative (Fauna and Flora International, 2017);
8. **Mali:** No formal elephant conservation strategy has been adopted since 1991 (Direction Nationale des Eaux et Forêts, 1991);
9. **Niger:** A National Strategy and Action Plan for the Conservation of Elephants in Niger was published in 2010 (Direction de la Faune, de la chasse et des Aires Protégées, 2010);
10. **Nigeria:** The Elephant Conservation Plan for Nigeria was developed in 1991 (Natural Resources Conservation Council, 1991);
11. **Senegal:** Senegal's Elephant Management Strategy was published in 1991 (Direction des Parcs Nationaux du Senegal, 1991);
12. **Sierra Leone:** An Elephant Conservation Plan for Sierra Leone was published in 1991 (Ministry of Agriculture, 1991);

13. **Togo:** Togo produced a National Strategy for Elephant Management in 2003 (Ministère de l'Environnement et des Ressources Forestières, 2003).

1.3 Regional Elephant Action Plans

The Strategy for the Conservation of West African Elephants (2005) requires updating. According to Thouless et al. (2016), the IUCN is currently planning a revised version using the framework contained within the African Elephant Action Plan.

1.4 CITES Elephant Regulations and Structures

The African elephant was uplisted from CITES Appendix II to Appendix I in 1989, at the 7th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES. Subsequently, four southern African elephant populations (Zimbabwe, Botswana, South Africa and Namibia) were transferred to Appendix II. All West African elephant populations remain in Appendix I.

There are a complex set of regulations governing African elephants within CITES. These regulations seek to address issues such as: management of ivory stockpiles, the reporting of ivory seizures and the reporting of illegal killing of elephants. These regulations are reviewed below.

a) Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) and the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS)

CITES Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17) on *Trade in Elephant Specimens*, establishes the following objectives for MIKE and ETIS:

- i) measuring and recording levels and trends, and changes in levels and trends, of illegal elephant killing and trade in ivory and other elephant specimens in elephant range States, ivory consumer States and ivory transit States;*
- ii) assessing whether and to what extent observed trends are related to measures concerning elephants and trade in elephant specimens taken under the auspices of CITES; changes in the listing of elephant populations in the CITES Appendices; or the conduct of legal international trade in ivory;*
- iii) establishing an information base to support the making of decisions on appropriate management, protection and enforcement needs; and*
- iv) building capacity in elephant range States and, as applicable, countries involved in trade in elephant specimens, to implement and make use of MIKE and ETIS in managing elephants and enhancing enforcement;*

MIKE

Although MIKE was first conceived by the Parties to act as an 'early warning mechanism', alerting Parties to rises in elephant poaching, it has since been recognized that the data collection and processing time lags make it difficult for MIKE to act in this capacity, as evidenced by the lack of data from 2016 in the CoP17 MIKE Report (CoP17 Doc 57.5).

MIKE monitors poaching levels relative to natural mortality by using the Proportion of Illegally Killed Elephants (PIKE), which is calculated as the number of illegally killed elephants found divided by the total number of elephant carcasses encountered by patrols or other means. PIKE is used to estimate numbers of elephants illegally killed, as well as poaching rates. CoP18 Doc 69.2 notes that the Secretariat, in collaboration with the MIKE-ETIS TAG, is undertaking an investigation on the levels of PIKE on elephant populations at MIKE sites, taking into account

that elephant population growth rate differs between populations. Therefore, the previous assertions of PIKE levels above 0.5 being of concern should currently be treated with ‘some caution’ until this investigation is complete (CoP18 Doc 69.2).

There are 16 MIKE sites distributed across 10 countries in West Africa. It is an expensive program. Funding requirements for MIKE Africa for the 2015 – 2018 period were projected as €11,553,500. This funding was secured from the European Union (CoP17 Doc 57.5). Unfortunately, there has been a chronic problem concerning a lack of regular reporting and data quality from the MIKE sites in the West African region. In 2015, for example, only eight sites reported data (CITES CoP17 Doc 57.5). This makes “reliable inference on trends impossible for the subregion” (CoP17 Doc 57.5). Indeed, the region has the lowest number of carcasses reported to MIKE, there are gaps in reporting years and overall a low number of sites reporting. According to CoP18 Doc 69.2: “West Africa continues to be a cause for concern in terms of data quantity and quality”. The problem is compounded by carcass numbers being either inaccurate, due to the difficulty of carrying out field surveys, or because of under-reporting. For example, for the Gourma elephants in Mali, 18 carcasses were reported to MIKE in 2015. However, another source (MINUSMA) reported 57 dead elephants between January and June 2015 (Farge, 2015).

In addition, some of the MIKE sites in West Africa may no longer have any elephants with which to report on. For example, although Marahoué National Park in Côte d’Ivoire is a MIKE site, Thouless et al. (2016) reported that this population was lost in 2010. It is unclear from the MIKE reports what efforts MIKE has made to recognize this situation within its data. A similar problem exists for Niokolo-Koba National Park in Senegal, which is a MIKE site, but which only has one known elephant. CoP18 Doc 69.2 Addendum notes that: “The MIKE programme will undertake targeted actions to improve the understanding of the situation relating to MIKE implementation in West Africa.”

The PIKE levels for 2015 and 2016 show a value above 0.5 for West Africa – indicating that there are a greater number of elephants dying from poaching than from natural causes. In 2018, the subregional PIKE estimate decreased from 0.75 in 2017 to 0.46. However, of all carcasses reported around 70% were from a single site (Pendjari National Park and Biosphere Reserve, Benin) (CoP18 Doc 69.2). It is difficult to know how accurate the PIKE levels are given the above-mentioned lack of data for the region. CoP18 Doc 69.2 further states that “...it is particularly hard to make reliable inferences based on the year-to-year trend in this subregion due to the low level of reporting from several sites”. However, what can be inferred is that elephant populations at MIKE sites in the region are in decline (MIKE, 2017). One particular site in West Africa, Gourma in Mali, had an alarming PIKE value of 1 in 2015 (although noting the inconsistency of data makes the accuracy of this unclear) – which would mean that every dead elephant found had been killed by poachers; there was no natural mortality.

TABLE 2: WEST AFRICAN MIKE SITES

Country	MIKE site
Togo	Fazao Malfakassa National Park
Senegal	Niokolo-Koba National Park
Nigeria	Yankari National Park
Niger	Parc W du Niger

Country	MIKE site
Mali	Gourma MIKE site
Liberia	Sapo National Park
Guinea	Ziama Classified Forest
Ghana	Mole National Park
Ghana	Kakum National Park
Côte d'Ivoire	Comoé National Park
Côte d'Ivoire	Marahoué National Park
Côte d'Ivoire	Taï National Park
Burkina Faso	Nazinga Game Ranch
Burkina Faso	Parc National W du Burkina
Benin	Park W du Bénin
Benin	Pendjari Biosphere Reserve

Source: CITES website www.cites.org

At the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Parties adopted the following Decisions concerning MIKE and ETIS:

CITES Decision 18.21: Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat shall develop a proposal for consideration by the Standing Committee at its 73rd meeting on possible approaches to address the financial and operational sustainability of the MIKE and ETIS programmes.

CITES Decision 18.22: Directed to the Standing Committee: The Standing Committee shall review the proposal developed by the Secretariat in terms of Decision 18.21 and make recommendations for consideration at the 19th meeting of the Conference of Parties.

The Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS)

ETIS records levels and trends of trade in ivory and other elephant specimens in elephant range States, ivory consumer States and ivory transit States. ETIS reported at CoP17 that the illegal trade in ivory has continued to escalate, as it has done since CoP14 in 2007. ETIS, similarly to MIKE, has a time lag for reporting data. Its report to CITES CoP18 (CoP18 Doc 69.3 Rev 1) only contained seizure data up to 2017.

ETIS reported a total of 28,490 records as of 21st June 2018 (CoP18 Doc 69.3 Rev 1). Representing 25,822 ivory seizures, with the remainder comprising non-ivory elephant products. The data indicates that ivory processing within Africa has increased, with more worked products being exported to Asian markets.

ETIS (CoP17 Doc 57.6) notes that Asian criminal networks 'completely dominate' the export of raw ivory from Africa, and that there is increasing evidence of Chinese involvement in ivory processing operations within Africa, including in Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire.

ETIS Program Review

At the 69th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee (SC69, Geneva, November 2017) the Standing Committee requested that the Secretariat prepare Terms of Reference for a review of the ETIS Program and to assess the options for carrying out this review. At the 70th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee (SC70, Sochi, October 2018), the Standing Committee adopted the Terms of Reference for the review (included in SC70 Comm 15), and requested the Secretariat:

- i) subject to external funding, appoint a group of independent experts to carry out the review of the ETIS programme under the oversight of the MIKE and ETIS Subgroup and a nominated member of the MIKE and ETIS Technical Advisory Group; and
- ii) issue a Notification to Parties requesting Parties to submit written observations on the ETIS methodology to be considered in the review process to the Secretariat by 28 February 2019; and to provide financial support for the review of the ETIS programme. The Standing Committee further requested the Secretariat to prepare a document on this matter for consideration at CoP18, which could include draft decisions on the conduct and delivery of the review, depending on advancements made.

The Standing Committee also directed Secretariat to prepare a document regarding the ETIS Program Review for consideration at CoP18, which could 'include draft decisions on the conduct and delivery of the review, depending on advancements made.'

At CoP18, the Parties adopted the following Decisions concerning the Review of the ETIS Programme:

CITES Decision 18.18: Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat shall include in the terms of reference for the review of the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) programme the issue of overlapping reporting requirements created under Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) on Trade in elephant specimens and Resolution Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP18) on National reports and the challenges posed by the different data-sharing policies, and work closely with the consultants carrying out the review to identify possible solutions.

CITES Decision 18.19: Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat shall report the findings of the review of the ETIS programme requested by the Standing Committee, and any recommendations emanating from the review, at the 73rd meeting of the Standing Committee.

CITES Decision 18.20: The Standing Committee shall review the findings and recommendations reported by the Secretariat in accordance with Decision 18.19 and make recommendations for consideration at the 19th meeting of the Conference the Parties.

b) African Elephant Action Plan and African Elephant Fund

At the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, the African elephant range States were directed to develop an African Elephant Action Plan, which was to be funded through an African Elephant Fund. The finalized African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP) was adopted by all 38 African elephant range States in 2010 at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES. It identifies a series of prioritized objectives designed to reduce the threats affecting African elephants in order to ensure their survival across their range. The prioritized objectives are as follows:

- Objective 1: Reduced Illegal Killing of Elephants and Illegal Trade in Elephant Products;*
- Objective 2: Maintained Elephant Habitats and Restored Connectivity;*
- Objective 3: Reduced Human-Elephant Conflict;*
- Objective 4: Increased Awareness on Elephant Conservation and Management of Key Stakeholders that include Policy Makers, Local Communities among other Interest Groups;*
- Objective 5: Strengthened Range States Knowledge on African Elephant Management;*
- Objective 6: Strengthened Cooperation and Understanding among Range States;*

Objective 7: Improved Local Communities' Cooperation and Collaboration on African Elephant Conservation;

Objective 8: African Elephant Action Plan is Effectively Implemented.

The African Elephant Fund was established as a multi-donor technical trust fund under the auspices of UNEP, which also acts as Secretariat to the AEF. Proposals are submitted to the African Elephant Fund Steering Committee, comprising representatives from range States in West, East, Central and Southern Africa, donor representatives and ex officio members from the CITES Secretariat and UNEP. This Steering Committee reviews proposals submitted and agrees on distribution of available funds across the four sub-regions.

CITES adopted Resolution Conf 16.9 concerning the African Elephant Action Plan and African Elephant Fund, as follows:

1. *ENCOURAGES* the African elephant range States to *prioritize support to the African Elephant Fund within their national or regional funding strategies, for example through their NBSAPs;*
2. *INVITES* biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements, in particular the *Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals*, to support the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan through effective partnerships with African elephant range States;
3. *INVITES* all Parties, donors, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders, as a matter of urgency, to support the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan and to provide financial contributions to the African Elephant Fund;
4. *URGES* all Parties, donors, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, as a matter of urgency, to provide in-kind support, including translation, to the African Elephant Fund Steering Committee and the African elephant range States;
5. *REQUESTS* the CITES Secretariat and UNEP to promote fundraising for the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan as part of their overall fundraising initiatives;
6. *FURTHER REQUESTS* the Executive Director of UNEP to explore opportunities for partnerships with ongoing UNEP projects and programmes to support the African elephant range States in the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan; and
7. *URGES* UNEP to ensure that it provides the necessary support to the African Elephant Fund Steering Committee, including serving as Secretariat to the fund through appropriate modalities to be agreed by UNEP and the Steering Committee.

To date, the African Elephant Fund Steering Committee has allocated USD 3,249,458 to 39 projects in African elephant range States, to support African Elephant Action Plan implementation. These funds were committed by Belgium, China, The European Commission, France, Germany, the Netherlands, South Africa and the United Kingdom. The 10th meeting of the African Elephant Fund Steering Committee saw new funding commitments from Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands (SC70 Doc 49.1).

c) National Ivory Action Plans

The development of National Ivory Action Plans (NIAPs) are requested of Parties that need to strengthen their ivory controls in order to combat the illicit trade in ivory. CITES NIAPs were conceived as a mechanism to support Parties in their implementation of CITES Resolution Conf 10.10 (Rev CoP18). Under the CITES NIAPs process, Parties of concern are identified based on ETIS reports.

At the 69th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee (SC69, Geneva, November 2017), the Standing Committee endorsed the following descriptions for the NIAP Party categories. These are as follows:

- a) Category A Parties: Parties most affected by illegal trade in ivory.
- b) Category B Parties: Parties markedly affected by illegal trade in ivory.
- c) Category C Parties: Parties affected by illegal trade in ivory.

Currently there are 24 Parties identified under the 3 categories as follows:

TABLE 3: NIAP PARTIES

Category A Parties	Category B Parties	Category C Parties
Malaysia	China and Hong Kong SAR*	Angola
Mozambique	Kenya*	Burundi
Nigeria	Uganda*	Cambodia
Togo	United Republic of Tanzania*	Cameroon
Viet Nam		Congo
		Democratic Republic of the Congo
		Ethiopia
		Gabon
		Lao People's Democratic Republic
		Qatar
		Singapore
		South Africa
		Turkey
		United Arab Emirates
		Zimbabwe

*At SC70, the Standing Committee noted that certain Parties had 'substantially achieved' their NIAPs and agreed that these Parties exit the NIAP process. These Parties are China (excluding Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China), Kenya, Philippines, Thailand, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. In addition, the Standing Committee has determined that Japan, South Africa, United Arab Emirates and Sri Lanka should not participate in the NIAP process currently.

For West Africa, Togo and Nigeria have been incorporated into the NIAP process:

- I. **Nigeria:** Originally identified as a Category B Party, has since been identified as a Category A Party. Nigeria was requested to produce a National Ivory Action Plan by the CITES Standing Committee at its 65th meeting (SC65 Doc 42.1). Nigeria has subsequently completed its NIAP and implementation of this plan has started. The Nigerian NIAP contains a number of important actions, including:

- i) Enhancing National legislation in order to increase penalties;
- ii) Strengthening wildlife legislation in the Federal States;
- iii) Preparing a compendium of the relevant legislation for distribution to judiciary;
- iv) Training of judiciary concerning wildlife legislation;
- v) Establishing a database for wildlife crime incidents;
- vi) Enhance use of intelligence and wildlife crime investigation procedures;

- vii) Conduct an audit of ivory stockpiles in Nigeria;
- viii) Gather intelligence on the domestic ivory markets;
- ix) Enhancing forensic capacity;
- x) Strengthening the capacity of the different enforcement agencies to collaboratively work together to detect wildlife crime;
- xi) Developing and implementing an anti-poaching strategy for several areas;

At the 71st meeting of the CITES Standing Committee, the following recommendations were agreed for Nigeria:

Nigeria:

f) The Secretariat recommends that the Standing Committee:

i) request Nigeria to revise and update its NIAP in accordance with Step 2 of the Guidelines, to facilitate a more effective response to current ivory trafficking trends, taking into consideration the information contained in the ETIS report prepared for CoP18, and other matters related to Nigeria as highlighted in Annex 2 to document SC71 Doc. 11;

ii) encourage Nigeria to seek support from the Secretariat in the revision and updating of its NIAP, to ensure that any revised and updated NIAP responds effectively to current wildlife crime trends affecting the Party, and that it aligns with and complements the ongoing Article XIII process concerning Nigeria; and

iii) submit the revised and updated NIAP to the Secretariat for assessment in accordance with Step 3 of the Guidelines, commence implementation as soon as the revised and updated NIAP is accepted as 'adequate' by the Secretariat, and provide associated reporting in accordance with the Guidelines.

The Nigerian NIAP and Progress Report can be found on the CITES website.

- 2. Togo:** identified at CoP17 as a Category A Party, ETIS reported that Togo serves as an ivory entrepôt / exit point within West Africa, with large seizures indicative of 'higher-level organized criminal involvement' (CoP17 Doc 57.6).

At the 71st meeting of the CITES Standing Committee, the following recommendations were agreed for Togo:

Togo:

g) The Secretariat recommends that the Standing Committee:

i) note the progress made by Togo in the implementation of its NIAP, and agree an overall rating of 'limited progress' in line with Step 4, paragraph e), of the Guidelines;

ii) request Togo to enhance efforts to progress the implementation of its NIAP actions between SC71 and SC73; and

iii) encourage Parties, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and others to, where possible, provide financial and technical assistance to Togo.

Togo's NIAP and Progress Report can be found on the CITES website.

d) Ivory Identification and Forensic Analysis

Identifying the source of illegal ivory is an essential tool in unravelling the complex trade networks being used by criminal syndicates that smuggle illegal shipments of ivory around the world, and furthermore to identify elephant populations being targeted by those criminals, thereby revealing poaching hotspots.

CITES Resolution Conf 10.10 (Rev CoP18) recommends that Parties that seize ivory shipments weighing 500kg or greater, submit samples of this ivory for forensic analysis, the text of RC10.10 in this regard is as follows:

21. RECOMMENDS that Parties cooperate in the development of techniques to enhance the traceability of elephant specimens in trade, for instance by supporting research to determine the age and origin of ivory and other elephant specimens, by supplying samples for forensic research, and collaborating with relevant forensic research institutions;

22. URGES Parties to collect samples from large-scale ivory seizures (i.e. a seizure of 500 kg or more) that take place in their territories, preferably within 90 days of the seizure or as soon as allowed under judicial processes, and provide these to forensic and other research institutions capable of reliably determining the origin or age of the ivory samples in support of investigations and prosecutions;

23. RECOMMENDS that Parties share with the Secretariat and source countries information on the origin or age of seized ivory specimens arising from forensic analysis of samples to facilitate investigations and prosecutions, and for analysis by MIKE and ETIS in their reporting to the Standing Committee and the Conference of the Parties

Professor Sam Wasser of the Centre for Conservation Biology at the University of Washington has been pioneering the field of forensic identification of ivory since 2004. Professor Wasser and his team isolate DNA from a sample of ivory in order to create a unique genetic fingerprint. Professor Wasser has also used fecal analysis to extract the same DNA from elephant dung – thereby creating a geographic elephant DNA map. This has enabled him to compare seized ivory with the geographic map, thereby revealing the original source of the seized ivory (Centre for Conservation Biology, 2017).

According to ETIS, the recommendation for Parties to have seizures larger than 500kg forensically analyzed has been poorly implemented. Only 21 of the 107 seizures weighing more than 500kg, reported to ETIS between 2003 and 2018, have been forensically tested (CoP18 Doc. 69.3 (Rev. 1)). The scope for improvement is obvious and, it is recommended that forensic analysis be prioritized.

A further complication has emerged recently – that of trade in Mammoth Ivory. Israel submitted a document to CITES CoP17 (CoP17 Doc 38) expressing concerns about increasing amounts of mammoth ivory being reported in trade (which is not considered illicit trade by CITES) and the ability of criminals to launder illegal elephant ivory into an apparently legal market for mammoth ivory. CITES agreed to amend Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17) to incorporate the following language (highlighted):

10. DIRECTS the Secretariat, subject to available resources, to provide technical assistance to Parties to:

- a) improve legislative, regulatory and enforcement measures concerning trade in ivory and in developing practical measures to implement this Resolution;
- b) support, where requested, the security and registration of government-held ivory stockpiles, and provide practical guidance for the management of these stockpiles; and
- c) identify specimens of elephant ivory, other types of ivory and ivory look-alike materials;

Martin & Vigne (2018) undertook a review of domestic mammoth ivory markets in Macau, China. They discovered a fourfold increase in mammoth ivory sales from 2004 to 2015. Although China has imposed a ban on domestic ivory sales, this does not extend to mammoth ivory.

In CoP18 Prop 13, Israel proposed the inclusion of Woolly Mammoth in Appendix II, stating that the Convention does not provide any legal barriers to inclusion of the species, and that it meets the criterion for listing as a “look alike” species, as its ivory cannot easily be distinguished from that of extant elephant species. Israel withdrew the Proposal following objections from Parties that listing an extinct species was beyond the mandate of CITES. However, CoP18 did adopt the following Decisions:

CITES Decision 18.120: *Directed to the Secretariat: Subject to external funding, the Secretariat shall commission a study on the trade in mammoth ivory, and its impact and contribution to the illegal trade in elephant ivory and the poaching of elephants and report its findings to the Standing Committee at its 74th meeting.*

CITES Decision 18.121: *Directed to the Standing Committee: At its 74th meeting, the Standing Committee shall consider the report and findings provided by the Secretariat in accordance with Decision 18.120 and make recommendations to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

e) **Ivory Stockpiles**

The security of ivory stockpiles is identified as being of significant concern, with confiscated tusks, on occasion, being stolen and returning into illegal trade. Given the black-market value of ivory, large stocks can be attractive to criminals and can lead to corruption and theft. Theft of ivory can be a real disincentive to enforcement agencies that have worked hard to seize the ivory and can disrupt legal proceedings where the ivory is needed as evidence. Furthermore, stockpiles can be costly to secure and protect. Ivory has indeed gone missing from government-held stockpiles in the past, such as reportedly occurred in Uganda (Reuters, 2014). Many, such as the Elephant Protection Initiative, have called upon States with ivory stockpiles to destroy them.

Recognizing these challenges, in 2013 CITES included a provision in Resolution Conf 10.10 (Rev. CoP17) on *Trade in elephant specimens*, as follows:

‘maintain an inventory of government-held stockpiles of ivory and, where possible, of significant privately held stockpiles of ivory within their territory, and inform the Secretariat of the level of this stock each year before 28 February, inter alia to be made available to the program Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) and the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) for their analyses, indicating the number of pieces and their weight per type of ivory (raw or worked); for relevant pieces, and if marked, their markings in

accordance with the provisions of this Resolution; the source of the ivory; and the reasons for any significant changes in the stockpile compared to the preceding year;'

Implementation of this provision has been extremely poor. In 2014, only 12 Parties provided the Secretariat with information, including inventory figures, concerning their stockpiles. A further two Parties reported no stockpiles, and a further five Parties reported the presence of stockpiles but no inventory figures. In 2015 only five Parties reported on their ivory stockpiles, including inventory figures. Together, the stockpiles reported amounted to 463.5 tonnes. None of the Parties mentioned above were West African States, and thus no West African State has thus far complied with this section of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17). It is unclear whether this reflects a lack of stockpiles or an inability to provide the necessary inventory and reports.

At the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, the Parties adopted Decisions 17.171 and 17.172 concerning stocks and stockpiles of elephant ivory, as follows:

Decision 17.171: *Directed to the Secretariat: Where appropriate, the Secretariat shall, in collaboration with Parties and subject to external funding:*

- a) develop practical guidance for the management of ivory stockpiles, including their disposal, based on an analysis of best practices and in accordance with provisions in Resolutions Conf. 17.8 on Disposal of illegally traded and confiscated specimens of CITES-listed species and Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17) on Trade in elephant specimens;*
- b) disseminate the guidance to the Parties and make it available on the CITES website; and*
- c) report on the implementation of this Decision as part of its regular reporting to the Standing Committee on the implementation of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17), prior to the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

Decision 17.172: *Directed to the Standing Committee: The Standing Committee shall make recommendations for consideration at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties as appropriate.*

At the 69th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee (SC69, Geneva, November 2017), Burkina Faso, Republic of Congo, Kenya and Niger submitted SC69 Doc 51.3 entitled 'Implementing the CoP17 Decisions on Ivory Stocks and Stockpiles', which requested that the Standing Committee seek a timeframe and budget from the Secretariat for the implementation of Decision 17.171, concerning the development of practical guidance for the management of ivory stockpiles. The Standing Committee agreed to these requests.

At the 70th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee (SC70), Ethiopia and Mali submitted Document 49.2 entitled 'Implementing Aspects of Decisions 17.171 to 17.172 on Stocks and Stockpiles (Elephant Ivory)'. This document included information concerning various initiatives, including the development of a gold-standard stockpile management system. The Standing Committee noted that the Secretariat '*...intends to finalise the development and dissemination of practical guidance for the management of ivory stockpiles in time to report to SC71, prior to CoP18, in line with the instruction from the Conference of the Parties in paragraphs a) and b) of Decision 17.171.*'

At CoP18, the following Decisions were adopted by the Parties:

CITES Decision 18.182: Directed to the Standing Committee: The Standing Committee at its 73rd meeting (SC73) shall review and consider for approval the practical guidance prepared by the Secretariat for the management of ivory stockpiles, including their disposal.

CITES Decision 18.183: Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat shall disseminate the practical guidance for the management of ivory stockpiles, including their disposal, once approved by the Standing Committee.

CITES Decision 18.184: Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat shall:

a) identify those Parties that have not provided information on the level of government-held stockpiles of ivory and significant privately held stockpiles of ivory within their territory or where stockpiles are not well secured and report to the 72nd and 73rd meetings* of the Standing Committee with recommendations as necessary; and

b) annually publish updated summary data based on the inventories submitted by Parties, disaggregated to regional but not country level, including the total ivory stockpiles by weight. * The Secretariat believes that the intention was to refer to the 73rd and 74th meetings of the Standing Committee

CITES Decision 18.185: Directed to the Standing Committee: At its 72nd and 73rd meetings*, the Standing Committee shall consider the report and recommendations of the Secretariat in Decision 18.184 and determine whether any further actions are necessary in the case of Parties who fail to provide annual inventories of government-held stockpiles of ivory and significant privately held stockpiles of ivory within their territory or where stockpiles are not well secured. * The Secretariat believes that the intention was to refer to the 73rd and 74th meetings of the Standing Committee.

f) Elephant Protection Initiative

The Elephant Protection Initiative launched on 14 February 2014, currently has Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Botswana, Tanzania, Chad, Gabon, Ethiopia, Malawi, Uganda, Kenya, The Gambia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Angola, Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Somalia as members. The EPI is focused, among other things, on conducting inventories and putting stockpiles beyond economic use. It is also supporting Parties with the development of National Elephant Action Plans (including Liberia, which launched its NEAP in 2017).

The overall objectives of the EPI are as follows:

- a) Provide both immediate and longer-term funding to address the Elephant Crisis through full and timely implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan (endorsed by the African elephant range states and the CITES Conference of the Parties at CoP16) by accessing public and private sector support through the creation of a long-term fund;
- b) Close domestic ivory markets in those participating states still operating a domestic market; and
- c) Observe a moratorium on any consideration of future international trade for a minimum of 10 years and thereafter until African elephant populations are no longer threatened; and
- d) Agree to put all stockpiles beyond economic use.

Source SC66 Doc 47.6

g) Domestic Markets

Unregulated domestic ivory markets are undermining efforts to protect elephants, providing criminals with opportunities to launder illegal ivory into the marketplace. Regular calls have been made to close these domestic markets, such as the motion adopted by the IUCN World

Conservation Congress in 2016, which called upon States to close their domestic markets. The African Elephant Coalition (a consortium of 29 countries which includes all ECOWAS member States except for The Gambia and Cabo Verde and lobbies for the adoption of full prohibition of international ivory trade) made a similar plea in its Cotonou Declaration of 2015.

In Resolution Conf 10.10 (Rev CoP18) on *Trade in elephant specimens*, CITES recommends the following with regard to domestic markets:

RECOMMENDS that all Parties and non-Parties in whose jurisdiction there is a legal domestic market for ivory that is contributing to poaching or illegal trade, take all necessary legislative, regulatory and enforcement measures to close their domestic markets for commercial trade in raw and worked ivory as a matter of urgency;

Parties have made efforts to implement this Resolution, including in West Africa. In Ghana, for example, a November 2008 raid on ivory markets, carried out by the Ghana Police Service and the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission, resulted in the seizure of several hundred kilos of ivory and the arrest and prosecution of a number of dealers. This action seems to have substantially reduced the quantity of ivory in Ghana's domestic markets. A 2010 survey found very little ivory on sale, with market traders seemingly fearful of being caught with ivory (Martin, 2010).

Much work is still to be done to regulate domestic ivory markets in the region. Nigeria in particular, is reported by ETIS to have made little apparent progress in regulating its large domestic ivory market. ETIS has noted that the size of the market appears to be increasing, and the country continues to be an important hub in the international trade. The Nigerian NIAP records that a survey of Lekki market found that the majority of ivory buyers are Chinese, and that most ivory was sold under the counter in order to avoid arrest. The NIAP progress report (SC67 Doc 13 Annex 17) further notes that efforts are being undertaken to train enforcement staff to undertake intelligence gathering and determine the supply chain of ivory in the domestic markets.

In response to a direction from the Standing Committee, the Secretariat issued Notification No. 2017/077 to the Parties, asking relevant Parties to submit information concerning the legality of domestic ivory markets. The only country from West Africa to respond to this request was Côte d'Ivoire, which provided the following information:

'There is no legal domestic ivory market in Côte d'Ivoire. The country has banned national ivory trade and has closed all its domestic ivory markets following the adoption of Decree No. 97-130 of 7 March 1997 regulating the possession of ivory on the national territory.'

At the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, the Parties adopted the following Decisions concerning domestic markets:

CITES Decision 18.117: *Directed to Parties: Parties that have not closed their domestic markets for commercial trade in raw and worked ivory are requested to report to the Secretariat for consideration by the Standing Committee at its 73rd and 74th meetings on what measures they are taking to ensure that their domestic ivory markets are not contributing to poaching or illegal trade.*

CITES Decision 18.118: *Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat shall compile the reports and make them available to Parties in advance of the Standing Committee meetings.*

CITES Decision 18.119: Directed to the Standing Committee: The Standing Committee shall: a) consider the reports under Decision 18.118; and b) report on this matter and make recommendations, as appropriate and consistent with the scope and mandate of the Convention, to the 19th meeting of Conference of the Parties.

The Secretariat focused on domestic markets for elephant ivory and reported its findings in CoP18 Doc 31. None of the surveyed countries were located in West Africa. The findings included the potential displacement of illegal activities to neighboring countries upon the enforcement of a ban on domestic ivory markets in one country. The Secretariat suggested that those countries enforcing a ban should therefore also increase efforts to protect their borders from illegal trade in ivory. The Conference of the Parties subsequently adopted the following amendment to Resolution Conf 10.10 (Rev CoP17) as follows:

5 bis. URGES Parties that close their domestic markets to enhance their border controls and collaboration with neighbouring countries that have not taken similar measures; and such neighbouring countries to closely review trends to ensure that measures are taken to immediately and effectively address illegal trade in ivory.

h) Poaching and Illicit Trade

Estimates concerning the total number of elephants killed across Africa annually vary from 50,000 (Centre for Conservation Biology 2017) to 20,000 – 25,000 (Nellemann et al. 2014). In truth, it is impossible to know exact figures, given the very extensive range of the species. Although MIKE is considered an important tool in the conservation of elephants, it can't always provide the whole picture, and seems particularly inadequate for the West African region, given the paucity of data it provides. Nevertheless, what is apparent, is that African elephants are being poached across their range at disturbingly high levels.

Poaching generally targets older animals with larger tusks, meaning it is the large males and matriarchs that are most often killed (Cob & Western 1989). Losing matriarchs can have serious negative impacts on the wider community and can affect the long-term survival of whole families (McComb et al. 2001). Therefore, the impact of poaching can be far greater than the loss of the individual animals.

Hundreds of tonnes of ivory are being trafficked each year and it is widely accepted that Asian criminal networks dominate the exportation of illegal raw ivory from Africa, which is shipped to Asia by sea and by air, although the vast majority of seizures are of sea freight rather than air freight (UNODC, 2016). Major transit points for containerized trafficking in the West African region include Togo and Nigeria.

It is commonly acknowledged that only a fraction of illicit goods in trade are ever detected, given the huge volumes of products in trade at any one time. Therefore, the illicit trade in ivory is likely to be far higher than what is being seized (UNODC, 2016). Furthermore, given the considerable number of large-scale seizures (CoP17 Doc 57.6 Rev. 1) combined with a few concentrated areas of poaching (Wasser et al., 2015) indicates that the illicit market may be coordinated by a small number of criminal “king pins” (UNODC, 2016).

Given the huge scale of ivory trafficking, and apparent lack of a market big enough to utilize volumes of ivory of this magnitude, UNODC have speculated that ivory may have become an

object of speculation (UNODC, 2016). If this is accurate, then it gives an incentive to criminals to stockpile.

Illicit trade in ivory is known to have provided militia groups, such as those in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic, with funds. It has been estimated that the likely annual income, sourced from ivory, for militias across the Sub-Saharan is between US\$4 million and US\$12.2 million (Nellemann et al., 2014).

It is important to note that for some countries a lack of prominence in the ivory seizure tables below does not necessarily reflect a lack of ivory being trafficked across their borders but may in fact reflect a lack of capacity to undertake seizures.

TABLE 4: ELEPHANT IVORY SEIZURES IN ECOWAS MEMBER STATES (2016-2017)

Date of Seizure	Seizing Country	Quantity of Ivory	Ivory Origin/ Ivory Sent From	Trafficker's Nationality	Reference
December 2019	Vietnam	330kg	Nigeria		https://phys.org/news/2019-12-vietnam-seizes-tonnes-ivory-pangolin.html
January 2019	Hong Kong	2,000kg	Nigeria		https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/law-and-crime/article/2184462/customs-officers-deliver-hk62-million-blow-smugglers
August 2017	Benin	14 tusks			http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/2-ivory-traffickers-arrested-with-14-tusks-A354/
July 2017	Malaysia ¹	75.74 kg (23 pieces)	Nigeria		http://www.traffic.org/home/2017/8/2/malaysia-makes-its-eighth-african-pangolin-scale-and-ivory-s.html
July 2017	Benin	20.09 kg (4 tusks)			https://aalfbenforcement.files.wordpress.com/2017/08/beninen-aalf-b-17-rap-juillet1.pdf
June 2017	Togo	4 tusks	Burkina Faso	Togo	http://eagle-togo.org/2017/07/
May 2017	Côte d'Ivoire	40 kg (165 objects)			http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/the-first-operation-launching-eagle-ivory-coast-A320/
April 2017	Gabon	2 tusks		Mali	http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/a-malian-trafficker-arrested-with-two-tusks-A307/ .
March 2017	Thailand	330 kg	Malawi	Gambia	http://www.maravipost.com/gambian-arrested-thailands-seized-ivory/ .
March 2017	Benin	14 kg			https://aalfbenforcement.files.wordpress.com/2017/04/beninen-aalf-b-17-rap-mars.pdf
February 2017	Uganda	1.3 tons (437 pieces)		Guinea, Liberia	http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/-A280/
February 2017	Gabon	10 kg (6 tusks)		Mali	http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/a-malian-ivory-trafficker-arrested-with-6-tusks-A275/
2016	France	805 carvings	Nigeria		http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/pdf/reports/2016_overview_significant_seizures.pdf
December 2016	Gabon	2 tusks		Nigeria	http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/a-nigerian-trafficker-arrested-with-2-tusks-A247/
December 2016	Republic of Congo	10 kg (1 tusk)		Guinea, Mali, Congo DRC	http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/a-ring-of-ivory-traffickers-crushed-A240/
December 2016	Vietnam	529 kg	Nigeria		http://www.traffic.org/traffic-bulletin/traffic_pub_bulletin_29_1_seizures.pdf
November 2016	Benin	13.5 kg (2 tusks)	Togo		https://aalfbenforcement.files.wordpress.com/2016/12/beninen-aalf-b-16-rap-novembre.pdf

Date of Seizure	Seizing Country	Quantity of Ivory	Ivory Origin/ Ivory Sent From	Trafficker's Nationality	Reference
November 2016	Vietnam	537 kg	Nigeria		http://www.traffic.org/traffic-bulletin/traffic_pub_bulletin_29_1_seizures.pdf
November 2016	Gabon	10 kg (6 tusk pieces)		Nigeria	http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/3-ivory-traffickers-arrested-with-2-tusks-A229/
November 2016	Vietnam	619 kg	Nigeria		http://www.traffic.org/traffic-bulletin/traffic_pub_bulletin_29_1_seizures.pdf
October 2016	Benin	2 kg (1 tusk)	Togo		https://aalfbenforcement.files.wordpress.com/2016/11/aalf-b-16-rap-octobre.pdf
October 2016	Gabon	21 kg		Ghana, Gabon, Cameroon	http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/a-ring-of-ivory-traffickers-cracked--A218/
October 2016	Vietnam	309 kg	Nigeria		http://www.traffic.org/traffic-bulletin/traffic_pub_bulletin_28_2_seizures_prosecutions.pdf
October 2016	Benin	3.2 kg (1 tusk)	Park W		https://aalfbenforcement.files.wordpress.com/2016/11/aalf-b-16-rap-octobre.pdf
October 2016	Guinea	ivory statues			http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/2-ivory-traffickers-arrested--A209/
October 2016	Benin	12.3 kg	Benin		http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/3-traffickers-arrested-with-12kg-ivory-A208/
August 2016	Gabon	2 tusks		Senegal	http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/an-ivory-trafficker-arrested-with-2-tusks-A189/
August 2016	Togo	1 tusk			http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/2-ivory-traffickers-arrested-with-1-tusk-A188/
July 2016	Senegal	136 jewelry objects			http://www.wara-enforcement.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Activit%C3%A9s_SALF-annuel-2016.pdf
July 2016	Benin	150 carvings		Guinea, Ivorian	http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/3-ivory-traffickers-arrested--A167/
June 2016	Senegal	789 jewelry objects			http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/an-ivory-trafficker-arrested-with-1081-pieces-A153/
June 2016	Togo	40 kg (30 tusks)			http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/4-ivory-traffickers-arrested-with-30-tusks-A163/
June 2016	Benin	6 tusks			http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/an-ivory-trafficker-arrested-with-6-tusks-A154/
June 2016	Togo	124 kg		Nigeria	http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/2-ivory-traffickers-arrested-with-124-kg-of-ivory-A152/

Date of Seizure	Seizing Country	Quantity of Ivory	Ivory Origin/ Ivory Sent From	Trafficker's Nationality	Reference
June 2016	Nigeria	678 pieces		China	http://www.traffic.org/traffic-bulletin/traffic_pub_bulletin_28_2_seizures_prosecutions.pdf
June 2016	Benin	6 tusks		Benin	https://aalfbenforcement.files.wordpress.com/2016/07/bc3a9ninen-aalf-b-16-rap-juin.pdf
May 2016	Indonesia	377 pieces	Nigeria	China	http://www.traffic.org/traffic-bulletin/traffic_pub_bulletin_28_2_seizures_prosecutions.pdf
May 2016	Togo	2 tusks			http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/a-trafficker-arrested-with-2-tusks-A149/
May 2016	Gabon	3 tusk pieces		Mali	http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/a-trafficker-arrested-with-3-pieces-of-ivory-and-leopard-skin-A147/
April 2016	Hong Kong	26 kg	Côte d'Ivoire		http://www.traffic.org/traffic-bulletin/traffic_pub_bulletin_28_1-seizures-prosecutions.pdf
March 2016	Vietnam	238 kg	Nigeria		http://www.traffic.org/traffic-bulletin/traffic_pub_bulletin_28_1-seizures-prosecutions.pdf
March 2016	Hong Kong	10 kg	Côte d'Ivoire		http://www.traffic.org/traffic-bulletin/traffic_pub_bulletin_28_1-seizures-prosecutions.pdf
March 2016	Gabon	2 tusks		Benin	http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/2-ivory-traffickers-arrested-A118/
March 2016	Netherlands	86 pieces	Nigeria		http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/pdf/reports/2016_overview_significant_seizures.pdf
February 2016	Cameroon	12 tusks		Nigeria	http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/a-trafficker-arrested-with-ivory-and-pangolin-scales--A105
February 2016	Senegal	5.3 kg (271 objects)			http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/3-ivory-traffickers-arrested-with-53-kg-of-ivory-A108/
February 2016	Benin	4 tusks			http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/news/5-ivory-traffickers-behind-bars-A109/
January 2016	Burkina Faso	69.63 kg (32 tusks)			http://www.savetheelephants.org/about-elephants-2-3/elephant-news-post/?detail=seventy-kg-ivory-contraband-seized-in-western-burkina

1.5 Other Threats to Elephants

Other threats to elephants, such as human-elephant conflict, habitat loss and climate change are certain to have long-term consequences for elephants at a local level. However, it is the illicit trade that needs to be addressed as a priority (as evidenced by the Prioritization of Objectives within the African Elephant Action Plan).

1.6 Analysis

There is clearly a significant level of concern about African elephants and a broad variety of initiatives have been dedicated to elephant conservation, ranging from field conservation to enforcement efforts and stockpile destruction. Nevertheless, activities undertaken thus far have not been adequate enough to protect West Africa's fragile populations from population collapses and for many countries in the region the elephant faces an uncertain future.

MIKE, while providing a valuable contribution to data concerning poaching across the continent, has a serious problem in West Africa, which needs to be addressed directly by the MIKE authorities. Given that MIKE is a long-established program that has already utilized significant funds (and has further secured a large amount of funding from the European Union) it seems appropriate to turn focus towards the African Elephant Action Plan. The elephant range States developed this to be an overarching action plan, and while it is encouraging that some funds have so far been donated to the African Elephant Fund, if it is to adequately address the problems outlined in this report, significantly more investment will be needed. In addition, the National Ivory Action Plans for Nigeria and Togo deserve serious attention. Concerning the Review of the ETIS Program, it is essential that there be adequate input provided by the relevant authorities and experts within the African elephant range States.

2. Grey Parrot

Note regarding nomenclature: CITES recognizes two subspecies of African grey parrot: *Psittacus erithacus erithacus* and *Psittacus erithacus timneh*. However, IUCN recognizes these as two separate species: *Psittacus erithacus* and *Psittacus timneh*. This report will follow the CITES nomenclature for purposes of recognizing the CITES requirements for both subspecies.

2.1 Status of Grey Parrots

A 2018 IUCN assessment of *Psittacus erithacus* and *Psittacus timneh* found both species to be Endangered and the species are therefore considered to be facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild. The reclassification from Vulnerable was made "...because the extent of the annual harvest for international trade, in combination with the rate of ongoing habitat loss, means it is now suspected to be undergoing rapid declines over three generations (47 years)." (BirdLife International, 2018a and 2018b).

Details for status of the species across the West African region are as follows:

- **Côte d'Ivoire:** Taï National Park populations were found to be in decline and in some areas had completely disappeared during surveys conducted between 1999 and 2002 (CoP17 Prop 19). In 2013, no sign of the birds was found during surveys of Parc National d'Azagny and other previously recorded areas of range for the species (Ahon, 2013);
- **Ghana:** grey parrot populations have declined by up to 99% since 1992 (Annorbah et al., 2016). Dowsett-Lemaire and Dowsett (2014) reported local extinctions from several areas, including Bia

National Park, Ofinsi district forest reserves, Ejura and Mampong areas, and the Mpraeso scarp and Takoradi areas;

- **Guinea:** A 2003 survey found only one intact roost of 200 individuals (Clemmons, 2003). This follows the export of huge number of specimens in the early 1990s (almost 12,000 reported exports took place in 1991 although it is suspected that many of these were illegally imported from other range States (Clemmons, 2003)). A 2006 survey found no evidence of any grey parrots remaining;
- **Guinea-Bissau:** Whilst no grey parrots remain on the mainland, their presence was recorded on nine of the 15 islands surveyed in the Bijagós archipelago (Clemmons, 2003);
- **Liberia:** Grey parrots were once known as commonly occurring throughout the country. However, numbers have been decreasing. In 2013 they were seen in low numbers in Zwedru forest (Phalan et al., 2013). Other surveys have indicated they may have become extinct from the forests of Nimba county (CoPI7 Prop 19);
- **Nigeria:** Field surveys in southern Nigeria in 2001 reported the distribution of grey parrots as highly fragmented, having disappeared from many areas (McGowan, 2001). A significant decline in numbers of grey parrots was reported in Omo Forest Reserve where previously flocks of hundreds were known to reside. The current population is thought to number no more than one thousand individuals (CoPI7 Prop 19);
- **Sierra Leone:** Marsden et al. (2013) notes that grey parrots are likely absent from most unprotected areas. Surveys in 2005 and 2007 in Gola forest area and Tiwai island, reported them as frequent in primary and secondary forest, forest edge and farm bush (Klop et al. 2010);
- **Togo and Benin:** Thought not to occur naturally in these countries due to lack of suitable habitat (CoPI7 Prop 19).

2.2 Grey Parrot Distribution

The West African subspecies *P. e. timneh* occurs in Guinea-Bissau and remnant patches of the Upper Guinean ecosystem from Guinea to Sierra Leone, Liberia and south west Côte d'Ivoire. The second subspecies, *P. e. erithacus*, historically occurred from south east Côte d'Ivoire (however its status there is now uncertain) to Ghana, Togo and eastwards from Nigeria through the forests of the Congo Basin into Uganda and Kenya.

Native: Angola; Burundi; Cameroon; Central African Republic; Congo; The Democratic Republic of the Congo; Côte d'Ivoire; Equatorial Guinea; Gabon; Ghana; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Kenya; Liberia; Nigeria; Rwanda; Sao Tomé and Príncipe; Sierra Leone, Tanzania, United Republic of; Uganda.

2.3 Grey Parrots and CITES

P. erithacus has been included in CITES Appendix II since 1981. The species has long been a focus for the Parties, having been included in four Animals Committee Reviews of Significant Trade (1988, 1992, 2006 and 2014).

Grey parrots were uplisted to CITES Appendix I at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Guinea, Nigeria and Togo were among the many proponents of this amendment.

Following the listing of *Psittacus erithacus* in Appendix I, Saudi Arabia, Democratic Republic of Congo and the United Arab Emirates entered Reservations for the listing, which became effective on the 2nd January 2017. Kuwait also entered a Reservation which was declared invalid.

At CoPI8, the following amended Decisions were adopted:

CITES Decision 17.256 (Rev CoP18): Directed to range States of *Psittacus erithacus*: The range States of *Psittacus erithacus* should, with the support of the Secretariat, relevant experts, relevant CITES Parties, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders, develop and update National Action Plans, with timeframes, deliverables, and milestones, for the conservation of the species. The following key issues should be addressed:

- a) as appropriate, undertake a scientifically based field survey to establish the population status of the species, as well as population trends, in the range States to review progress made towards the restoration and conservation of the species, and in support of the activities proposed in paragraph c);
- b) implement law enforcement activities to combat illegal trade and report results in their annual illegal trade and implementation reports;
- c) identify suitable habitat in range States for re-population of *Psittacus erithacus* where appropriate and feasible, using wild sourced specimens seized from illegal trade and following internationally agreed guidelines for any such reintroductions; and d) assess the possibility of establishing in situ captive-breeding facilities for the species, in collaboration with States with breeding facilities.

CITES Decision 17.258 (Rev CoP18): Directed to Parties and the Secretariat: Until the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in the evaluation of applications to register facilities breeding *Psittacus erithacus* for commercial purposes, pursuant to Resolution Conf. 12.10 (Rev. CoP15) on Registration of operations that breed Appendix-I animal species in captivity for commercial purposes, consideration should be given to:

- a) the recommendations of the Management Authority and Scientific Authority of the Party;
- b) national measures to regulate domestic trade in this species which may not previously have been required due to its former Appendix-II status;
- c) any compliance measures directed to the Party submitting the application to register the facility; and
- d) whether the Party has been included in the Review of Significant Trade concerning the species in the prior 10 years from the effective listing date.

2.4 Threats to Grey Parrots

African grey parrots are extremely popular as pets, and as such trapping for international trade (both legal and illegal), combined with significant loss of habitat have led to rapid declines of the species across their range (Birdlife International 2018a and b). Although there is some local use of the species, as bushmeat, for traditional medicine and as fetishes in traditional witchcraft (McGowan, 2001), these pose a relatively minor threat in comparison to that posed by international trade (CoP17 Prop 19).

P.erithacus has been traded in higher volumes than any other CITES-listed species of parrot. A total of 1,550,197 reported exports took place between 1975 and 2013 (UNEP-WCMC Trade Database 2015, CoP17 Prop 19). Up to the early 1990s, the majority of these exports came from the West African region. However, due to heavy population declines, Central Africa has now taken over as the primary exporting region.

African grey parrots suffer high mortality rates during trapping and preparation for export. Estimates state that between 30-60% suffer mortality, but that can rise to as high as 70-90% in some circumstances. This means that the number of birds being removed from the wild to supply the trade is significantly higher than the number reported for export would indicate (McGowan, 2001; CITES Review

of Significant Trade, 2006). Based on an estimated 40% – 60% mortality rate, the actual number of parrots captured to supply international legal trade since 1975 could number as many as 2.1 – 2.5 million (CoP17 Prop 19).

There have been concerns expressed that illegally trapped wild-caught birds are laundered into the legal market. One of the ways this is done is by labelling wild-caught specimens as captive bred. For example, from 1994 to 2010, Guinea reported exports of 15,065 *P. e. timneh* and 13,472 of *P. e. erithacus*, despite not being a range state for *P. e. erithacus*. Guinea has also exported a number of birds as ‘captive bred’ despite not having any breeding facilities in the country (CoP17 Prop 19).

In addition to the legal trade, there is also a significant illegal trade in African grey parrots. For example, in 2010, 2,701 birds were seized, whilst in the same year the legal export quota was 9,000 birds. This high volume of seizures compared with numbers shipped legally, indicates well established criminal trade. Evidence points to smuggling networks that are largely based in Central Africa, with the Arabian Peninsula as the main destination market (UNODC, 2016). However, West Africa is still implicated. In 2015, an operation by the EAGLE Network, in conjunction with local authorities, arrested a bird trafficker in Senegal, who was found with 111 *P. e. timneh* (EAGLE, 2015).

Habitat loss and fragmentation have compounded the impact of trapping, further reducing population size by decreasing breeding opportunities and foraging habitat (Annorbah et al., 2016). African grey parrots are frugivores and obligate cavity nesters and are therefore dependent on a diversity of large trees (Clemmons, 2003). The loss of such trees has undoubtedly contributed to the catastrophic population declines in countries such as Ghana (Annorbah et al., 2016). However, for all range States, while habitat loss is certainly having a deleterious impact on the species, it is trapping for the pet trade that is having the most harmful impact (CITES Review of Significant Trade, 2006).

At the 69th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee, Republic of Congo submitted SC69 Doc 29.4 on *Illegal Trade in Species: Grey Parrot (Psittacus erithacus)*. The report provided the results of a March 2017 mission to assess the extent of the illegal trade in Grey Parrot, which was undertaken by the Ministry of Forest Economy, Sustainable Development and Environment of the Republic of Congo. Among other things, this mission found there had been a massive increase in illegal trade, partly due to the increase in the price of grey parrots on the black market. Up until 2016, the average price paid for a caught bird was USD15. Now it has increased to as much as USD85, and up to USD300 by the time the bird reaches the market in Brazzaville.

According to UNODC, the greatest weakness in the illegal trafficking chain for grey parrots is that criminals usually rely on flights from remote regions. Monitoring and controlling such flights would make it much more challenging to move wild parrots out of the field cost effectively (CoP18 Doc 34 Annex 4).

2.5 Analysis

Given that African greys only reproduce once they reach ten years of age, their ability to recover from huge population losses is poor. This is further exacerbated by the fact that they are easy to capture in large numbers, where they roost in big flocks or gather at mineral licks. Their current status in West Africa is highly precarious, with populations becoming extinct across the range and, in some areas, only tiny numbers being found where once huge flocks were known. The situation for *P. e. timneh* in particular seems extremely fragile.

The recent uplisting of African grey parrots to CITES Appendix I will likely improve the situation, however, there clearly remains a criminal element that will be willing to traffic birds regardless of their

CITES status. Therefore, it is vital that enhanced enforcement efforts are made to ensure that the small populations remaining in West Africa can be protected and allowed to recover. Noting the reported increase in price of grey parrots on the black market in Central Africa following the CITES Appendix I listing, authorities will need to operate with enhanced vigilance to ensure that poaching levels are not increasing in the West African region also.

3 African Lion

3.1 Status of African Lions

Classified as Vulnerable by IUCN, African Lion (*Panthera leo leo*) populations are estimated to have reduced by approximately 43% over 21 years, from 1993 to 2014 (Bauer et al. 2016).

Although not yet recognized as a separate subspecies, West African lions have unique characteristics that demonstrate their distinctiveness from other African lions, based on craniometry (Mazak, 2010) and molecular genetics (Bertola et al., 2011). Bertola et al. (2016) supports revision of lion taxonomy based on morphological and genetic data. Indeed, it has been found that West African lions are actually genetically more closely related to Asiatic lions than to southern and eastern African lions (Dubach et al., 2013).

The West African lion sub-population is classified separately by IUCN as ‘Critically Endangered’ (Henschel et al., 2015). This sub-population is estimated to number just over 400 individuals, around 90% of which are found in a single population in the transboundary W-Arly-Pendjari complex of Burkina Faso, Benin and Niger.

Survey work conducted in 17 protected areas suspected to have lions in West Africa (following the IUCN SSC regional conservation planning workshop for lions in West and Central Africa in 2005) found lions in only three of those protected areas: in Niokolo-Koba National Park, Senegal (est. 16 lions), Kainji Lake National Park in Nigeria (est. 32 lions) and W-Arly-Pendjari of Burkina Faso, Benin and Niger (est. 356 lions) (Henschel et al., 2014). There is also believed to be an isolated population of less than 15 individuals remaining in Nigeria’s Yankari National Park (Henschel et al., 2015).

3.2 African Lion Distribution

Lions in West Africa were historically distributed throughout the region, apart from coastal rainforests and the Sahara desert. The most recent surveys indicate that West African lions have lost almost 99% of their former range (Henschel et al., 2014). Below is a list of range States for African lions:

Native: Angola; Benin; Botswana; Burkina Faso; Cameroon; Central African Republic; Chad; Democratic Republic of Congo; Ethiopia; Kenya; Malawi; Mozambique; Namibia; Niger; Nigeria; Senegal; Somalia; South Africa; South Sudan; Sudan; Swaziland; Tanzania, United Republic of; Uganda; Zambia; Zimbabwe

Possibly extinct: Côte d'Ivoire; Ghana; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Mali; Rwanda; Togo

Regionally extinct: Algeria; Burundi; Congo; Djibouti; Egypt; Eritrea; Gabon; Gambia; Lesotho; Mauritania; Morocco; Sierra Leone; Tunisia; Western Sahara.

3.3 African Lions and CITES

Lions are included in Appendix II of CITES. The following annotation was approved by Parties at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, in 2016: “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.”

In addition to the annotation, a number of CITES Decisions were adopted at CoP18, as follows:

CITES Decision 18.244: Directed to the Secretariat: Subject to external funding, the Secretariat shall, in collaboration with African lion range States, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and, as appropriate, taking into consideration the joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative and the Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa:

- a) support the implementation of activities in joint African lion conservation plans and strategies that relate to trade in African lion specimens and the implementation of CITES and, as needed, the review of such plans and strategies;
- b) jointly with the CMS Secretariat undertake a comparative study of African lion population trends and conservation and management practices, such as lion hunting, within and between countries, including the role, if any, of international trade;
- c) support capacity-building in African lion conservation and management including where appropriate, in the making of non-detriment findings by range States according to Resolution Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) on Non-detriment findings and the implementation of Resolution Conf. 17.9 on Trade in hunting trophies of species listed in Appendix I or II;
- d) assist in maintaining a joint CITES-CMS webportal on African lions, that also allows for the posting and sharing of information and guidance on the conservation and management of African lions;
- e) share the Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa and any relevant update with the Animals Committee for its review, as appropriate; and
- f) report on the implementation of the present Decision to the 32nd meeting of the Animals Committee and the 74th meeting of the Standing Committee and to the Conference of the Parties at its 19th meeting.

CITES Decision 18.245: Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat shall:

- a) draft, terms of reference and a modus operandi for the CITES Big Cat Task Force prior to convening its first meeting and submit it to the 73rd Standing Committee for review and adoption, and subject to external resources:
- b) establish and convene, in consultation with the Standing Committee, a CITES Big Cats Task Force (Task Force), focusing on big cat species from Africa, Asia and Latin America, and consisting of representatives from Parties most affected by the illegal trade in big cats, the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime partner organizations, other Parties and organizations, as appropriate, and experts who the Secretariat determines may contribute to the Task Force;
- c) provide support to the Task Force allowing it, inter alia, to: i) discuss enforcement and implementation issues related to the illegal trade in specimens of big cats; ii) as deemed appropriate, exchange intelligence and other information on the illegal trade in big cats; and iii) develop strategies and make recommendations to improve international cooperation regarding the enforcement of CITES concerning illegal trade in specimens of big cats; and

d) report the findings and recommendations of the Task Force to the 74th meeting of the Standing Committee for its consideration, and for making its own recommendations as appropriate.

CITES Decision 18.246: Directed to the Secretariat: 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.

CITES Decision 18.247: Directed to the Animals Committee: The Animals Committee shall:

a) review the Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa and any relevant update, as appropriate;

b) review the information reported by the Secretariat under Decisions 18.244 and 18.246, and submit recommendations to the Secretariat, the Standing Committee and African lion range States, as appropriate.

CITES Decision 18.248: Directed to the Standing Committee: The Standing Committee shall: a) review and adopt the draft terms of reference, membership and modus operandi for the CITES Big Cat Task Force submitted by the Secretariat as per Decision 18.245, paragraphs a) and b) prior to convening the first meeting of the Task Force;

b) consider at its 74th meeting the reports submitted by the Animals Committee and the Secretariat, as per Decisions 18.244 to 18.247, and make recommendations to the Animals Committee, the Secretariat and African lion range States, as appropriate;

c) recommend further actions to be taken, including the possible need for the development of a draft resolution, on the conservation of the African lion taking into consideration Decisions 18.244, 18.245 and 18.247; and

d) report on the implementation of Decision 18.248, and formulate recommendations as appropriate, to the Conference of the Parties at its 19th meeting.

CITES Decision 18.249: Directed to Parties: Parties, including range States and consumer countries of African lion, as relevant, are encouraged to:

- a) increase enforcement efforts to detect illegal, unreported or misreported trade in specimens of African lion and other big cats;
- b) use, where appropriate, South Africa's Barcode of Wildlife Project to help identify lion specimens in trade and, when importing lion specimens from South Africa, collaborate where necessary with relevant authorities in South Africa to improve the traceability of such specimens;
- c) provide details on the observed and/or removed lion body parts in trade when collecting and communicating data on illegal killing and illegal trade in lions to CITES in their annual reports; and
- d) cooperate on lion conservation, including by sharing information on lion populations, illegal killing and illegal trade.

CITES Decision 18.250: Directed to Parties, governmental, intergovernmental, non-governmental organizations, donors and other entities: All Parties, governmental, intergovernmental, non-governmental organizations, donors and other entities are encouraged to support African lion range States and the Secretariat in their efforts to conserve and restore African lions across their range, taking into consideration the Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa; and in implementing Decisions 18.244 to 18.246, and 18.249.

The CITES Secretariat submitted an information document to CoPI8 (CoPI8 Inf 10), entitled '**Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa (GCLA)**'. This was prepared by the IUCN/Species Survival Commission Cat Specialist Group and is intended to provide overarching context and priorities for lion conservation and management across sub-Saharan Africa. These Guidelines provide the latest information on lion status and distribution, survey methods, existing policies and plans.

3.4 African Carnivore Initiative

The first meeting of Range States for the Joint CMS-CITES African Carnivore Initiative (ACII), was held in November 2018 in Bonn, Germany. The communiqué recommended the following initiatives be prioritized for the four species concerned:

- Develop and implement conservation strategies for each of the four species (African lion, Cheetah, Leopard and African Wild Dog);
- Take measures that allow and secure connectivity between populations of African carnivores;
- Promote the coexistence of local communities and the four carnivores in landscapes where they occur;
- Promote innovative approaches that deliver sustainable benefits to the local communities that pay the costs of living alongside wildlife;
- Establish a national coordination structure based on the Range Wide Conservation Programme for Cheetah and Wild Dog to provide technical support, training and mentoring to coordinators and a platform for regular meetings;
- Develop and implement reliable, comparable monitoring protocols for large carnivore populations to inform management decisions;
- Develop the capacity of Range States to monitor populations of the four species; - Improve education and awareness on the plight of African carnivores;
- Enhance and facilitate communication and information sharing between Range States;

CoPI8 Doc 96 reported that the African carnivore range States agreed to the following recommendations:

- a) Addressing the threats to African carnivores requires the long-term commitment of range States and the international community. Therefore, the establishment of a Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative is a timely undertaking.
- b) To ensure long-term engagement by CITES and CMS, a Programme of Work should be jointly developed by the two Secretariats, allocating responsibilities to Parties to CITES and CMS in accordance with the mandates of the two Conventions. This Programme of Work should build on the current arrangement, by which the Secretariats implement CITES and CMS Resolutions and Decisions in the framework of the ACI by setting priorities and specifying activities.
- c) The Programme of Work should include indicators that enable evaluating the success of implemented activities.
- d) The Programme of Work should identify potential partners for the implementation of activities.
- e) The Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative should have the following governance structure, pending the availability of extrabudgetary resources:
- i) Triennial range State meetings or, if funding allows, annual range State meetings to develop policies for the conservation of the four carnivores; review the implementation of, update or renew the Joint Programme of Work (and CITES and CMS Resolutions and Decisions pertaining to the four species); and facilitate exchange of data, information and best practices.
 - ii) A network of National Coordinators should be established. Parties should decide on whether it would be preferred to appoint one joint national CITES-CMS coordinator, or two separate ones. The National Coordinators should coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Joint Programme of Work at the national level.
 - iii) A network of Regional Coordinators should be established in cooperation with IUCN. Synergies could be sought with existing networks, such as the IUCN Cheetah and African Wild Dog Regional Coordinators network to assist range States in implementing the Joint Programme of Work.
 - iv) A Joint CITES-CMS Programme Officer position should be established at one of the Conventions' Secretariats to oversee the coordination of the ACI and to foster further synergies between the two Conventions.

At COP18 the following Decisions were adopted concerning the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative:

CITES Decision 18.56: Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat shall:

- a) include the African Carnivores Initiative in its proposals for the new CMS-CITES joint work programme for the period 2021-2025, to be developed in the context of the implementation of Resolution Conf. 13.3 on Cooperation and synergy with the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS);
- b) subject to the availability of external resources, and in collaboration with the CMS Secretariat and, as appropriate, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN):
 - i) develop a dedicated Programme of Work for the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative (ACI), taking into consideration the outcomes of the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS, and the First Meeting of Range States for the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative; and submit the draft Programme of Work to the Standing

Committee for its review and appropriate revision: and ii) support range States of African carnivores in implementing relevant CITES Resolutions and Decisions through the ACI;

c) report, as appropriate, on the implementation of this Decision to the Animals Committee and to the Standing Committee; and

d) report on the implementation of this Decision to the Conference of the Parties at its 19th meeting.

CITES Decision 18.57: Directed to the Standing Committee: The Standing Committee shall review the draft Programme of Work submitted by the Secretariat under Decision 18.56, paragraph b) i) and make appropriate recommendations or revisions and consider any reports of the Secretariat on its implementation of Decision 18.56, and formulate guidance and recommendations, as appropriate, to range States and the Secretariat.

CITES Decision 18.58: Directed to the Animals Committee: The Animals Committee shall consider any report of the Secretariat on its implementation of Decision 18.56, and formulate guidance and recommendations, as appropriate, to range States and the Secretariat.

CITES Decision 18.59: Directed to range States of African carnivores: Relevant range States of African carnivores are urged to work through the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative to implement CITES Resolutions and Decisions relating to the species covered by this Initiative.

CITES Decision 18.60: Directed to Parties, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations: Parties are invited to recognize the importance of the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative in implementing CITES Resolutions and Decisions relating to the species covered by the Initiative, and in seeking synergies as appropriate to implement complementary CMS resolutions and decisions.

CITES Decision 18.61: Directed to Parties, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations: Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to support relevant African range States, through the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative, in their implementation of CITES Resolutions and Decisions relating to the species covered by this Initiative.

3.5 Threats to African Lions

With the exception of the WAP complex, West African lion populations are small, isolated and fragmented. Threats to the long-term survival of the few remaining populations include habitat loss, depletion of prey base (exacerbated by national and international bushmeat trade), and the international trade in lion body-parts and products (Bauer et al., 2016).

Lions parts and products are also used for traditional African medicine and ceremonies by a number of communities. Where humans and lions live in close proximity, lions are considered a risk to livestock and human life and can be persecuted as a result. These threats may pose a significant threat to some populations (Hazzah, 2006; Bauer et al., 2010).

In response to a questionnaire distributed to all African lion range States for the Animals Committee Periodic Review Process of *Panthera leo*, a number of responses were received from West African states (AC Doc 24.3.3), including the following:

- i) **Benin:** illegal trade in lion skins is a recognized problem;
- ii) **Côte d'Ivoire:** although lions are considered extinct in Côte d'Ivoire, there is frequent trade of lion skins or partial skins in Abidjan street markets. "given the rarity of lions in West Africa, this trade and the high price a lion skin can fetch is most likely one of the biggest threats to lion survival in this region"

- iii) **Ghana:** occasionally lion parts and products (such as claws, skin pieces) are found in Techiman market;
- iv) **Guinea:** large carnivore parts and products (skins, claws, teeth, skulls, fat) are frequently traded in the Faranah area and in Conakry;
- v) **Mali:** there is a well-known illegal trade in lion trophies, poached in Mali and neighboring countries. This poaching is for lion meat and other products (trophies, fat, skins);
- vi) **Nigeria:** there is a “massive” domestic illegal trade, which is largely unreported. Skins are illegally exported. In 2008, a U.S. court case was brought against a Nigerian national who attempted to smuggle several lion skins from Nigeria into the U.S;
- vii) **Senegal:** lion skins (sold for medicinal purposes) and canines (sold as talismans) likely originating from Burkina Faso, Benin and Nigeria can easily be found in Dakar markets.

These reports by range States are mirrored in the enforcement efforts of the EAGLE Network and their national partners. Recent examples include:

- a. In January 2019, a notorious trafficker was arrested in Côte d’Ivoire during an attempted sale of an illicit lion skin;
- b. In December 2018: two traffickers were apprehended in Burkina Faso, in possession of two lion skins and two leopard skins.
- c. In April 2017, two traffickers were arrested in Guinea with a lion head skin and two leopard skins;
- d. In October 2016, a trafficker was arrested in Senegal with 106 skins of 11 different species, including lion and leopard skins;
- e. In 2014, five traffickers were arrested in Senegal with 2,600 parts and products of including lion canine teeth and skins. It was estimated that the lion products came from as many as 12 lions. The operation was conducted by the Senegalese Ministry of Environment, Police, and WARAA, and EAGLE network NGO (Africa Geographic, 2014).

There has also been an increasing demand for lion specimens in legal trade. Information from the CITES Trade Database on international trade of lions and their parts and products, shows that from 2005 – 2014, a total of 29,214 lion items were exported by 102 Parties. 11,164 of these items were declared as derived from wild sourced lions (CITES Trade Database, CoP17 Prop 4).

With regard to the West African region, the study on The Legal and Illegal Trade in African Lions in support of CITES Decision 17.241 e) notes: “*The threat from illegal trade in body parts is magnified when the sub-population is small and located in a region where demand is high for lion products (e.g. West Africa).*” Following consultation from multiple stakeholders, the study identified Guinea, Senegal and Côte d’Ivoire as potentially significant countries for the trafficking of lion skins (and other big cats). For example, a number of investigations found between 2009 and 2012 in Guinea, uncovered 42 vendors offering 67 lion skins for sale. Given that the lion is possibly extinct in Guinea, this is a strong indication of illegal cross-border trade. Furthermore, skins from Guinea are believed to be transiting the country before being trafficking to other destinations, including the US and Europe.

3.6 Analysis

Given their distinctiveness from other African lions, and their precarious and declining population status, conservation activities focused on the remaining West African lions must be seen as a priority action for the region. In addition to the initiatives being undertaken by CITES, there have been some recent efforts to promote their conservation, including the Conservation Strategy for the Lion in West and Central

Africa, developed by the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group (2006) and the newly developed African Carnivore Initiatives. However, these initiatives urgently need to be backed up by action on the ground. Time is running out to secure the long-term survival of the West African lion subpopulation.

There needs to be a combined short-term effort to ensure that:

- i) CITES Decisions are implemented as soon as possible;
- ii) Conservation Action Plans are finalized and implemented;
- iii) Enforcement efforts are undertaken as a high priority to:
 - a. Close-down local markets;
 - b. Arrest and prosecute criminals involved in the illicit trade of lion parts and products;
 - c. Prevent poaching of lions across the region;

4 Pangolins

4.1 African Pangolin Status

Classified as Vulnerable by IUCN, all four African pangolin species are in serious decline, with populations believed to have reduced by 30 – 40% over the past decade. These declines are projected to continue over the next twenty years if the threats are not mitigated (Pietersen et al., 2014). Trends reflect the precarious status of pangolin populations in Asia, which have been in catastrophic decline and are now locally extinct across large areas of their former range (Challender et al., 2014).

4.2 African Pangolin Distribution

There are eight species of pangolin, four of which are found in Africa. Range States for all four species are listed below:

Giant ground pangolin (*Smutsia gigantea*): Cameroon; Central African Republic; Congo; The Democratic Republic of Congo; Côte d'Ivoire; Equatorial Guinea; Gabon; Ghana; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Kenya; Liberia; Nigeria; Senegal; Sierra Leone; United Republic of Tanzania; Uganda. (Waterman et. al. 2014c).

Black-bellied pangolin (*Phataginus tetradactyla*): Cameroon; Central African Republic; Congo; The Democratic Republic of Congo; Côte d'Ivoire; Equatorial Guinea; Gabon; Ghana; Liberia; Nigeria; Sierra Leone (Waterman et. al. 2014a).

White-bellied pangolin (*Phataginus tricuspis*): Angola; Benin; Cameroon; Central African Republic; Congo; The Democratic Republic of Congo; Côte d'Ivoire; Equatorial Guinea; Gabon; Ghana; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Kenya; Liberia; Nigeria; Rwanda; Sierra Leone; South Sudan; United Republic of Tanzania; Togo; Uganda; Zambia (Waterman et. al. 2014b).

Temminck's pangolin (*Smutsia temminckii*): Botswana; Central African Republic; Chad; Kenya; Malawi; Mozambique; Namibia; Rwanda; South Africa; South Sudan; United Republic of Tanzania; Uganda; Zambia; Zimbabwe. Possibly extinct in: Swaziland (Pietersen et. al. 2014).

4.3 Pangolins and CITES

Pangolins were listed on CITES Appendix II in 1975. Over a long period, there was a large legal trade in skins, scales and meat, with tens of thousands of wild-sourced (primarily Asian) pangolins traded. However, in 2000, a zero-export quota was placed on all Asian pangolins, effectively putting a stop to this trade. In 2016, in response to a booming illicit trade in pangolins, all African and Asian pangolin

species were uplisted to CITES Appendix I, with several West African States (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo) among the many proponents of the uplisting.

CITES Resolution Conf 17.10, urges Parties to take a number of measures to protect pangolin species. These measures include (among other things):

- i) the adoption of comprehensive legislation including adequate deterrent penalties;
- ii) the adoption of strict enforcement controls; international cooperation to coordinate activities, exchange information on trade routes and patterns and law enforcement responses to combat illegal trade;
- iii) carry out capacity-building activities to assist with detection and identification of illegally traded pangolins and best practice protocols for safe handling, care and rehabilitation, and release back into the wild of live confiscated pangolins;
- iv) the development of techniques, including the application of forensic science, for identifying parts and derivatives of pangolins in trade;
- v) ensure that adequate control measures are in place to secure any stocks of pangolin parts and products
- vi) raise awareness among the law enforcement community about the conservation status of pangolins and the threats posed to their survival by illegal trade;
- vii) to work with local communities to develop non-consumptive livelihood programmes and educational programmes and material to assist local communities in sustainably managing pangolin populations;
- viii) develop and implement in situ pangolin management and conservation programmes, which include population assessments, the making of non-detriment findings for trade in the species, monitoring, and management and conservation measures;

In 2017, the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Pangolin Specialist Group and the IUCN Global Species programme, with support from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, launched a project entitled “*Equipping pangolin range States to better implement CITES and combat wildlife trafficking through developing monitoring methodologies*”. The project resulted in the production of a review: *Evaluating methods for detecting and monitoring pangolin (Pholidata: Manidae) populations* (Willcox et al., 2019). This review notes that, due to overexploitation of many pangolin populations, densities are often extremely low, which makes survey effort required to detect presence extremely high and therefore very challenging. The report recommends monitoring methods which include mark and recapture (for burrow-dwelling species), sign-based surveys, detection dogs and camera-trapping. Where intensive surveys are not financially viable, Willcox et al. (2019) recommends using proxies (i.e. the presence of other hunting-sensitive species), combined with patrol / enforcement data and community interviews.

A *Pangolin Species Identification Guide: A Rapid Assessment Tool for Field and Desk* has been developed by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Wildlife Asia. The guide was developed to support enforcement authorities in pangolin identification (CoPI8 Doc 75).

CoPI8 Doc 75 Proposed the adoption of a number of new Decisions concerning *in situ* conservation of pangolins. These Decisions were adopted as follows

CITES Decision 18.238: *Directed to all pangolin range States: All pangolin range States that have not yet done so, are encouraged to take urgent steps to develop and implement in situ pangolin management and conservation programmes, which includes population assessments, as anticipated in*

paragraph 7 of Resolution Conf. 17.10 on Conservation of and trade in pangolins, and report on the implementation of this Decision to the Secretariat.

CITES Decision 18.239: Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat shall, subject to external funding, work with the Species Survival Commission Pangolin Specialist Group of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and other relevant experts and in collaboration with the pangolin range States to develop conversion parameters for all pangolin species, that will enable the reliable determination of the number of animals associated with any quantity of pangolin scales seized, that can be used by Parties in cases where national legislation demands that such information be provided for court purposes.

CITES Decision 18.240: Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat shall:

- a) report on the implementation of Decisions 18.238 and 18.239, to the Animals Committee, as appropriate;
- b) bring any tools or materials brought to its attention in accordance with Decision 18.242, to the attention of the Animals Committee or the Standing Committee, as appropriate, together with any recommendations it may have, and taking into account any subsequent recommendations from the Animals Committee or the Standing Committee, make such tools or materials available to the Parties;
- c) subject to external funding, work with relevant experts and the pangolin range States to prepare a report for review by the Animals Committee and Standing Committee on: i) the national conservation status of pangolin species, ii) legal and illegal trade in pangolins, iii) stocks of specimens of pangolins and stockpile management, and iv) enforcement issues.

CITES Decision 18.241: Directed to the Standing Committee: The Standing Committee shall:

- a) consider the report and any recommendations of the Secretariat in accordance with Decision 18.240 paragraphs b) and c), and any recommendations of the Animals Committee in accordance with Decision 18.243.
- b) make recommendations to the Parties or the Secretariat as appropriate; and
- c) report the results of its work together with any recommendations it may have, to the Conference of the Parties at its 19th meeting.

CITES Decision 18.242: Directed to Parties, intergovernmental organizations, international aid agencies and nongovernmental organizations: Parties, intergovernmental organizations, international aid agencies and nongovernmental organizations that develop tools or materials that could assist Parties in the implementation of Resolution Conf. 17.10, are invited to bring such tools or materials to the attention of the Secretariat.

CITES Decision 18.243: Directed to the Animals Committee: The Animals Committee shall review any information brought to its attention by the Secretariat in accordance with Decisions 18.238, 18.239, 18.240 and 18.242, and make recommendations as appropriate to the Standing Committee and the Secretariat.

CITES Decision 18.315: Directed to the Animals Committee: The Animals Committee shall examine the taxonomy and nomenclature of pangolins (*Manidae* spp.) and will propose a way forward to clarify a listing of pangolins on the Appendices.

4.4 Threats to Pangolins

Pangolins are “*the most heavily trafficked wild mammal in the world*” (Challender et al., 2014). Poaching for illegal international trade is the primary threat facing all species of African and Asian pangolin. An estimated one million pangolins have been taken from the wild across Asia and Africa in the last decade (Challender et al., 2014).

There is increasing demand for African pangolins in East Asia, particularly China and Vietnam, where their meat is considered a delicacy and their body parts, particularly the scales, are used in traditional medicine. To a lesser degree, pangolins are also utilized in Africa as bushmeat, and their body parts used in African traditional medicine practices (Challender et al., 2014). Pangolins do not breed well in captivity and there are, therefore, no captive breeding facilities for pangolins (apart from a few zoos), which means that pangolins in trade are all wild caught.

Since 2000, as Asian species have declined in the wild, there has been a significant shift to trading in African species (Challender et al., 2014; Henrich et al., 2016). The IUCN SSC Pangolin Specialist group has estimated that since 2012 more than 20,000kg of scales from African pangolins, destined for illicit markets in Asia, have been seized, representing between 5,000 and 30,000 animals (Anderson, 2016). A single seizure in June 2016 of four tonnes of African pangolin scales was made in Hong Kong. This shipment alone was worth more than 1.25 million US dollars (Anderson, 2016).

According to the EU-TWIX database, several seizures of pangolin scales have taken place during transit in Belgium, en route from West and Central Africa and destined for mainland China and Hong Kong. This is an important emerging trend (Mundy-Taylor, 2013). Eighty-five percent of seizures reported in the EU-TWIX database for 2012 and 2013, involved seizures from West and Central Africa. Of these, more than 80% were destined for Hong Kong or mainland China (CITES SC65 Doc 27.I Annex 4).

Pangolins are primarily nocturnal animals that feed almost exclusively on ants and termites. They have a low reproductive rate (usually only one young per year), which makes them particularly vulnerable to over-exploitation. When threatened, pangolins roll into a ball to expose their scales, making them susceptible to poachers as they are very easily captured (CITES CoP17 Prop 12).

Seizures of African pangolin products have often occurred in conjunction with other species. For example, in December 2015, 587kg of pangolin scales were seized in Thailand, along with 800kg of elephant ivory. This shipment had been exported from Nigeria via Singapore and was worth an estimated US \$1.1 million (CITES CoP17 Prop 12). This suggests that criminal networks are involved in smuggling multiple species (UNODC, 2016).

The rise in trafficking of African species has led to a rise in prices in the region. For example, in Nigeria, the price of pangolins has reportedly increased ten-fold in the last 5 years (CoP17 Prop 12, 2016). While in China, the price has also been on the rise – since 2008, pangolin scales have doubled in value from \$300 to \$600 per kilogram (Zhou et al., 2014). There appears to be a similar story in Vietnam, where a survey of 18 restaurants found pangolin meat available in 16 of them. It was reportedly the most expensive item on the menu (UNODC, 2016).

Following the uplisting of pangolins to CITES Appendix I, there have been a number of fraudulent permits detected for trade in pangolin scales. For example, an investigation by the CITES Secretariat found that a permit from Nigeria concerning the export of 15,000kg of pangolin scales to China, was fraudulent (SC69 Doc 57). The Secretariat has therefore asked Parties to “...*treat any CITES permits or certificates authorizing trade in pangolin specimens with caution, and to confirm the authenticity and validity of*

such documents with the CITES Management Authority of the Party concerned and the CITES Secretariat” (SC69 Doc 57).

IUCN, in consultation with pangolin range States, was contracted to prepare a report which was submitted to the 69th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee. Several Parties from West Africa contributed data to the report, including Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo. The report, entitled *Implementation of CITES Decisions 17.239 b) and 17.240 on Pangolins (Manis spp.)* contained important information relevant to the West African subregion, for example:

- Between 1999 and 2017, 1,557 seizures took place, representing an estimated 192,576 pangolins. The vast majority of these seizures took place from 2007 to 2017. Often the exact species was not reported, simply being recorded as ‘*Manis spp*’ (SC69 Doc57 Annex 1);
- The majority of African range States that provided information for the report, considered their pangolin populations either to be data deficient or in decline.

Additional data concerning seizures of pangolins exported from Nigeria in 2018 include:

- **May 2018:** 3,300kg of pangolin scales exported from Nigeria were seized in Vietnam. The shipment had been mislabeled as containing cashew nuts and was en route to Cambodia;
- **July 2018:** 7,100kg of pangolin scales (representing approximately 11,000 pangolins) exported from Nigeria were seized in Hong Kong, destined for mainland China. This is the second largest seizure of pangolin scales in the last decade and had a market value of US\$450,000. The shipment was mislabeled as containing plastic raw materials;
- **September 2018:** 805kg of pangolin scales exported from Nigeria were seized in Vietnam (along with 193kg elephant ivory);

CoPI8 Doc 34 Annex 4 notes that Nigeria is the most common source of seized pangolins from the West/Central African region. SC70 Doc 27.3.5 further notes the significant escalation in seizures of pangolins from Nigeria, from 2 metric tonnes in 2015, to almost 8 metric tonnes in 2016 and 2017, and almost 24 metric tonnes in the first seven months of 2018.

4.5 Analysis

Pangolin trafficking poses a severe threat to the long-term future of African pangolins. A strong and coordinated West African Pangolin Initiative is required to protect all three species across their West African range. There needs to be an urgent enhancement of enforcement efforts and strict implementation of CITES regulations. Furthermore, research is required to enhance knowledge of pangolin population status and range, and of the impact that trade is having on these species.

5 Great Apes

Note that for this report, only the species of great apes occurring in West Africa will be referred to, specifically the Western Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*), Nigeria-Cameroon Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes ellioti*) and the Cross-River Gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla diehli*).

5.1 Status of West African Great Apes

The IUCN listing for the **Western Chimpanzee** was raised from Endangered to Critically Endangered in 2016, as population declines of 80% are estimated over three generations due to ‘...high levels of poaching, and loss of habitat and habitat fragmentation resulting from human activities...’ (Humble et al., 2016).

The **Nigeria-Cameroon Chimpanzee** is classified as Endangered by the IUCN. It has the smallest population size and smallest range of any Chimpanzee subspecies, and has an inferred population decline of more than 50% over three generations (Oates et al., 2016).

The **Cross-River Gorilla** was assessed in 2016 and Classified as Critically Endangered, as mature individuals number less than 250 (Bergl et al., 2016).

5.2 West African Great Ape Distribution

Range States and population estimates for the three species of great ape found in West Africa are as follows:

- **Western Chimpanzee** (*Pan troglodytes verus*):
 - i. Ghana: 264;
 - ii. Guinea: 21,210 (10,007–43,534);
 - iii. Liberia: 7,008 (4,260–11,590);
 - iv. Côte d'Ivoire: 580 (332–940);
 - v. Guinea-Bissau: 1,000–1,500;
 - vi. Mali: (population size unknown);
 - vii. Senegal: (500 - 600);
 - viii. Sierra Leone: 5,580 (3,052–10,446)
- **Nigeria-Cameroon chimpanzee** (*Pan troglodytes ellioti*):
 - i. Nigeria: 730–2,095;
 - ii. Cameroon: 3,000–7,060
- **Cross River Gorilla** (*Gorilla gorilla diehli*):
 - i. Nigeria: 85–115;
 - ii. Cameroon: 132–194

5.3 Great Ape Action Plans

- Regional Action Plan for the Conservation of the Cross-River Gorilla (Oates et al. 2007);
- Regional Action Plan for the Conservation of the Nigeria-Cameroon Chimpanzee (Morgan et al. 2011);
- West African Chimpanzees. Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan (Kormos et al. 2003).

5.4 Great Apes and CITES

All great ape species are included in CITES Appendix I.

CITES Resolution Conf 13.4 (Rev CoP18) on Conservation of and trade in great apes, encourages Parties to, *inter alia*:

- a) adopt and implement comprehensive legislation to protect great apes;
- b) strengthen enforcement controls, including anti-poaching measures in great ape habitats and anti-smuggling measures at international borders;
- c) limit the international use of great apes to nationally approved zoological institutions, educational centers, rescue centers and captive-breeding centers in accordance with CITES; and

- d) promote the protection of great ape habitats, including cross-border cooperation between neighboring range States for the management of contiguous habitat, and to take appropriate action to restore such habitats where they have become fragmented or diminished in quality.

The CITES Secretariat is directed to report on the implementation of this Resolution to each regular meeting of the CITES Standing Committee, whereby the Standing Committee is tasked to review implementation and provide any comments or recommendations.

The Resolution further calls upon all governments, intergovernmental organizations, international aid agencies and non-governmental organizations to assist the range States in any way possible in supporting the conservation of great apes, such as through funding, assistance with enforcement, training, capacity building and education.

A Decision concerning great apes was also adopted at CoP17 as follows:

CITES Decision 17.232 *The Secretariat shall collaborate with the IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group, GRASP, and other experts, and subject to the availability of sufficient funding, finalize a report on the status of great apes and the relative impact of illegal trade and other pressures on their status, for consideration by the Standing Committee.*

CITES Decision 17.233 *The Standing Committee shall consider the report prepared in accordance with Decision 17.232, and prepare recommendations for further action as may be needed, to be considered at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

At SC69, the Standing Committee established an intersessional working group on great apes, to review the report prepared in accordance with Decision 17.233. The Great Ape Status Report (GRASP & IUCN, 2018) was presented to the 70th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee. The report notes that all species of great ape are facing significant and multiple threats across their range. It is a comprehensive analysis of the status of all great apes and the threats they face, noting that “Almost all great ape populations are in decline in both Africa and Asia, some so drastically that the population viability is in doubt.”

CoP18 Doc 75 proposed amendments to Resolution Conf 13.4 on Conservation of and Trade in Great Apes. A number of amendments to this Resolution were adopted by the Parties, including, for example, a new clause that addresses the extractive industries and agricultural sectors:

URGES all actors in the energy, extractives and agricultural sectors to comply with relevant national and international laws and encourages them to apply appropriate best practice guidelines in minimising impacts on great ape populations and habitats

5.5 Threats to Great Apes in West Africa

Great apes are facing multiple severe threats across the region. In Guinea, for example, deforestation, mining, slash and burn agriculture and poor enforcement of wildlife law are reportedly all threatening the chimpanzee populations in the country (USAID, 2012).

The major overarching threats to West African great apes include:

- i. **Habitat loss:** this is a major problem for great apes in the region. This is partly caused by deforestation for slash and burn agriculture and commercial agriculture (such as palm oil plantations). There is significant reported overlap between chimpanzee range and areas identified as

suitable for oil palm development, particularly in Liberia (81.7%), Ghana (87.9%) and Sierra Leone (48.8%) (Wich et al., 2014). Extractive industries such as logging and mining also threaten chimpanzee habitat in West Africa, and bring with them increased access to forested areas, for hunters and farmers, through construction of roads and railways. Half of all Western Chimpanzees reside in Guinea, in a region threatened by industrial mining (Kühl et al 2017);

- ii. **Bushmeat hunting:** bushmeat hunting seriously threatens Western chimpanzee populations. The slow rates at which chimpanzees reproduce, combined with already small population sizes, means that poaching can rapidly result in local extirpation of chimpanzee populations (Humble et al., 2016). A one-month survey in Liberia (around the Sapo National Park area), found 82 chimpanzee carcasses, killed by professional hunters, along with eight live infants (Greengrass, 2016);
- iii. **Conflict with humans:** apes that enter human crops are sometimes killed. In Sierra Leone, for example, there is a critical problem of chimpanzees outside of protected areas depending on human crops, often destroying an entire crop. Communities sometimes try to poison or hunt chimpanzees as a result (Brncic et al., 2010);
- iv. **International trafficking:** great apes succumb to high mortality rates during capture, so the true impact of poaching on West Africa's great apes is largely unknown. Often the capture of infants is opportunistic, once the mother has been killed for bushmeat or as a result of crop raiding. However, it has been reported that there are much more sophisticated criminal networks now in operation that directly target great apes for the specific purpose of obtaining infant apes for sale into the tourist-entertainment industry or exotic-pet trade. This trade is sophisticated and has been linked to other forms of crime, including trafficking of drugs and arms (Stiles et al., 2013).

In 2016 alone, the EAGLE Network coordinated operations across West and Central Africa that led to the arrest of 19 great ape traffickers and the seizure of 45 chimpanzee skulls, 19 gorilla skulls and other body parts. One live chimpanzee was also rescued (EAGLE, 2016).

A now infamous case of great ape trafficking involved Guinea, where in 2010 alone, 69 chimpanzees left Guinea under false permits, which had labelled them as captive bred (despite the absence of registered breeding facilities in the country). All were destined for display in Chinese zoos and safari parks (Stiles et al., 2013). As a result of this incident, the head of the CITES Management Authority was removed from office (UNODC, 2016).

Great ape trafficking is unusual in that it usually involves the shipment of live animals. Traffickers therefore tend to prefer transporting them as air freight, as a quicker method of transportation, and traffickers are known to utilize small air strips and cargo planes, often enabling the trafficking to take place without inspection by enforcement authorities.

The Great Ape Survival Partnership (GRASP) has created an Apes Seizure Database in collaboration with the United Nations Environment -World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC). This reveals that more than 1,800 great apes were seized internationally, but as more than 90% of these seizures occurred within national borders, they often were not reported to CITES.

5.6 Analysis

As our closest living relatives, great apes are of special importance. They play a significant cultural, social and scientific role as part of our natural heritage. The status of great apes in West Africa is precarious and they face a number of serious threats, including poaching for bushmeat and trafficking for the pet trade and for entertainment. Trafficking live great apes appears to be a specialist field for criminals, given the complexity of shipping and 'storing' live animals.

6 Reptiles and Amphibians

6.1 Reptile Trade in West Africa

There is a significant legal trade in CITES-listed reptiles from the West African region. A 2018 TRAFFIC Report (Outhwaite & Brown, 2018) analyzed the volumes of protected species being legally exported from West Africa to Asia between 2006 – 2015, including:

- Ball pythons (*Python regius*): 139,847 individuals;
- African spurred tortoise (*Centrochelys sulcata*): 31,193 individuals

The report found that a number of West African countries were exporting live reptiles to Asia. Including:

- **Togo** which exported 37,661 Ball pythons and 9,120 African savannah monitors;
- **Mali** which exported 13,000 Nile monitors and 12,951 African spurred tortoises;
- **Ghana** which exported 93,168 Ball pythons;

Several trade suspensions for reptiles from the West African region have been recommended by the CITES Standing Committee. A full list of these trade suspensions can be found in Annex I.

6.2 Snakes

CITES Decision 17.276 on snakes specifically pertained to Ghana, Benin and Togo (as well as Honduras and Indonesia):

Decision 17.276: Directed to Benin, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia and Togo: Benin, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia and Togo are encouraged to undertake the following actions:

- a) Honduras: to ensure that measures are in place to address poaching of, and illegal trade in, the Cayos Cochinosa boa constrictor (*Boa constrictor imperator*);*
- b) Benin: to implement the following measures for the Ball python (*Python regius*):*
 - i) design and implement a management programme for the species;*
 - ii) make non-detriment findings based on studies of the species, basic demographics, harvest and trade in the species; and*
 - iii) strengthen national regulations relating to trade control and monitoring, including stricter control policies for production systems.*
- c) Benin, Ghana and Togo: to implement the following measures for the Calabar ground boa (*Calabaria reinhardtii*):*
 - i) make non-detriment findings based on studies of the species, basic demographics, harvest and trade in the species; and*
 - ii) improve systems to monitor harvest, captive breeding, and trade in the species;*
- d) Indonesia: to improve enforcement of existing laws and take into account the recommendations provided in the document to more effectively regulate the collection of and trade in the populations of the wild green tree python (*Morelia viridis*) and the Boelen's python (*Morelia boeleni*); and*
- e) Benin, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia and Togo: to report to the Secretariat on the implementation of actions directed to them in this Decision, for transmission to, and review by the Animals Committee at one of*

its meetings between the 17th meeting and the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties and subsequent reporting by the Animals Committee to the Standing Committee.

The Secretariat submitted AC30 Doc27.2 to the 30th meeting of the Animals Committee, concerning Decisions 17.276 and 17.279, and noting that no report had been submitted by Benin, Ghana or Togo with regard to these Decisions. At the 70th meeting of the Standing Committee, the Standing Committee noted the conclusions of the Animals Committee presented in SC70 Doc 59, including:

“Concerning Benin, Ghana, Honduras and Togo, the Animals Committee requested the United Nations Environment Programme-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) to pay particular attention to trade in *Boa constrictor imperator* from Honduras, *Python regius* from Benin, and *Calabaria reinhardtii* from Benin, Ghana and Togo when performing, after the next Conference of the Parties, its initial analysis of trade data in the context of the Review of Significant Trade in specimens of Appendix-II species, and the review of trade in animal specimens reported as produced in captivity. “

At AC30, the Animals Committee expressed its concern that these Decisions may result in a parallel process to the Review of Significant Trade (RST) except that it would lack the RST structure. It therefore recommended that UNEP-WCMC pay attention to reports of *Python regius* from Benin, and *Calabaria reinhardtii* from Benin, Ghana and Togo when undertaking its analysis of trade data for the Review of Significant Trade in specimens of Appendix II species. The Parties therefore agreed to delete Decision 17.276 at CoP18.

6.3 Threats

Wildlife crime incidents involving reptiles and amphibians in the West African region are numerous, and involve a variety of different species, from snakes to chameleons. Furthermore, reptiles are commonly trafficked alongside other species, such as leopard skins and pangolin scales. However, often the specific reptile species concerned is not reported, but simply noted as a generic species such as ‘lizards’ or ‘turtles’.

Many seizures of reptiles in the region are seized largely thanks to the work of the EAGLE Network in collaboration with the national authorities. The following are just a few examples of the many seizures taking place concerning reptile species from the region:

Benin

- In November 2014, 5 boa skins, 3 leopard skins, and pangolin carcasses and scales were seized and a wildlife trafficker arrested (EAGLE Network, 2014);
- In February 2015, 34 freshwater turtles, 4 crocodiles and 2 Sitatunga antelope skins were seized and a wildlife trafficker arrested (EAGLE Network, 2015);
- In April 2015, an investigation into the illegal trade in live animals resulted in the seizure of 150 live Royal Pythons and pangolin scales, and the arrest of two traffickers (EAGLE Network, 2015).

Ghana:

- In January 2012, 28 live Senegal Chameleons (*Chamaeleo senegalensis*) in transit from Ghana to Canada, were seized in the UK. Benin was reportedly the origin of the chameleons (TRAFFIC, 2013);
- In April 2014, 100 live African-spurred Tortoises (*Geochelone sulcata*) destined for a UK trader were found in air freight that had originated from Ghana (TRAFFIC, 2015);

Guinea:

- In May and June 2010 customs officials at Brussels Airport in Belgium confiscated 25 crocodile bags from the luggage of a number of Chinese passengers who were in transit from Guinea, bound for Beijing, China (TRAFFIC, 2017);
- In 2015, 2 traffickers were arrested in Guinea with 6 crocodiles, a giant tortoise, three vultures and a Patas Monkey (EAGLE Network, 2016);
- In 2015 there was an arrest of 2 traffickers in Conakry with 60 tortoises, six python skins and four crocodiles (EAGLE Network, 2016);

Nigeria:

- In July 2002, at Heathrow Airport in the UK, 10 African Dwarf Crocodiles (*Osteolaemus tetraspus*) were discovered by customs officers inspecting a shipment in transit from Nigeria to South Korea. 12 Royal Pythons (*Python regius*) and 13 monitor lizards were among 95 other reptiles in the consignment. Documents alleging that the reptiles were genuine exports from Benin and claiming the crocodiles to be of common species that had been farmed, had been forged (TRAFFIC, 2017).

Togo:

- In August 2013, Belgium officials seized 130 live Hinged Tortoises (*Kinixys* spp), 21 Graceful Chameleons (*Chamaeleo gracilis*) and 20 Savannah Monitor Lizards (*Varanus exanthematicus*) from Togo. (TRAFFIC, 2014);
- In February 2015, two Togolese traffickers were arrested and 150 royal pythons seized. It was discovered that the pythons were being imported mainly from Ghana (EAGLE Network, 2016);
- In April 2017, three traffickers were arrested with 783 python skins. All the skins were apparently trafficked through Nigeria (EAGLE Network, 2017).

Senegal:

In October 2014, 5 international traffickers were arrested in Dakar and 2,753 wildlife products seized, resulting in the dismantling of a wildlife trafficking network that included operations in Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Kenya and Congo. The wildlife products included python skins, crocodile skins, turtle shells and savannah monitor skins, among other animals parts (EAGLE Network, 2014);

In August 2016, 128 African Helmeted Turtles were seized and members of a ring of turtle traffickers arrested (EAGLE Network, 2016).

6.4 Analysis

The presence or absence of reptiles in an ecosystem can be a key indicator of its health. Despite the lack of a comprehensive analysis of illegal trade in reptiles and amphibians in the region, it is evident from the number of seizures, and the diversity of species involved in those seizures, that illegal trade appears to be booming. This trade is apparently both regional and international. Furthermore, given that there are also significant amounts of legal trade in reptile and amphibian species from the region, the actual combined impact of legal and illegal trade may be a cause for concern for some species. Providing support to the region to research these impacts, and to provide input into the CITES processes reviewing significant trade in the species, would be an important step for the region.

7 Northwest African Cheetah

7.1 Status of Northwest African Cheetah

The Northwest African cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus ssp. Hecki*) has been classified as *Critically Endangered* by the IUCN (Belbachir, 2008). The population is experiencing continued decline, with the total population suspected to number less than 250 mature individuals.

7.2 Northwest African Cheetah Distribution

The Northwest African cheetah is known to exist in four countries: Niger, Burkina Faso, Benin and Algeria. Within West Africa, the only known population persists only in the transboundary Park W complex.

7.3 Cheetah and CITES

At the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016), the following Decisions on *Illegal trade in cheetahs (Acinonyx jubatus)*, were adopted as follows:

Directed to the Secretariat

CITES Decision 17.124: The Secretariat shall, subject to external funding, and in consultation with relevant experts, commission the development of a CITES cheetah trade resource kit that compiles relevant information and tools to assist in implementing the Convention with regard to trade in cheetahs, and addresses inter alia: identification of live cheetahs and parts and derivatives thereof; advice on procedures to be followed in case of seizures including handling, DNA sampling, guidance on the immediate and long-term disposal of live animals (e.g. decision trees based on relevant CITES Resolutions, veterinary care, contact details of experts or potential rescue centres, advice on procedures, reporting on disposal activities); and lists of suitable housing facilities for long-term placement of live cheetahs; and other relevant materials;

Decision 17.125: The Secretariat shall submit a draft CITES cheetah trade resource kit, together with recommendations on the languages in which it should be made available, and the formats in which it should be made available (e.g. hard copy, smart phone application, web-based), to the Standing Committee at its 69th or 70th meeting for its consideration. The Secretariat shall, subject to external funding, make the final version of the kit available in the languages and formats agreed by the Standing Committee, and subject to available resources, revise it as may be necessary to ensure that it remains accurate, up to date and reflecting best practice;

Decision 17.126: The Secretariat, subject to available resources, is invited to assess the feasibility of creating a forum on the CITES website for Parties, experts, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders to exchange and share information on cheetahs;

Decision 17.127: The Secretariat shall report to the Standing Committee on progress on all of the recommendations in Standing Committee document SC66 Doc. 32.5, paragraphs 17 and 18, and progress in halting illegal trade in cheetahs;

Decision 17.128: The Secretariat shall keep the Standing Committee informed about its actions to implement Decisions 17.124 - 127 and report on their implementation and its efforts to halt illegal trade in cheetahs at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Directed to the Standing Committee

Decision 17.129: The Standing Committee shall review the draft CITES cheetah trade resource kit produced in compliance with Decision 17.125 at its 69th or 70th meeting, and formulate comments and recommendations to the Secretariat for its finalization and dissemination.

Directed to Parties and donors

Decision: 17.130 Parties and potential donors are encouraged to provide funding support to the Secretariat for the implementation of the Decisions regarding Illegal trade in cheetahs (Decisions 17.124 - 130), where needed.

In compliance with these Decisions, the Secretariat reported in CoPI8 Doc 60 that the following activities had been carried out:

- The CITES Secretariat has developed a webpage on cheetahs, which is located on the CITES website, and includes a forum for non-sensitive information exchange:
https://cites.org/eng/prog/terrestrial_fauna/cheetahs
- The World Customs Organization (WCO) and the CITES Secretariat have established a closed user group for cheetahs, on the WCO CENComm platform. This is a secure communication system for enforcement authorities.
- A Cheetah Trade Resource Kit has been developed by the Zoological Society of London and reviewed by an intersessional Working Group established by the Steering Committee at SC69. This resource kit is not yet finalized (SC71 Doc. 18 Rev 1).

At CoPI8, it was agreed that Decisions 17.124 – 17.30 be deleted and replaced with the following Decision:

CITES Decision 18.193: Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat shall, subject to external funding, make the final version of the CITES cheetah trade resource kit available in the languages and formats agreed by the Standing Committee.

7.4 Threats to Northwest African Cheetah

Although there have been no recent confiscations of live or dead cheetah in the West African region, range States have identified illegal trade as a significant threat to the remaining populations. It is believed that cheetah parts and products are illegally traded within the wider illegal market for large cats.

At a regional strategy workshop for cheetah, Niger expressed strong concern about trade in skins to Nigeria, and that controlling illegal trade is an important management strategy within the W Park complex. Also, fakes resembling cheetah skins are frequently observed – such as a recent seizure in Togo which found 15 fake skins with a cheetah spot pattern. The presence of fakes is indicative of a demand for the product in the illegal marketplace (AC27 Doc 18, Annex 1).

7.5 Analysis

The Northwest African cheetah is emblematic of the precarious conservation status of many species in the West African region. The cheetah also emphasizes the importance of the Park W complex for the region's biodiversity. If this subspecies of cheetah is not to be lost altogether a comprehensive program for its protection must be implemented immediately.

8 Black Crowned Crane

8.1 Status of Black Crowned Crane

The Black Crowned Crane (*Balearica pavonina*) is classified by the IUCN as Vulnerable (BirdLife International, 2016) due to "...a rapid population decline which is predicted to continue into the future, primarily due to habitat loss and trapping for domestication or illegal international trade." The global population is estimated to be 28,000 and 47,000 mature individuals. A 1994 survey indicated the population to be between 65,500 and 77,500, highlighting the recent rapid population decline (AC30 Doc 12.2).

8.2 Black Crowned Crane Distribution

CITES recognizes two sub-species, the West African Crowned Crane (*B. p. pavonina*) and the Sudan or Eastern Crowned Crane (*B. p. ceciliae*). Each subspecies occurs in a distinct sub-population. The West African sub-population (*B. p. pavonina*), is fragmented and occurs from the Gambia basin to Lake Chad. The eastern sub-population occurs from Chad to Northern Kenya. (AC30 Doc 12.2).

Native: Cameroon; Chad; Ethiopia; Gambia; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Kenya; Mali; Mauritania; Niger; Senegal; South Sudan.

Possibly Extinct: Nigeria

Extant: Sudan

8.3 Black Crowned Crane and CITES

Balearica pavonina was listed on CITES Appendix II in 1985. At the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal submitted CoPI8 Prop 19, a proposal to uplist the Black Crowned Crane from Appendix II to Appendix I. The proposal was adopted by consensus.

The species was included in the Review of Significant Trade at the 24th meeting of the CITES Animals Committee in 2009 (AC24 Summary Record). At the 25th meeting of the Animals Committee, the species was retained in the Review of Significant Trade process for Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sudan, Togo and Uganda (AC25 Doc 9.5). Recommendations for a suspension of trade in *Balearica pavonina* were subsequently issued for Guinea, South Sudan, Sudan and Nigeria (AC25 Summary Record). Nigeria was then removed as it was thought to have complied with the necessary requirements. The suspension remains in place for Guinea, South Sudan and Sudan (CITES Notification No. 2018/006).

'*Balearica pavonina* / Mali' was identified as a priority species-country combination for further analysis under the Review of Significant Trade at the 29th meeting of the CITES Animals Committee in 2017 (AC29 Com 5 (Rev by Sec)). At the 30th meeting of the Animals Committee, the species was categorized as 'Action is Needed' for Mali (AC30 Comm 11 (Rev by Sec)). The Animals Committee Significant Trade Working Group noted that '...the recorded trade levels in wild specimens of this species were very high (90 birds between 2015 and 2016) considering the population was estimated to be 100 birds in 2004. It was suggested that birds may be coming from neighbouring countries but are not reported as re-exports, noting that Guinea is subject to a trade suspension for this species. The Secretariat may wish to request

Mali to clarify the origin, provenance and legal acquisition of specimens that were exported in previous years / 2015 and 2016.'

8.4 Threats to Black Crowned Cranes

The Black Crowned Crane is severely threatened by loss and degradation of wetlands, as well as overgrazing, industrial pollution, dam construction, nest disturbance and egg removal, bushfires, hunting and illegal capture of chicks for domestication and international trade. Parts of the crane, particularly the head and feathers, are also utilized in traditional healing practices (Williams et al., 2003).

There is a legal trade in Black Crowned Cranes, with 8,916 live birds in trade recorded between 1986 and 2016 (CoP18 Prop 19).

Cranes are commonly illegally captured for domestication by communities in several areas of West Africa. International demand has also been recorded from North Africa, the Middle East and Europe (Williams et al., 2003).

The capture, domestication and trade in live cranes is reported to be a serious threat for cranes across West Africa, with 60% of all crane sites affected (Williams et al., 2003). In Mali, for example, domestication and trade is reportedly the primary threat to Black Crowned Cranes. A 2001 survey in the Inner Niger Delta reported a larger number of captive cranes than there were remaining in the wild (Kone et al., 2007). Cranes do not breed successfully in captivity and the survey indicated that black crowned cranes could become extinct in Mali if captures continued (Kone et al., 2007).

8.5 Analysis

The Black Crowned Crane is both an iconic and a vulnerable species. It is Nigeria's National bird. The threats it faces are numerous, ranging from illegal trade to habitat destruction. Scientists had been calling for the species to be uplisted to CITES Appendix I for more than a decade, due to the serious threat posed by the trade in live cranes (Williams et al., 2003, Diagana et al., 2006). At CoP18 the Black Crowned Crane was uplisted to Appendix I (CoP18 Prop.19), following a proposal by Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal. It is therefore now imperative that follow-up actions are taken to ensure compliance with the CITES listing.

9 African Leopard

9.1 Status of African Leopards

Panthera pardus is classified as Vulnerable, with a decreasing population (Stein et al, 2016). However, populations of leopard in Africa are largely concentrated in East, Central and Southern Africa, with West African populations highly threatened. Therefore, the IUCN classification cannot be considered reflective of the level of threat to the West African leopard subpopulation. Jacobson et al. (2016) note that there is a lack of empirical field data on distribution status and population estimates for the species, although Stein et al. (2016) indicates that there is 'compelling evidence' that subpopulations in Africa have declined considerably.

9.2 African Leopard Distribution

Panthera pardus occupies the greatest range of any felid, ranging across a large part of Africa, and Asia (from the Middle East to the Pacific Ocean) (Hunter et al. 2013). They are able to adapt to a wide variety of different habitats, including savannah grasslands, tropical forests, alpine regions and deserts (Nowell and Jackson, 1996).

In West Africa, the loss of range for leopard has been estimated at between 86% - 95% (Jacobson et al., 2016). Stein et al. (2016) indicate that leopard distribution in West Africa has been 'dramatically reduced'. Recent surveys have indicated presence in Niger (along the border with Benin and Burkina Faso), Senegal (including Parc National de Niokolo-Koba) and Sierra Leone (near Outamba Kilimi National Park and Gola Rainforest National Park). In Liberia, leopards have been recorded in Sapo National Park and Lofa-Mano National Park. In Ghana, leopards are present in Mole National Park and along the border with Côte d'Ivoire. In Benin, leopards are present in the north of the country. Leopards are reportedly almost absent from Nigeria (Stein et al. 2016). The leopard is reportedly extinct in Togo and possibly extinct in Gambia (Stein et al 2016).

9.3 African Leopards and CITES

African leopards are listed on CITES Appendix I. CITES permits trophy hunting of leopards which is regulated under CITES Resolution Conf 10.14 (Rev. CoP16) *Quotas for leopard hunting trophies and skins for personal use*. There are no West African states with a CITES quota for leopard hunting trophies.

9.4 Threats to African Leopards

Leopards are subject to a wide range of threats across their range, including: habitat destruction and fragmentation; reduced prey-base; human wildlife conflict; excessive offtake for ceremonial purposes; poorly regulated trophy hunting and the illegal trade in skin and bones. In West Africa, threats to leopard populations are poorly documented. However, the ongoing seizure of illegally traded leopard parts and products is evidence of significant demand. Examples of illegal trade in leopard in the region include:

- Benin (March 2019): a trafficker imprisoned for possession of a leopard skin and several crocodile skins (EAGLE Briefing March 2019);
- Côte d'Ivoire (January 2019): a trafficker arrested with a lion skin and two leopard skins. Also seized were serval and civet skins, 3 honey badgers, 7 crocodile skins and elephant and hippo parts (EAGLE Briefing January 2019);
- Côte d'Ivoire (January 2018): a trafficking network was uncovered and among products seized were ivory, pangolin scales and leopard parts, including crushed and boiled leopard bones (EAGLE Annual Report, 2018);
- Senegal (December 2018): the arrest of three traffickers, found with more than 500 wildlife skins, including several leopards cut into pieces and at least 3 lions (EAGLE Annual Report, 2018);
- Burkina Faso (December 2018): traffickers apprehended with 2 lion skins and 3 leopard skins. The lion skins reportedly came from the WAP complex (EAGLE Annual Report, 2018);
- Côte d'Ivoire (May 2017): three operations led to the seizure of 7 leopard skins and 400 pieces of carved ivory (EAGLE Annual Report, 2017);
- Senegal (November 2017): a wildlife trafficker arrested with 2 tusks, one leopard skin and several crocodile skins (EAGLE Annual Report, 2017)

9.5 Analysis

The previous widespread distribution of leopards, and their ability to adapt to different habitats, have led to a misconception that leopards are more resilient to many of the threats facing large carnivores in sub-Saharan Africa. Among other problems, this has led to a paucity of adequate data about the species in the West African region. However, the massive loss of estimated range within West Africa (86% - 95%) provides strong evidence that leopards in the region are in serious need of increased conservation

efforts. The true scale and nature of the illicit trade in leopard parts and products is unknown, but the ongoing seizures of leopard parts in the region, and the fact that leopards are regularly being traded alongside other illicit wildlife products, means that the impact of the illegal trade in leopards is likely to be highly significant and requires urgent attention.

10 Common Hippopotamus

10.1 Status and Distribution of Common Hippopotamus

Hippopotamus amphibius is classified as Vulnerable by IUCN (Lewison & Pluháček, 2017), with a stable population trend. This classification is due to relatively large populations being present in Eastern and Southern Africa. However, the IUCN recognizes that the West African subpopulation occurs in much lower densities and, as evidenced by the table below, the majority of populations show a decreasing trend. All but two West African populations are of conservation concern. IUCN further notes that: “The conservation status of Hippos remains precarious and the need for direct conservation action to protect Hippos and Hippo habitat across their range is a priority. Although in some countries Hippo populations have stabilized, Hippo population declines are still reported in many countries. The growing and unabated threats of habitat loss and unregulated hunting are major challenges to Hippo population viability and persistence.” (Lewison & Pluháček, 2017).

Hippopotamus amphibius is present in the following countries: Angola; Benin; Botswana; Burkina Faso; Burundi; Cameroon; Central African Republic; Chad; Congo; Congo, The Democratic Republic of the; Côte d'Ivoire; Equatorial Guinea; Ethiopia; Gabon; Gambia; Ghana; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Kenya; Liberia; Malawi; Mali; Mozambique; Namibia; Niger; Nigeria; Rwanda; Senegal; Sierra Leone; Somalia; South Africa; South Sudan; Sudan; Swaziland; Tanzania, United Republic of; Togo; Uganda; Zambia; Zimbabwe

Within West Africa, the populations of the hippopotamus are as follows:

TABLE 5: WEST AFRICAN POPULATIONS OF HIPPOPOTAMUS AMPHIBIUS

Country	Status	Trend	Concern	Estimated population size
Benin	RD-LA	D	Y	500
Burkina Faso	RD-LD	I	N	1,500-2,000
Gambia	RD-LD	U	Y	40
Ghana	RD-LD	U	Y	150-200
Guinea	RD-LA	D	Y	500
Guinea Bissau	RD-LD	D	Y	200-500
Côte d'Ivoire	RD-LD	D	Y	500-600
Mali	RD-LD	U	Y	100
Niger	RD-LA	U	Y	150-200
Nigeria	RD-LD	D	Y	100-200
Senegal	RD-LA	U	Y	500
Sierra Leone	RD-LD	U	Y	100-200
Togo	RD-LD	U	N	250-500

Status of population (Status): RD-LA = Restricted Distribution-Locally Abundant; RD-LD = Restricted Distribution-Low Density

Trends in population (Trend): D = Decreasing; I = Increasing; U = Unknown

Concern regarding conservation status (Concern): Y = yes; N = No

*Source of data: Lewison & Pluháček (2017) IUCN Red List Supplementary Information

10.2 Common Hippopotamus and CITES

Hippopotamus amphibius is listed in Appendix II of CITES. The CITES Animals Committee initiated a Significant Trade Review for *Hippopotamus amphibius* in 1999, in order to identify potential impacts of trade on hippo populations in Africa. The Animals Committee issued recommendations for Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. CITES subsequently established an export quota for Tanzania.

10.3 Threats to Common Hippopotamus

Habitat clearance and/or degradation, and illegal, unregulated hunting for meat and ivory, are recognized as the two main threats to hippos (Lewison & Pluháček, 2017). In some areas of West Africa, hippopotamus raid agricultural areas for food and a need for special conservation status of the species has been identified to alleviate conflict (Amoussou et al, 2006). In 2003, the world's largest hippo population (in the Democratic Republic of Congo) was found to have crashed by 90%, decreasing from 29,000 hippos to just 1,300, as a result of mass poaching for meat and ivory (New Scientist, 2003). Hippopotamus provide important ecosystem services, and their dung is known to deliver nutrients for fish and other aquatic species. Therefore, concern has been expressed that the declining populations could have a direct impact on the livelihoods of the local human populations that rely on fish (United Press International, 2005).

Hippopotamus ivory is utilized in the same way as elephant ivory, carved into sculptures, trinkets and other high-value products. Hippo ivory, like elephant ivory, is extremely valuable. Other hippo products are also traded, including hippo skins and feet. There is a global demand for hippopotamus products, and the primary market for legal hippo ivory is Hong Kong, with 90% of traded hippo products imported to, or exported from, the country (Andersson & Gibson, 2017). Hong Kong, however, has no processes in place for registering owners of hippo ivory, therefore providing a loophole for potential laundering of illegal ivory into the legal market (Andersson & Gibson, 2017).

The impact of illegal poaching of hippopotamus on populations within West Africa is unknown. However, given that hippopotamus ivory regularly appears as a component of illicit wildlife seizures, and given the low numbers of hippopotamus present in many West African countries, it seems likely that hippopotamus ivory is being brought into West Africa from other parts of Africa. Examples of seizures include:

- Togo (September 2016): 4 hippo skulls, 14 hippo teeth and 15 bones were seized and two traffickers arrested (EAGLE Network Annual Report, 2016);
- Benin (July 2016): 3 ivory traffickers were arrested with 180 pieces of worked ivory and additional hippo ivory (amount not recorded) (EAGLE Network Annual Report, 2016);
- Senegal (August 2017): the largest ever haul of ivory seized in Senegal, also contained lion teeth and hippo ivory. The traffickers were thought to have brought most of the products into Senegal from Nigeria (EAGLE Network Annual Report, 2017);
- Togo (March 2018) two Beninese poachers were arrested and prosecuted after killing a hippo (EAGLE Network Annual Report, 2017);
- Côte d'Ivoire (January 2019): a notorious trafficker found with illegal wildlife products from many different species, including hippo, lion, leopard, crocodile and python (Eagle Network Briefing, January 2019)

10.4 Analysis

Hippopotamus conservation in West Africa does not get the attention it warrants, perhaps due to the widespread distribution of the species across the region, giving the false impression that populations are healthy. Unfortunately, with the exception of Burkina Faso, all populations in West Africa are either in a downward trend or the trend is unknown. Population sizes are also small and, again with the exception of Burkina Faso, all populations number 500 individuals or less. This troubling conservation status, combined with evidence of illegal trade in the region, is cause for concern. Trade routes for the species in the region, and the source of illegal hippo ivory seized is unknown. More information is needed with regard to the conservation requirements of the species, and more awareness is required concerning the important ecological role that hippopotamus plays in the freshwater ecosystems of West Africa.

II West African Vultures (migratory)

11.1 Status and Distribution of West African Migratory Vulture Species

Vultures are among the most threatened bird species in West Africa. The six species of Old World migratory vultures found in the region are all either Critically Endangered or Endangered. They are facing a high risk of extinction in the wild.

White-headed Vulture (*Trigonoceps occipitalis*). Status: Critically Endangered with a decreasing population trend. Severe population declines have been reported throughout its range in West Africa (BirdLife International, 2017d). Total population: 2,500 – 9,999 mature individuals. West African Distribution: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Benin. Presence uncertain: Nigeria.

Hooded Vulture (*Necrosyrtes monachus*). Status: Critically Endangered with a decreasing population trend (BirdLife International, 2017e). West African Distribution: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.

White-backed Vulture (*Gyps africanus*). Status: Critically Endangered with a decreasing population trend (BirdLife International 2018c). Population declines have exceeded 90% in West Africa. West African Distribution: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.

Rüppell's Vulture (*Gyps rueppelli*). Status: Critically Endangered with decreasing population trend. Extremely rapid population declines reported for West Africa (BirdLife International, 2017f). Total population: 22,000 mature individuals. West African Distribution: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.

Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*). Status: Endangered with a decreasing population trend (BirdLife International, 2017c). Total population: 12,000 – 38,000 mature individuals. West African Distribution: Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Benin, Ghana, Togo, Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau

Lappet-faced Vulture (*Torgos tracheliotos*). Status: Endangered with decreasing population trend (BirdLife International, 2017g). Total population: 5,700 mature individuals. West African Distribution: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo.

Recent assessments have shown population declines of 50% - 96% for these vulture populations in West Africa (BirdLife International, 2017 c-g and 2018c).

Note that the Palm-nut vulture is not included in this list as it is not considered migratory, is not a scavenger, and therefore is not subject to the same levels of threat (Botha et al., 2017).

11.2 West African Migratory Vultures and CITES

West African vultures were included in CITES Appendix II in 1979.

Burkina Faso, Senegal and Niger submitted a document to the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES concerning West African Vulture Trade and Conservation Management (CoP18 Doc 97). CoP18 adopted the following Decisions concerning vultures:

CITES Decision 18.186: Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat shall liaise with the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) to assist in the implementation of the trade-related aspects of the Vulture Multispecies Action Plan, subject to the availability of resources, including sharing information based on the work of the Animals Committee.

CITES Decision 18.187: Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat is encouraged to include vultures as a case study for the possible Non-Detriment Findings workshop.

CITES Decision 18.188: Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat shall issue a Notification to the Parties requesting the following information concerning trade in and conservation of Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), whiteheaded vulture (*Trigonoceps occipitalis*), hooded vulture (*Necrosyrtes monachus*), whitebacked vulture (*Gyps africanus*), Rüppell's vulture (*Gyps rueppelli*) and lappet-faced vulture (*Torgos tracheliotos*) in West Africa:

- a) biological data on West African vultures, including population size, breeding productivity, distribution, and trends across the range of the species;
- b) available information about harvest and levels of legal and illegal trade of vultures and their parts;
- c) information on threats to these species, in particular belief-based use and sentinel poisoning, and other trade-related threats;
- d) information on enforcement actions taken, including seizures, forensic analysis of seized specimens, arrests, prosecutions and judgments relating to illegal trade in vultures as well as disposal of seized specimens; and
- e) new developments regarding management, education and awareness-raising measures concerning vultures.

CITES Decision 18.189: Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat shall compile responses from the Parties and provide these responses to the Animals Committee's working group to inform its work.

CITES Decision 18.190: Directed to the Animals Committee: The Animals Committee shall establish a working group to address key gaps in knowledge as it relates to the biological and trade issues highlighted in the Vulture Multispecies Action Plan (Vulture MsAP), with particular attention for the six species mentioned in Decision 18.188 and the West African region, and including but not limited to trade in vulture parts of belief-based use (Objective 4), sentinel poisoning by poachers (Objective 5), crosscutting actions that contribute to addressing knowledge gaps (Objective 11), and contribute to effective implementation of the Vulture MsAP (Objective 12). The working group shall:

- a) review the information submitted under the Notification;
- b) conduct a detailed assessment on the scale and impact of legal and illegal trade in live birds, eggs, and vulture body parts across the range of the Vulture MsAP; and

c) provide findings and recommendations to the Animals Committee.

CITES Decision 18.191: Directed to the Animals Committee: The Animals Committee shall provide guidance to range States on how to factor in all known threats to the species when making non-detriment findings for these species, and make recommendations, as appropriate, for consideration by the Standing Committee.

CITES Decision 18.192: Directed to the Standing Committee: The Standing Committee shall: a) consider the recommendations from the Animals Committee, as appropriate, and information relating to illegal trade in vulture body parts for traditional/belief-based use, and adopt recommendations as appropriate for consideration by the Parties concerned; and b) in consultation with the Secretariat, report on the implementation of Decisions 18.186 to 18.191 to the Conference of the Parties at its 19th meeting.

11.3 Threats to West African Vultures

All six species of Old World migratory vulture in West Africa face multiple threats across their range, both within and outside of the West African region. These threats include widespread poisoning, habitat degradation (including the loss of suitable nesting trees), nest harvesting, capture for bushmeat, decreased food sources (loss of wild ungulates has resulted in reduced carrion availability) and electrocution (CoP18 Doc 97).

Within West Africa, the primary threat to vultures is poisoning. Vultures are often the unintended victim of illegal predator control by livestock farmers, which use poison bait. This is becoming more prevalent as human populations expand into wildlife habitats (Ogada et al., 2016b; Botha et al., 2017).

Poisoning can also target vultures directly, particularly for “belief-based” use (Botha et al., 2017). Vulture parts are believed to aid a range of physical and mental illnesses. Vulture heads, skins and other parts are sold in markets throughout the West African region. A survey of fetish and bushmeat markets across West Africa by Buij et al. (2016) found vulture parts on sale in Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo. Annual offtake for these markets in West Africa was estimated at 975-1462 hooded vultures, 356-534 palm-nut vultures, 188-282 Rüppell’s vultures, 154-231 white-backed vultures, 143-214 lappet-faced vultures, and 40-60 crowned eagles (Buij et al., 2016). These figures are extremely high considering total population sizes for the species.

Recorded legal international trade in the six species is minimal (CoP18 Doc 97). However, there have been observations made of vulture parts being illegally traded between countries. For example, Nikolaus (2001) indicates that vultures are the most valuable bird products present in markets within Nigeria and that vultures are brought into Nigeria from neighbouring countries. Nabaloum (2012) also reports the illegal poaching of 26 vultures for export from Burkina Faso to Nigeria. Such cross-border trade (without permits) is illegal, hence the lack of inclusion in the CITES trade database.

Another cause for concern is sentinel poisoning, in which ivory poachers use poisons to contaminate elephant carcasses, thereby ensuring that circling vultures do not reveal to wildlife officials the location of both the poachers and carcass (Ogada et al., 2016a) although at present this type of poisoning is primarily reported to be taking place in Southern Africa. Between 2012 and 2014, Ogada et al. (2016a) recorded 11 elephant poaching incidents across Africa in which vultures were poisoned, leading to the death of 155 elephants and 2,044 vultures.

11.4 Analysis

Vultures play a vital role in the wider ecosystem, removing carcasses and other waste from the environment. This reduces disease and contamination of water. In areas in which vultures are lacking, there are implications for the spread of disease, potentially affecting both domestic livestock and human communities (CoPI8 Doc 97).

Given the alarming rates of decline for all species of West African migratory vulture, efforts are urgently required to reduce threats to vultures. Efforts should particularly focus on curbing rates of illegal poisoning and reducing demand for the species across the region. Indeed, given the migratory nature of these six vulture species, West Africa has a critical responsibility to protect the species not only for their value to its own ecosystems, but for all the other regions in which the species are present.

1.2.2 TERRESTRIAL FLORA

Despite the recognized international importance of West African flora, particularly within the Guinean Ecosystem hotspot, information available concerning the status of flora in the region is surprisingly poor. According to the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, of the 9,000 recorded vascular plant species in the hotspot, only 1,030 have been assessed by the IUCN (Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, 2015). Of these 1,030 assessments, the greatest number have been carried out for species in Cameroon, and therefore not within West Africa.

Specifically regarding tree species, many in West Africa remain unassessed by IUCN. For a number of those tree species that have been IUCN assessed, the assessment is almost 20 years old and in urgent need of updating (see the table below for an example of some tree species from the region which need their status updated).

Intense logging is seriously threatening the future of a large number of species that rely on these forests, such as the Endangered Gola Malimbe (*Malimbus ballmanni*), the Critically Endangered Mount Nimba Viviparous Toad (*Nimbaphrynoides occidentalis*), the Endangered Pygmy hippopotamus (*Choeropsis liberiensis*) and many others.

Compounding the problem of a lack of data, is that illegal logging and the international trade in illegally logged timber, is a widespread problem for the entire West African region. Yet it is impossible to determine the true damage that this threat is having, not only to biodiversity but also to economies through the loss of ecosystem services, pollution, associated bushmeat hunting and lost revenue. Nigeria has stated that this threat costs governments billions of dollars (Government of Nigeria, 2017). Furthermore, logging is known to undermine good governance by promoting corruption and has been known to fund rebel groups (such as in the case of African Rosewood, see section 4.2.1).

TABLE 6: EXAMPLES OF TREE SPECIES IN URGENT NEED OF STATUS ASSESSMENTS. ALL OF THESE SPECIES WERE LAST ASSESSED IN 1998.

Species	Status	Distribution	Comments from IUCN Red List
African mahogany (<i>Khaya ivorensis</i>)	Vulnerable ¹	Angola; Cameroon; Côte d'Ivoire; Gabon; Ghana; Liberia; Nigeria	"Levels of exploitation are very high. Little regeneration takes place after disturbance. Individuals reach a seed-producing age at 30 years, although large seed crops appear only at three to four year intervals." ¹

Species	Status	Distribution	Comments from IUCN Red List
<i>Synsepalum glycydora</i>	Vulnerable ²	Nigeria	"Surrounding areas have been extensively logged and cleared for cultivation." ²
Black Afara (<i>Terminalia ivorensis</i>)	Vulnerable ³	Cameroon; Côte d'Ivoire; Ghana; Guinea; Liberia; Nigeria; Sierra Leone	"Exploitation is moderate. Poor regeneration is often attributed to crop failure." ³
<i>Nauclea diderrichii</i>	Vulnerable ⁴	Angola; Cameroon; Central African Republic; Congo; Congo, The Democratic Republic of the; Côte d'Ivoire; Gabon; Ghana; Liberia; Nigeria; Sierra Leone; Uganda	"It is heavily exploited for its timber, which is used in general construction work. Regeneration is good in large canopy gaps but the species is outcompeted by other pioneers after clear-felling." ⁴
<i>Talbotiella eketensis</i>	Endangered ⁵	Nigeria	"In Eket the habitat appears to have been almost completely destroyed because of oil exploration operations. Elsewhere levels of logging and clearing are high outside protected areas." ⁵
<i>Heritiera utilis</i>	Vulnerable ⁷	Côte d'Ivoire; Gabon; Ghana; Liberia; Sierra Leone	"Exploitation rates are high and likely to be unsustainable." ⁷
<i>Triplochiton scleroxylon</i>	Lower Risk/least concern ⁸	Benin; Cameroon; Congo; Congo, The Democratic Republic of the; Côte d'Ivoire; Equatorial Guinea; Ghana; Guinea; Liberia; Nigeria; Sierra Leone	"Exploitation of the wood is very heavy and, in places, unsustainable, both for local use and the international timber trade. Of all West Africa timbers this species is extracted at the highest volumes." ⁸

¹African Regional Workshop 1998a; ²World Conservation Monitoring Centre. 1998a; ³Hawthorne 1998a; ⁴African Regional Workshop, 1998b; ⁵World Conservation Monitoring Centre. 1998b; ⁷Hawthorne, 1998c; ⁸African Regional Workshop, 1998c

CITES

In 2015, at the 22nd meeting of the CITES Plants Committee an intersessional working group on African tree species was established and members were invited to join through Notification 2015/060. Senegal is the sole West African Party member of the Working Group.

At CITES CoP17, the Parties adopted a Decision concerning African tree species as follows:

Decision 17.302: Directed to the Plants Committee: The Plants Committee shall form a working group on African tree species with the following terms of reference, as well as any other terms it deems appropriate:

- a) *The working group will work primarily via electronic means;*
- b) *The working group will seek to facilitate the circulation and exchange of experiences among the range States, importing countries and other stakeholders on the sustainable use and management of CITES-listed African tree species;*
- c) *The working group will seek to identify gaps and weaknesses in the capacity of range States of African tree species to effectively implement CITES for these species;*

- d) The working group will examine how the processes currently used by countries to develop annual export quotas compare with the processes recommended under CITES and develop recommendations for reconciling them;
- e) The working group will explore the conversion factors used for different commodities (e.g., logs, sawn wood, bark) and develop recommendations for improving such processes;
- f) The working group will seek to identify other African tree species that may benefit from inclusion in the CITES Appendices;
- g) The working group will bring any issues related to implementation and enforcement of CITES listings for African tree species to the attention of the Plants Committee; and
- h) The working group will report its findings and recommendations to the Plants Committee.

The CITES Tree Species Programme aims to “..provide direct financial assistance to selected Parties in taking conservation and management measures to ensure that their trade in timber, bark, extracts and other products from CITES-listed tree species is sustainable, legal and traceable, and in compliance with CITES provisions.” Projects currently prioritised for the CITES Tree Species Programme within the West African region include:

- *Nigeria, Benin and Togo: Plan d’action et renforcement des capacités pour la gestion durable de Pterocarpus erinaceus (Fabaceae) au Bénin Nigeria, et Togo;*
- *Côte d’Ivoire: Projet de sauvegarde de Pericopsis elata (Assamela) et de Pterocarpus erinaceus (Bois de vêne) en Côte d’Ivoire.*

(Source: CoPI8 Doc 16)

Analysis

Current knowledge of the status of tree species across the region is surprisingly poor, considering that the area is recognized as a biodiversity hotspot with high levels of plant endemism. Habitat destruction and illegal logging, meanwhile, are taking place at unprecedented and unsustainable levels, but the impact of this threat on the fragile West African ecosystems is poorly understood.

I African Rosewood

Note: The term ‘Rosewood’ covers a large number of species traded internationally. For the purposes of this report, Rosewood refers to Pterocarpus erinaceus, also known as African Rosewood or Kosso.

1.1 Status of African Rosewood

Pterocarpus erinaceus is classified as Endangered by IUCN (Barstow, 2018). The IUCN assessment notes that the species is: “...subject to heavy exploitation for its timber. Over the last century the demand for African rosewoods on the international timber market has significantly increased putting P. erinaceus at risk from unsustainable and illegal logging in parts of its range. Consequently, the species is presently experiencing a high rate of population decline.”

African Rosewood Distribution

Pterocarpus erinaceus is found in the open dry Sudan-Guinea forests of West Africa, in semiarid and subhumid areas (PC22 Inf. 13, 2015). It has wide distribution across the West African region and into Central Africa, including Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso,

Ghana, Niger, Benin, Togo, Nigeria and Cameroon (GBIF, 2013), also possibly Central African Republic, Chad, Liberia and Sierra Leone (Duvall et al., 2016).

1.2 African Rosewood and CITES

At the 22nd meeting of the CITES Plants Committee in Tblisi (2015), Senegal submitted a document expressing its serious concerns about over-exploitation of *Pterocarpus erinaceus* (CITES PC22 Inf. 13, 2015). Senegal subsequently listed *Pterocarpus erinaceus* in Appendix III of CITES in early 2016 (CITES Notification No. 2016/008).

At the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, a Proposal by Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the European Union, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo successfully resulted in the inclusion of *Pterocarpus erinaceus* in Appendix II of CITES.

IUCN noted in its analysis of CITES CoP17 Prop 57 that an Appendix II listing was unlikely to prevent *P.erinaceus* from becoming eligible for an Appendix I listing in the near future (Duvall et al., 2016).

At the 70th meeting of the Standing Committee, it was recommended that Parties suspend commercial trade in *Pterocarpus erinaceus* with Nigeria. The Standing Committee also directed Nigeria to strengthen its Scientific Authority by building capacity for forestry issues. The full wording of the Standing Committee's recommendations concerning *Pterocarpus erinaceus* are as follows:

Regarding management of trade in specimens of Pterocarpus erinaceus

- a) Parties shall suspend commercial trade in specimens of the species Pterocarpus erinaceus from Nigeria until the Party makes scientifically based non-detriment findings for trade in the species in the country to the satisfaction of the Secretariat and the Chair of the Plants Committee*
- b) The Standing Committee encouraged all importing Parties to inform the Secretariat about the volumes of timber of Pterocarpus erinaceus imported from Nigeria since the entry into force of the Appendix II listing.*
- c) The Standing Committee invited the importing Parties to share with the Secretariat the administrative, legislative and enforcement arrangements put in place to ensure that trade in specimens of this species only takes place when Parties are satisfied that it is in line with the requirements of the Convention, including any relevant stricter domestic measure to verify legality and ensure sustainability; and encouraged those Parties to consider inviting the Secretariat to conduct technical missions in order to strengthen cooperation between range States and importing countries and identify further recommendations to ensure that timber trade is conducted in accordance with the Convention.*
- d) The Standing Committee requested the Plants Committee to consider the inclusion of Pterocarpus erinaceus from all range States in the Review of Significant Trade and report its findings and recommendations to the 73rd meeting of the Standing Committee (SC73).*
- e) Nigeria shall strengthen the CITES Scientific Authorities by building capacity on forestry issues, and allocating sufficient modern resources to undertake population surveys of Pterocarpus erinaceus that can be used in the making of the non-detriment findings, on the setting of annual export quotas prior to authorizing trade in specimens of CITES-listed species, and on the enhancement of scientific capacities of the country.*

At CoP18, the Parties adopted the following Decisions concerning Rosewood species as follows:

CITES Decision 18.234: Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat shall:

- a) subject to external resources, undertake the following study:
 - i) provide or confirm, with the nomenclature specialist of the Plants Committee, a reference list of genera that are commonly referred to as “rosewood tree species”, noting that at present the species from the following CITES and non-CITES listed genera have been assumed as such by the CITES community: *Caesalpinia*, *Cassia*, *Dalbergia*, *Dicorynia*, *Guibourtia*, *Machaerium*, *Millettia*, *Pterocarpus* and *Swartzia*;
 - ii) taking into consideration the existing information (including that developed under the ongoing CITES Tree Species Programme), and based on the available lists of species in trade, compile available data and information to address information gaps on the biology, population status, management, use and trade for CITES-listed rosewood tree species as a first priority; and as a second priority, non-CITES listed rosewood tree species, in particular those that are highly sought after for the timber trade;
 - iii) assess the effects of international trade on wild populations of the species concerned; and iv) take into account the relevant work on timber identification to be carried out under Decisions 18.140 to 18.143 on Identification of timber and other wood products;
- b) issue a Notification seeking input from Parties, in particular exporting, re-exporting and importing countries, and relevant stakeholders to provide information to the Secretariat to share with the consultant for the purposes of completing the study outlined under paragraph a) above;
- c) report on progress regarding the study to the Plants Committee;
- d) taking into consideration the advice of the Plants Committee, and subject to external funding, organize an international workshop, inviting relevant range States, trading countries, relevant organizations, industry representatives and other experts, with a view to presenting and discussing the results, and develop recommendations;
- e) submit the final study for consideration by the Plants Committee, as well as the outcomes of the workshop if held; and
- f) seek external resources to support the study, and the workshop as appropriate.

CITES Decision 18.235: Directed to Parties: Parties are encouraged to:

- a) respond to the Notification described in paragraph b) of Decision 18.234 in close collaboration with relevant stakeholders; and
- b) support the work of the consultancy, and the workshop as appropriate, including seeking external resources from relevant stakeholders.

CITES Decision 18.236: Directed to the Plants Committee: The Plants Committee shall:

- a) consider the progress reported by the Secretariat and make recommendations regarding the study and the need for the international workshop referred to under Decision 18.234;
- b) consider the final study, and outcomes of the workshop if held, and make recommendations on how to enhance implementation for CITES-listed rosewood tree species with a particular focus on non-detriment findings including with respect to capacity building; and make further recommendations regarding non-CITES listed rosewood tree species; and

c) make recommendations to the Standing Committee and the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties as appropriate.

CITES Decision 18.237: Directed to the Standing Committee: The Standing Committee shall consider any report prepared in response to Decision 18.236 and identify any implementation and enforcement issues associated with the international trade in rosewood tree species, particularly those already listed in the Appendices, and develop recommendations for more effective implementation of the Convention for rosewood tree species. The Standing Committee shall furthermore take into account considerations related to revisions to annotations, and identification of terms in annotations that require further clarification and convey them for consideration by the working group on annotations.

1.3 Threats to African Rosewood

Hongmu is a Chinese term that refers to tree species used in the manufacture of luxury furniture. *Pterocarpus erinaceus* is among the 33 species classified under China's Hongmu Standard, which also includes *Dalbergia* spp., *Diospyros* spp., *Millettia* spp. and *Cassia* spp. Chinese demand for hongmu species has skyrocketed, with imports increasing from 144,500 m³ in 2000 to over 2 million m³ in 2014 (EIA, 2016). The trade in hongmu products is highly lucrative, generating domestic retail revenues of more than US\$25 billion in 2014 (CoPI7 Inf. 79).

In West Africa, export of *Pterocarpus erinaceus* for the hongmu trade was relatively unknown until 2010, with other hongmu species making up the majority of imports into China. In recent years, however, exports of African Rosewood for the hongmu trade have risen exponentially, and in the second quarter of 2016, West Africa was the world's leading hongmu-producing region, accounting for 84% of all hongmu imports into China (CoPI7 Inf 79). This increase is reflected in the value of China's imports, which totaled US\$12,000 in the first quarter of 2009, and leapt to more than US\$180 million in the third quarter of 2014, a 15,000-fold growth (CITES PC22 Inf. 13).

Fears have been expressed by several range States that African Rosewood is being illegally and unsustainably harvested and is laundered into legal markets (China and Vietnam do not prohibit import of illegally sourced or traded timber). Unsurprisingly, whenever illegally sourced products enter a legal market, the potential demand increases far beyond what it would be if the product was only traded on a black market. Criminals then exploit this demand (UNODC, 2016). Thus, because of the existence of a legal market, it is likely that illegal operations are highly fruitful to criminal networks. Interpol's 2015 Operation Log, which was coordinated in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Malia, Mauritania, Senegal and Togo, resulted in the seizure of US\$216 million worth of illegally harvested African rosewood. Forty-four individuals were arrested in connection with this illegal trade, and the operation further uncovered links between this trade and other serious crimes, including firearms trafficking and corruption (Interpol, 2015).

Illicit rosewood trade from West Africa has also been implicated in funding conflict. Between 2010 and 2014, more than 360,000 m³ of African rosewood was imported into China from Gambia. It has been estimated that 99% of these logs originated in Senegal and given that log exports from both Senegal and Gambia are prohibited, these logs were therefore illegally re-exported from Gambia (CoPI6 Prop 57). This illegally exported timber is, according to the Senegalese government, classified as 'conflict timber' since it was sourced in the Casamance region which is controlled by rebel forces (Gueye, 2015).

In Ghana, it was discovered that rosewood was being illegally harvested under the guise of 'salvage permits' for road and dam construction projects. The Ghanaian authorities subsequently imposed a ban

on all harvesting, processing and export in July 2014. In August 2014, 51 shipping containers of illegal rosewood logs were seized with an estimated value of US \$800,000 (The Ghanaian Times, 2014).

P. erinaceus is a nitrogen-fixing, fire-resistant, deciduous tree which plays a critical role in the ecosystem particularly in preventing desertification of arid areas (Winrock, 1999). The rapid and unsustainable exploitation of this slow-growing species will leave large areas extremely vulnerable to desertification (CoP17 Prop 57). This in turn could have serious consequences for West Africa's dry forests and for the communities that live in these regions. *P. erinaceus* is also of high socio-cultural importance, as it is widely utilized by communities for animal fodder, fuel, construction, dyes, medicine and musical instruments.

Finally, concern has been expressed that if *Pterocarpus erinaceus* becomes commercially extinct, the traders will switch focus to other endemic rosewood species, such as *Diospyros crassiflora* or *Dalbergia melanoxylon* and thus the cycle of trade and extinction will continue until the entire ecosystem becomes unviable (CITES PC22 Inf. 13).

1.4 Analysis

A report for CITES undertaken by UNODC, found that in West (and Central) Africa, trade is a key driver of economic development, particularly with Asia. This trade is primarily comprised of exporting natural resources, including wild fauna and flora. In some cases, such as that of *Pterocarpus erinaceus*, the trade emerged and grew so quickly that national authorities were unable to develop adequate regulatory mechanisms to properly control and maintain sustainable levels of harvest and trade (CoP18 Doc 34 Annex 4).

The ongoing unsustainable exploitation of African Rosewood for international trade is having serious negative impacts on the biodiversity and ecology of the West African dry forests and the communities that depend on them. The true extent of these impacts is largely unknown given a lack of information concerning the status of the species in many range States. However, the huge volumes of logs being exported from West Africa for the hongmu trade, alongside anecdotal evidence that *P. erinaceus* has already become commercially extinct in many areas (Lawson, 2015), means that it should be a high priority for conservation activities in the region. In addition, it is conceivable that such commercial extinction will result in a new focus on other rosewood species in the region, thus further damaging West Africa's fragile ecosystems.

1.2.3 MARINE AND FRESHWATER FAUNA

The two large marine ecosystems (LME) in the West African region, fed by the Canary Current and the Guinea Current, are among the richest in the world. The Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem (GCLME) spans 16 countries, from Guinea Bissau to Angola. The Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem (CCLME) spans 7 countries: Spain (Canaries), Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Morocco, Senegal and The Gambia. These LMEs are globally important in terms of marine biodiversity (Protected Planet Ocean, 2017). From the coral reefs to sea grass prairies, mangroves and sandy beaches, the region plays host to a wealth of fauna and flora including migrating birds, manatees, marine turtles and over 1,000 species of fish (USAID, 2013). Indeed, the highest levels of diversity among marine fish in the Eastern Central Atlantic can be found in the Gulf of Guinea and its marine habitats (Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, 2015). These resources underpin the livelihoods of millions of people but, unfortunately, unsustainable extraction, over-harvesting, and illegal trade are putting those livelihoods, and the environment itself, in jeopardy.

Increasing attention is being paid to the impact of international trade on marine species, such as sharks and rays. Escalating demand for marine products, from seahorses to gill rakes, is being recorded across the region. This is a cause for concern as the true impact of this trade is often difficult to monitor until species reach the brink of commercial extinction. Many marine fish populations cannot recover rapidly following collapse, if at all. It is therefore essential to prevent collapses from happening in the first place (Hutchings & Reynolds, 2004) The slow reproductive rate and time taken to reach maturity of certain targeted species adds to their vulnerability. Devil Rays, for example, produce a single pup only once every two or three years (West African Shark and Ray Guide, 2017). Coastal habitats, such as mangroves, are also of vital importance, as they provide breeding grounds for many species, as well as habitat for other species such as manatees and birds (USAID, 2012).

I Sharks and Rays

I.1 Status and Distribution

The Status and Distribution of CITES-listed sharks and rays in the West African region are described in the tables below.

TABLE 7: STATUS OF CITES LISTED SHARKS AND RAYS

Species	Status	Population Trend
Oceanic whitetip (<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>)	Vulnerable ¹	Decreasing
Scalloped Hammerhead (<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>)	Endangered ²	Unknown
Great hammerhead (<i>Sphyrna mokarran</i>)	Endangered ³	Decreasing
Smooth hammerhead (<i>Sphyrna zygaena</i>)	Vulnerable ⁴	Decreasing
Porbeagle (<i>Lamna nasus</i>)	Vulnerable ⁵	Decreasing
Basking Shark (<i>Cetorhinus maximus</i>)	Vulnerable ⁶	Decreasing
Whale Shark (<i>Rhincodon typus</i>)	Endangered ⁷	Decreasing
Silky Shark (<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>)	Near Threatened ⁹	Decreasing
Bigeye thresher shark (<i>Alopias superciliosus</i>)	Vulnerable ¹⁰	Decreasing
Common thresher shark (<i>Alopias vulpinus</i>)	Vulnerable ¹¹	Decreasing
Shortfin Mako Shark (<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>)	Endangered ¹²	Decreasing
Longfin Mako Shark (<i>Isurus paucus</i>)	Endangered ¹³	Decreasing

Species	Status	Population Trend
Lesser Guinean Devil Ray (<i>Mobula rochebrunei</i>)	Vulnerable ¹⁴	Unknown
Spinetail Devil Rays (<i>Mobula japonica</i>)	Near Threatened ¹⁵	Unknown
Sicklefin Devil Ray (<i>Mobula tarapacana</i>)	Vulnerable ¹⁶	Decreasing
Bentfin Devil Ray (<i>Mobula thurstoni</i>)	Near Threatened ¹⁷	Decreasing
Giant Manta Ray (<i>Manta birostris</i>)	Vulnerable ¹⁸	Decreasing
Reef Manta Ray (<i>Manta alfredi</i>)	Vulnerable ¹⁹	Decreasing

¹Baum et al. 2015; ²Baum et al. 2007; ³Denham et al. 2007; ⁴Casper et al. 2005; ⁵Stevens et al. 2006; ⁶Fowler, 2005; ⁷Pierce & Norman, 2016; ⁸Ferguson et al. 2009; ⁹Rigby et al 2016; ¹⁰Amorim et al. 2009; ¹¹Goldman et al. 2009; ¹²Rigby et al (2019b); ¹³Rigby et al (2019a); ¹⁴Valenti & Kyne, 2009; ¹⁵White et al. 2006; ¹⁶Pardo et al. 2016; ¹⁷Walls et al. 2016; ¹⁸Marshall et al. 2011a; ¹⁹Marshall et al. 2011b

TABLE 8: DISTRIBUTION OF CITES-LISTED SHARK SPECIES IN THE WEST AFRICAN REGION

CITES PARTIES	Oceanic Whitetip (<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>)	Scalloped Hammerhead (<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>)	Great hammerhead (<i>Sphyrna mokarran</i>)	Smooth hammerhead (<i>Sphyrna zygaena</i>)	Porbeagle (<i>Lamna nasus</i>)	Basking Shark (<i>Cetorhinus maximus</i>)	Whale Shark (<i>Rhincodon typus</i>)	Silky Shark (<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>)	Bigeye thresher shark (<i>Alopias superciliosus</i>)	Common thresher shark (<i>Alopias vulpinus</i>)	Shortfin Mako Shark (<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>)	Longfin Mako Shark (<i>Isurus paucus</i>)
Benin	X	X					X	X			X	X
Cabo Verde	X	X	X	X			X				X	X
Côte d'Ivoire	X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X
Gambia	X	X					X	X			X	X
Ghana	X	X					X	X	X	X	X	X
Guinea	X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X
Guinea-Bissau	X	X					X	X	X	X	X	X
Liberia	X	X					X	X	X	X	X	X
Nigeria		X					X	X	X	X	X	
Senegal	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sierra Leone	X	X					X	X	X	X	X	X
Togo	X	X					X	X				X

TABLE 9: DISTRIBUTION OF CITES-LISTED RAY SPECIES IN THE WEST AFRICAN REGION

	Lesser Guinean Devil Ray (Mobula rochebrunei)	Spinetail Devil Rays (Mobula japonica)	Sicklefin Devil Ray (Mobula tarapacana)	Bentfin Devil Ray (Mobula thurstoni)	Giant Manta Ray (Manta birostris)	Reef Manta Ray (Manta alfredi)
Benin						
Cabo Verde			X			X
Côte d'Ivoire		X	X	X		
Gambia						
Ghana						
Guinea	X					
Guinea Bissau	X					
Liberia			X			
Mauritania						
Nigeria					X	
Senegal	X		X	X	X	X
Sierra Leone						
Togo						

1.2 Sharks, Rays and CITES

All shark and ray species in the tables above are listed on CITES Appendix II.

CITES Resolution Conf. 12.6 (Rev CoP18) on Conservation and Management of Sharks, highlights the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) International Plan of Action on the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-sharks). It notes that all States whose fisheries directly fish sharks or who regularly take sharks in non-direct fisheries, are encouraged to adopt a National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Shark Stocks (NPOA-Sharks). The Resolution further notes that “there has been slow progress with the development and implementation of NPOAs”. The Resolution encourages Parties, inter alia, to report on progress with implementation of NPOA-Sharks, and to develop their own NPOAs and to take steps to improve research and data collection on both fisheries and trade.

At CoP18, the Parties adopted a number of Decisions concerning sharks and rays, as follows:

CITES Decision 18.218: Directed to Parties: Parties are encouraged to:

- a) provide information to the Secretariat in support of the study called for in Decision 18.221 paragraph a), in particular on any national management measures that prohibit commercial take or trade, and in response to the Notification called for in Decision 18.220;
- b) in accordance with their national legislation, provide a report to the Secretariat about the assessment of stockpiles of shark parts and derivatives for CITES-listed species stored and obtained before the entry into force of the inclusion in CITES in order to control and monitor their trade, if applicable;
- c) inspect, to the extent possible under their national legislation, shipments of shark parts and derivatives in transit or being transhipped, to verify presence of CITES-listed species and verify the presence of a valid CITES permit or certificate as required under the Convention or to obtain satisfactory proof of its existence; and

d) continue to support the implementation of the Convention for sharks, including by providing funding for the implementation of Decisions 18.219, 18.221 and 18.222, and considering seconding staff members with expertise in fisheries and the sustainable management of aquatic resources to the Secretariat.

CITES Decision 18.219: Directed to the Secretariat: Subject to external funding, the Secretariat shall continue to provide capacity-building assistance for implementing Appendix-II shark and ray listings to Parties upon request.

CITES Decision 18.220: Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat shall:

a) issue a Notification to the Parties, inviting Parties to:

i) provide concise summaries of new information on their shark and ray conservation and management activities, in particular:

A. the making of non-detriment findings;

B. the making of legal acquisition findings;

C. the identification of CITES-listed shark-products in trade; and

D. recording stockpiles of commercial and/or pre-Convention shark parts and derivatives for CITES Appendix-II elasmobranch species and controlling the entry of these stocks into trade; and

ii) highlight any questions, concerns or difficulties Parties are having in writing or submitting documentation on authorized trade for the CITES Trade Database;

b) provide information from the CITES Trade Database on commercial trade in CITES-listed sharks and rays since 2000, sorted by species and, if possible, by product;

c) disseminate existing guidance identified, or newly developed, guidance on the control and monitoring of stockpiles of shark parts and derivatives pursuant to Decision 18.224, paragraph b) by the Standing Committee; and

d) collate this information for the consideration of the Animals Committee and the Standing Committee.

CITES Decision 18.221: Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat shall, subject to external funding, and in collaboration with relevant organizations and experts:

a) conduct a study to investigate the apparent mismatch between the trade in products of CITES-listed sharks recorded in the CITES Trade Database and what would be expected against the information available on catches of listed species; and

b) bring the results of the study in paragraph a) to the attention of the Animals Committee or Standing Committee, as appropriate.

CITES Decision 18.222: Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat, subject to external funding, is requested to collaborate closely with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to:

a) verify that information about Parties' shark management measures are correctly reflected in the shark measures database developed by FAO (<http://www.fao.org/ipoa-sharks/database-of-measures/en/>) and, if not, support FAO in correcting the information;

b) compile clear imagery of wet and dried unprocessed shark fins (particularly, but not exclusively, those from CITES-listed species) along with related species level taxonomic information to facilitate refinement of iSharkFin software developed by FAO;

c) conduct a study analysing the trade in non-fin shark products of CITES-listed species, including the level of species mixing in trade products and recommendations on how to address any implementation challenges arising from the mixing that may be identified; and

d) bring the results of activities in paragraphs a) to c) to the attention of the Animals Committee or Standing Committee, as appropriate.

CITES Decision 18.223: Directed to the Animals Committee: The Animals Committee, in collaboration with relevant organisations and experts, shall:

a) continue to develop guidance to support the making of non-detriment findings (NDFs), in particular in data-poor, multi-species, small-scale/artisanal, and non-target (bycatch) situations, for CITES-listed shark species; and

b) report the outcomes of its work under Decision 18.223, paragraph a) to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

CITES Decision 18.224: Directed to the Standing Committee: The Standing Committee shall:

a) develop guidance on the making of legal acquisition findings, and related assessments for introductions from the sea for CITES-listed shark species in the context of the implementation of Resolution Conf. 18.7 on Legal acquisition findings;

b) develop new guidance or identify existing guidance on the control and monitoring of stockpiles of shark parts and derivatives, in particular for specimens caught prior to the inclusion of the species in Appendix II; and

c) report its findings under Decision 18.224, paragraphs a) and b) to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

CITES Decision 18.225: Directed to the Animals Committee and the Standing Committee: The Animals Committee and Standing Committee shall analyse and review the results of any of the activities under Decisions 18.221 and 18.222 brought to their attention by the Secretariat, and with the support of the Secretariat prepare a joint report for the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the implementation of these Decisions.

1.3 Threats to Sharks and Rays

The West Africa region has many coastal communities that catch sharks. Sustainable management of shark fisheries and trade contributes to the livelihoods of these communities yet capacity to implement applicable measures is lacking. Given the highly migratory nature of many shark species, it is crucial for nations in West Africa to work cooperatively and on a regional basis to implement fishery management measures, to improve data collection and monitoring, and to ensure that they are not trading products from sharks that were caught illegally.

The effectiveness of shark management has been challenged by the lack of identification of sharks and fins at the species level and the lack of monitoring for shark species that are landed and enter into international trade. When shark captures are reported, they are often not identified by species. This

makes it very difficult to evaluate the impact of fisheries on endangered and threatened sharks and for authorities to make recommendations on the management of fisheries that catch sharks.

Sharks in the region are currently being overfished, either by directed fisheries or as bycatch from fisheries targeting other species such as tuna. Shark species, such as the oceanic whitetip and hammerheads, have fins which are highly sought after for shark fin soup, and have a high value attached to them. The meat of certain sharks, such as porbeagle, is also considered to be of high commercial value. Those sharks with high fin value, but low meat value, are subject to finning: the fins are cut off and the body of the shark discarded at sea. The sharks may be alive during finning, which raises welfare as well as conservation concerns. Sharks such as hammerheads, due to the high value of the fins, are subject to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, sometimes within protected areas. Many sharks listed on CITES were once abundant, but are now subject to dramatic population declines, such as the oceanic whitetip (Baum et al. 2015).

Whale sharks are primarily targeted for the fin trade, however, the meat, liver and oil are also utilized. A single pectoral fin of a whale shark can fetch as much as \$20,000. Between 1995 and 2008, as many as 800 whale sharks were legally captured by a fishery in Taiwan (West African Shark and Ray Guide, 2017). Ship strike is also a significant problem for the species (Pierce & Norman, 2016). Unregulated whale shark tourism may also affect populations (West African Shark and Ray Guide, 2017). Population declines of between 40 and 92% have been recorded (Pierce & Norman, 2016).

Certain shark species are also targeted by trophy hunting sports fishermen, particularly the great white, which has been wrongly labelled as a significant threat to humans. A great white trophy can fetch a high price. Great whites are also captured for the aquarium trade but rarely survive capture (Ferguson et al. 2009).

For both manta rays and devil rays, the threat is unmonitored and unregulated fisheries that are driven by the rising international demand for their gill plates. These gill plates are used in traditional Asian medicine (West African Shark and Ray Guide, 2017). To a lesser degree they are also targeted for their meat and cartilage.

In July 2017, shark fins and the carcasses of whole sharks (including hammerheads and manta rays) were found on board a number of Chinese vessels off the coast of Guinea, during a joint Greenpeace – Guinea patrol. Illegal nets were being used on board the vessels and one vessel was found fishing for species outside of its license. Several fines were given and the contraband seized (Greenpeace, 2017).

In January 2016, a Ghanaian trafficker was arrested in Togo with 80 kg of shark fins. The trafficker was arrested on the Togo – Benin border and was travelling from Nigeria to Ghana where he was planning to sell the contraband (EAGLE Network, 2016).

1.4 West African Initiatives

In 2014, representatives from Benin, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo, met in Senegal (with support from NOAA Fisheries and the Commission Sous-régionale des Pêches (CSR)) to facilitate the implementation of the shark listings adopted at CoP16. Participants developed “*Conclusions on the development of an action plan for the implementation of the Shark and Ray Listings under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora by member range states in the African Region*” also known as “The Dakar Action Plan”, which identified the priority requirements for the West African region in terms of shark and ray regulatory enforcement. The overarching objectives within this Action Plan were as follows:

1. Objective 1. Ensure that relevant national authorities in the region have a good understanding of CITES requirements and their implementation;
2. Objective 2. Obtain proper identification of CITES-listed shark and ray species and identification tools for sharks and ray species when caught and landed, and when in trade;
3. Objective 3. Review and update domestic legislation and regulations relevant to the implementation of CITES;
4. Objective 4. Enhance the implementation of the requirements of CITES through tracking procedures, data-collection, data reporting and scientific research;
5. Objective 5. Strengthen enforcement, cooperation, and coordination relative to the implementation of the requirements of CITES shark listings on a regional basis;
6. Objective 6. Promote sustainability of protected shark and ray species through targeted communication, education and public outreach;

In December 2016, with support from NOAA, representatives from customs, fisheries and management authorities from nine countries (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal, Togo, Gabon and Cabo Verde) met to discuss the CITES shark listings, which resulted in the adoption of formal “*Recommendations regarding the implementation of the listing of sharks species in CITES Appendixes.*”

1.5 Analysis

The high value of shark and ray products in Asia means that criminal elements are taking advantage of the West African region’s limited capacity to enforce the law when it comes to protected species of sharks and rays. Nevertheless, much of the West African region has demonstrated its strong support for shark and ray CITES listings, and evidently is committed to taking measures that ensure CITES regulations are adequately implemented and enforced. Given that a framework for this process already exists, through the two declarations developed at the 2014 and 2016 regional shark workshops, it is appropriate to promote ongoing implementation and, where necessary, expansion of these declarations. Priorities from these declarations are:

1. Capacity building and training (focused on CITES and on the identification of sharks);
2. Regional enforcement coordination;
3. Education and outreach;
4. Improved capacity and data to enable issuance of Non-Detriment Findings;
5. Improved capacity to enable reporting to CITES.

2 Marine Turtles

The West African region is important for 4 species of marine turtle, and although the specific threats in the region are largely unknown or undocumented, marine turtles should form a component of any attempt to preserve marine biodiversity.

TABLE 10: DISTRIBUTION OF MARINE TURTLES IN WEST AFRICA

CITES PARTY	Olive Ridley (<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>)	Green turtle (<i>Chelonia mydas</i>)	Loggerhead turtle (<i>Caretta caretta</i>)	Leatherback (<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>)
Benin	X			X
Cabo Verde	X		X	
Côte d'Ivoire	X			X
Gambia	X			X

CITES PARTY	Olive Ridley (<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>)	Green turtle (<i>Chelonia mydas</i>)	Loggerhead turtle (<i>Caretta caretta</i>)	Leatherback (<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>)
Ghana	X			X
Guinea	X	X	X	X
Guinea Bissau	X	X		X
Liberia	X			X
Nigeria	X			X
Senegal	X	X		X
Sierra Leone	X	X	X	X
Togo	X			X

2.1 Marine Turtles and CITES

All marine turtles are listed on CITES Appendix I. At the 66th CITES Standing Committee (January 2016), a Report on Illegal Take of and Trade In Marine Turtles (SC66 Inf.7) was submitted by Secretariat of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia and the Secretariat pro tempore of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles. It states that there is an illegal trade in marine turtles (of meat, eggs and carapaces) and that all species of marine turtles are at risk. However, the full extent of the illegal activities remains largely unknown due to a lack of reporting.

Several Decisions were adopted by the Parties at CoP18 as follows:

CITES Decision 18.210: Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat shall, subject to available resources:

- a) convey to Parties the findings of the study presented in information document CoP18 Inf. 18 on the legal and illegal international trade in marine turtles with a view to inform targeted conservation and management efforts;
- b) refer the study contained in information document CoP18 Inf. 18 to the Standing Committee at its 73rd meeting and the Animals Committee at its 31st meeting for consideration;
- c) support Parties, upon request, with the CITES-relevant aspects of the development, implementation and/or update of management and action plans for the conservation of marine turtles;
- d) assist Parties, upon request, with the identification of inconsistencies, overlaps and gaps in national legislation and regulations relating to the implementation of CITES for marine turtles; and
- e) convey to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) the findings of the study presented in information document CoP18 Inf. 18 to inform efforts, including by Regional Fisheries Bodies, addressing marine turtle bycatch and illegal take, and promote collaboration, as appropriate.
- f) issue a Notification requesting that Parties provide information on implementation of Decisions 18.210 to 18.214 for consideration by the Standing Committee at its 73rd meeting; and
- g) report on the implementation of Decisions 18.210 to 18.215, and on any technical and financial mechanisms and opportunities that can be provided through CITES to assist Parties in marine turtle conservation, to the 31st meeting of the Animals Committee and the 73rd meeting of the Standing Committees as appropriate, and to the Conference of the Parties at its 19th meeting.

CITES Decision 18.211: Directed to Parties: Parties are urged to:

- a) review the findings of the study presented in information document CoP18 Inf. 18 and use these to inform targeted conservation and management efforts;
- b) fully implement the provisions of CITES that are relevant to the seven species of marine turtles listed on Appendix I;
- c) develop and/or update management and action plans for the conservation of marine turtles inclusive of the recommendations in information document CoP18 Inf. 18;
- d) use CITES fora, including the Animals Committee and Standing Committee, to raise and discuss challenges relating to illegal trade in marine turtles;
- e) collect in a standardized manner, including at different governance levels, illegal wildlife trade data, that can be used for monitoring trade in CITES-listed marine turtles; and submit comprehensive and accurate information on illegal trade in marine turtles in their annual illegal trade reports to the Secretariat;
- f) improve monitoring, detection and law enforcement activities related to marine turtles in coastal areas and at transaction points (e.g. in the marketplace, online, maritime areas, and at air- and seaports);
- g) collect samples of marine turtles for DNA analysis, including from seized specimens, to determine species involved and populations of origin and provide these to forensic and other research institutions capable of reliably determining the origin or age of the samples in support of, for example, research, investigations and prosecutions;
- h) improve intra- and interregional cooperation, collaboration and exchange of actionable intelligence regarding illegal take of and trade in marine turtles;
- i) ascertain key trade routes, methods, volumes, and trade 'hot-spots' using available technologies, and enforce national and international regulations or other mechanisms that apply to marine turtles take and trade;
- j) improve accountability for the practices undertaken by all vessels and improve the monitoring and control related to CITES-listed marine turtles at landing sites;
- k) support fisheries management authorities in implementing turtle mitigation and safe handling practices;
- l) coordinate efforts at the regional level, involving Parties and bodies with relevant mandates, to identify and address trade, use and other threats, such as fisheries' interactions with marine turtles (particularly bycatch), with a view to supporting multilateral environmental agreements; and
- m) respond to the Notification issued by the Secretariat per Decision 18.210, paragraph f) on the implementation of Decisions 18.210 to 18.214.

CITES Decision 18.212: Directed to Parties that are marine turtle range States: Parties that are marine turtle range States are urged to:

- a) develop, and where such legislation already exists, conduct a thorough review of legislation that protects marine turtles, taking account of its effectiveness in enforcement and management including

direct and incidental harvest, and standardization or alignment with other national and sub-national legislation, neighbouring states, as well as international regulations and commitments;

b) where domestic harvest of specimens of marine turtles, including eggs, is legal, ensure any domestic harvest quotas are established based on robust science-based methods and the principles of sustainability, including accounting for existing quota or no-take quotas in other States' that share marine turtle stock(s), taking into account national enforcement capacity; c) respond to the Notification issued by the Secretariat pursuant to Decision 18.210 paragraph f) on the implementation of Decisions 18.210 to 18.215.

CITES Decision 18.213: *Directed to Parties, governmental, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations and other entities: Parties, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other entities are invited to provide financial or technical assistance for, inter alia:*

a) training and capacity building of relevant authorities at the national and regional level, including on the implementation and enforcement of national and international regulations that apply to marine turtles, and on identification, monitoring, reporting and wildlife enforcement capability;

b) build community and political awareness on the conservation status of marine turtles and on the importance of promoting the conservation of the species through compliance with CITES at the national level;

c) research into the socioeconomics associated with the legal and illegal harvest and use of specimens of marine turtles, including eggs, including assessments of the sustainability of alternative livelihood options for communities depending on marine turtles and the motivations for their use;

d) research that establishes a baseline for the status and distribution of marine turtles in the different countries/regions; and

e) research into the scale and impact that national (and its international) artisanal, semi-industrial and industrial fisheries, including illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, have on marine turtle populations and their linkage to illegal trade.

CITES Decision 18.214: *Directed to the Secretariat, Parties and other organizations: Parties, the Secretariat and relevant multilateral agreements such as the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), its Indian Ocean and South-East Asia Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding (IOSEA), the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC), and the Ramsar Convention and the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) are encouraged to communicate and collaborate with each other on the management and sustainable use of marine turtles to ensure the compatibility of activities, optimize resources, promote research, and enhance synergies concerning the conservation of marine turtles.*

CITES Decision 18.215: *Directed to the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC): The International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) is encouraged to, as appropriate, use data on illegal trade in marine turtles submitted under Decision 18.211, paragraph e) to the Secretariat in Parties' annual illegal trade reports in its activities.*

CITES Decision 18.216: *Directed to the Animals Committee: The Animals Committee is asked to:*

a) review, at its 31st meeting, the study contained in information document CoP18 Inf. 18 and any additional information received by the Secretariat in response to the Notification issued under Decision 18.210, paragraph f); and

b) submit recommendations, as appropriate, for consideration by the Standing Committee.

CITES Decision 18.217: Directed to the Standing Committee: The Standing Committee is asked to:

a) review, at its 73rd meeting, the study contained in information document CoP18 Inf. 18 and any additional information received by the Secretariat in response to the Notification issued under Decision 18.210, paragraph f), and the recommendations of the Animals Committee; and

b) submit its recommendations to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, as appropriate

A study entitled Status, scope and trends of the legal and illegal international trade in marine turtles, its conservation impacts, management options and mitigation priorities was submitted to CoP18 (CoP18 Inf18).

2.2 Threats to Marine Turtles

Marine turtles are vulnerable to over-harvesting due to a slow intrinsic growth rate. They are vulnerable at all life stages – from eggs on nesting beaches, hatchlings trying to reach the sea, to juveniles and adults within migratory routes and pelagic foraging zones. They are directly targeted for their eggs, meat and carapaces (SC66 Inf.7), and are also caught as bycatch in trawl and longline fisheries, purse seines and other net fisheries. Habitat degradation due to coastal development also threatens marine turtles, as does pollution and climate change.

Underscoring the need to consider marine turtles in any anti-illegal wildlife trade action in West Africa, the EAGLE network (Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement), reports that a number of arrests of marine turtle traffickers have been made in the region in recent years, including:

- January 2014: Seven traffickers were arrested in Togo with 14 sea turtle shells. The traffickers were also found with 15 leopard skins, 10 leopard heads, seven lion skins, five lion heads, elephant parts, 2 gorilla skins, and other primate parts;
- December 2014: a wildlife trafficker was arrested for illegal possession of a green sea turtle in Benin;
- August 2015: three traffickers were arrested with 15 Olive Ridley shells in Cotonou, Benin;
- September 2015: two traffickers were arrested with 26 sea turtle shells in Grand Popo, Benin;
- December 2015: a trafficker was discovered with 12 sea turtle shells on the border between Ghana and Togo;
- May 2016, in Senegal a sea turtle shell trafficker was arrested with 16 shells;
- June 2016: a trafficker was arrested with eight Olive Ridley shells in Porto Novo, Benin;
- October 2016: two traffickers were arrested with nine sea turtle shells on an island near Conakry, Guinea;
- March 2017: two traffickers were arrested with 66 live sea turtle hatchlings and 3 sea turtle shells in Togo.

Sources: Eagle Network 2014, Eagle Network 2015, Eagle Network 2016 and Eagle Network 2017

2.3 Analysis

Overall, information about marine turtle biology, conservation and threats in West Africa is significantly lacking (CoP18 Inf18). Marine turtles are vulnerable both at sea, where they are trapped for meat and shells, and on land, where the eggs and hatchlings are harvested. There is clearly an active illegal trade in the region, although it is not known whether consumption remains within the region, or whether specimens are exported to other regions. The extent of the impact of this illegal trade on the status of the four species of marine turtles is also unknown. CoP18 Inf18 notes that: “*Previous studies have extensively highlighted the importance of developing (together with coastal communities) sustainable alternative livelihoods along western Africa for those that rely on marine turtles. Increasing legal protection, continuing awareness and beach protection projects in proximity with local communities, preserving core nesting areas from urbanization, and demonstrating the economic income potential of alternative activities are necessary to safeguard marine turtle populations in the eastern Atlantic.*”

3 West African Manatees

West African manatees are the least studied sirenian in the world (IUCN, 2015). Whilst they are distributed widely throughout the region, in estuaries, mangroves, rivers, inland lakes, and marine coastal flats, populations are declining. This is primarily due to poaching and incidental catches. In some areas, this has led to near extirpation of the species (Keith Diagne, 2015).

3.1 West African Manatee Status and Distribution

The West African Manatee (*Trichechus senegalensis*) is classified as Vulnerable by IUCN (Keith Diagne, 2015). However, robust information concerning population status and trends is lacking, as indicated by the IUCN analysis, which notes: “*There are no population estimates based on quantitative information.*”

West African Manatee are native to: Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

3.2 West African Manatee and CITES

West African Manatees were uplisted from CITES Appendix II to Appendix I at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (2013).

3.3 Manatee Action Plans

The Action Plan for the Conservation of the West African Manatee is attached as Annex I to the Convention on Migratory Species' *Memorandum of Understanding Concerning the Conservation of the Manatee and Small Cetaceans of Western Africa and Macaronesia*.

3.4 Threats to West African Manatees

Human population expansion in coastal areas and along major rivers is exerting direct pressure on the West African manatee due to poaching, incidental catches, habitat loss and fragmentation.

West African manatees are hunted for their meat (aquatic bushmeat), but other body parts (e.g. oil, fat, skin, bones, viscera, sexual organs) are used for medicinal purposes (CoP16 Prop. 13). Manatees are targeted throughout their range. Often the hunting is opportunistic, but sometimes they are poached by specialist manatee hunters, including in Guinea Bissau's Bijagós Archipelago, the Sine Saloum Delta of Senegal, the Ogooué River in Gabon, the Congo River in Angola and Lake Volta in Ghana. In Sierra Leone, reportedly more than 350 manatees were poached between 2007 and 2010, with the trade being operated by a “Manatee Mafia” (CoP16 Prop. 13).

Manatee parts are highly sought after and are known to be actively traded in Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Mali, Niger, Togo, Ghana, Senegal, Gambia, Liberia, Benin, Guinea Bissau and Guinea (CoP16 Prop 13). Although the species is distributed widely across the region, the high price of manatee products in different range States appears to be providing an incentive for cross-border trade.

In 2015, a trafficker was discovered with 20 skulls and skeletons of West African Manatees, exposing a large and organized illegal trade in this species. The trafficker had, reportedly, sold a similar number the week before. This trafficker, who apparently had been involved in illegal trade in marine species for 19 years, is being further investigated (EAGLE Network, 2016).

There is, in addition, a trade in live manatees for exhibiting in zoos and aquariums. Toba Aquarium in Japan, for example, has West African manatees on display. In Nigeria, manatees are taken from the wild for exhibition in local zoos (Marsh & Morales, 2013).

3.5 Analysis

As the least-studied sirenian in the world, the true status of the West African manatee is largely unknown, as is the impact that wildlife crime is having upon the species. However, given its low reproductive rate, illegal killing is undoubtedly a serious threat. Manatee body parts are highly sought after in the region, and although much killing is incidental or opportunistic, there is also an organized illegal trade. This illegal killing is widely regarded as the primary threat to the survival of manatees, and whilst there is cross-border illegal trade, the market appears to be mainly centered within West Africa. Given that there is already an Action Plan developed for the species, focus should be placed on implementation of this Action Plan.

4 West African Seahorse

4.1 Status and Distribution

West African seahorses (*Hippocampus algiricus*) are classified as Vulnerable by IUCN (Czembor, 2012) due to a suspected decline in the population. IUCN notes that there are '*...suspected population declines of at least 30% in the past and continuing into the future. ... Population declines due to the pressures from international trade have been acting on this species in West Africa for well over 15 years and are expected to continue into the future.*'

Hippocampus algiricus are native to Angola, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

4.2 CITES and Seahorses

All species of *Hippocampus* are listed on CITES Appendix II.

In 2011, at the 25th meeting of the CITES Animals Committee, *Hippocampus algiricus* was included in the Review of Significant Trade as a priority species. At the 26th meeting of the Animals Committee, it was agreed that Algeria, Angola, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Príncipe and Sierra Leone should be removed from the Significant Trade Review process, on the basis that there had been no commercial trade over the last 10 years (AC26 Summary Record).

At the 66th Standing Committee meeting in 2016, following advice from the Animals Committee, Guinea and Senegal were both subject to a recommendation to suspend trade in the species (CITES Notification No. 2016/018 and No. 2018/006).

A number of Decisions concerning seahorses were adopted at CoPI8 as follows:

CITES Decision 18.228: Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat shall include available materials to support CITES implementation for seahorses (non-detriment findings guidance, identification materials, etc.) on the CITES website.

CITES Decision 18.229: Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat shall:

a) issue a Notification to the Parties inviting them to inform the Secretariat of any national management measures that regulate or restrict international trade in seahorses, and on how they are implementing and enforcing such measures for seahorses;

b) compile the responses received to the Notification issued as per paragraph a) of the present Decision and communicate them to CITES Authorities through a Notification to the Parties and through its website; and

c) subject to external funding:

i) commission a study on trade in *Hippocampus* spp., including applicable regulations, to understand shifts in international trade patterns since the inclusion of seahorses in Appendix II and the Review of Significant Trade of *Hippocampus* spp., as well as the implementation challenges and possible solutions; and

ii) organize an expert workshop to discuss the implementation and enforcement of CITES for trade in *Hippocampus* spp., including the recommendations and outcomes from the Review of Significant Trade process, and propose practical steps to address implementation and enforcement challenges; and

d) report on the implementation of paragraphs a) through c) of the present Decision to the Animals and Standing Committee, as appropriate.

CITES Decision 18.230: Directed to Parties: To support the effective implementation of Appendix II of CITES for seahorses, Parties are invited to:

a) inform the Secretariat of any national management measures that regulate or restrict international trade in seahorses; and how they are implementing and enforcing such measures for seahorses;

b) share copies of their non-detriment findings with the Secretariat for posting on the CITES website to assist other CITES Parties; and

c) inform seahorse traders within their jurisdiction of any quotas, including any zero quotas, and any trade suspensions for seahorses to further facilitate compliance and enforcement by all participants in the trade.

CITES Decision 18.231: Directed to Parties: Parties are encouraged to:

a) use existing tools for effective CITES implementation and enforcement that are relevant to seahorses;

b) where quotas, trade suspensions, or both are in place, develop monitoring programmes for seahorses in their national waters to understand effectiveness of these actions and any other relevant implementation and enforcement actions for seahorse conservation and management; and

c) share the design and initial results of these programmes with the Secretariat to report to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

CITES Decision 18.232: Directed to the Animals Committee: The Animals Committee shall analyse and review the results of any activities under Decision 18.229 and other relevant information available

to the Animals Committee and develop recommendations as appropriate to ensure sustainable and legal trade in seahorses.

CITES Decision 18.233: Directed to the Standing Committee: The Standing Committee shall analyse and review the results of any activities under Decision 18.229 and develop recommendations as appropriate to strengthen CITES implementation and enforcement for trade in seahorses.

4.3 Threats to Seahorses

There is significant international trade in seahorses from West Africa. Based upon importer reported quantities in the CITES Trade Database (excluding any re-exports), there was a total of 9763.8 kg of *Hippocampus algiricus* exported between 2004-2015. The exporting countries for this trade were Guinea, Senegal and Togo, while the importers were Hong Kong and China. All transactions were for the purpose of commercial trade, and all traded specimens were wild-sourced. Using West's (2012) median weight of 5.6g for a dried *Hippocampus algiricus* individual as a trade volume conversion factor, the total number of individual specimens exported between 2004-2015 amounted to 1,743,536 seahorses. The majority of the species traded are imported into Asia as dried specimens, for use in traditional medicine.

Hippocampus spp. are considered vulnerable to over-fishing and unsuitable for intense harvesting due to their biological characteristics, with small brood sizes and a relatively long period of parental care (Foster and Vincent, 2004).

Illegal trade is an added threat to *Hippocampus algiricus*. For example:

- In 2014, a passenger travelling from Sierra Leone to China was detained in transit (in France) after dead seahorses *Hippocampus* spp. were detected in the luggage (TRAFFIC, 2015);
- Based upon seizure records reported by EU Member States in EU-TWIX (2007-2011), there were 22 seahorse seizure records from Guinea into the EU during the period, with seizure records primarily reported by Belgium and France (Mundy-Taylor, 2013);
- During May and June 2010, Belgium Customs officials at Brussels Airport confiscated over 3,000 dried seahorses *Hippocampus* from the luggage of around 100 Chinese passengers who were in transit from Guinea, bound for Beijing, China (TRAFFIC).

4.4 Analysis

The trade in West African seahorses is of a scale that must be of concern to the international community. It is unknown what the impact of this trade is on the survival of the species but trade (both legal and illegal) is unlikely to be highly sustainable. Although Guinea and Senegal are both subject to a recommendation to suspend legal trade, more robust measures may be required to ensure protection of the species from illegal trade, the scale of which is unknown.

5 Guitarfish

Guitarfish are batoid elasmobranchs, which are bottom-dwelling. As their presence in an area is often associated with sea grass beds, it has been surmised that their presence contributes to the healthy functioning of these beds, which are recognized as providing essential ecosystem services to humans (Campagne et al., 2015). Guitarfish are also an important prey species to larger marine animals.

Guitarfish have provided an important source of protein for coastal communities in West Africa for millennia and also contribute to local communities through dive eco-tourism. Among the elasmobranch families, Guitarfish have been identified as among the most vulnerable (after sawfish), however they have

received little attention so far. Yet, concerns have been expressed that guitarfish are under serious pressure (Moore, 2017). There are four species of guitarfish in the West African Region, all of which are under threat from illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

5.1 Status and West African Distribution

- **Common Guitarfish** (*Rhinobatos rhinobatos*). Listed as Endangered by IUCN (Notarbartolo di Sciara et al., 2007). West African Distribution: Benin, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo;
- **White-spotted Guitarfish** (*Rhinobatos albomaculatus*). Listed as Vulnerable by IUCN (Séret & Valenti, 2009a). West African Distribution: Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo;
- **Spineback Guitarfish** (*Rhinobatos irvinei*). Listed as Vulnerable by IUCN (Séret & Valenti, 2009b). West African Distribution: Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo;
- **Blackchin Guitarfish** (*Glaucostegus cemiculus*). Listed as Endangered by IUCN (Notarbartolo di Sciara et al., 2016). West African Distribution: Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.

5.2 CITES and Guitarfish

The Blackchin Guitarfish was listed on CITES Appendix II at CoPI8. The three remaining species of West African Guitarfish are not listed on CITES.

5.3 Threats to Guitarfish

IUCN red list surveys, although in need of updating for three of the four species, report increasing concern about the conservation status of guitarfish in the West African region. There is widespread unregulated fishing throughout the region and populations are in decline. Guitarfish are easily targeted by artisanal fisheries due to their in-shore habitats. Although little is known of their biology, it has been presumed that their life history makes them vulnerable to overfishing (Notarbartolo di Sciara et al., 2016).

Fins and meat are highly valued in international trade. Fins of *Glaucostegus cemiculus* can reportedly fetch between 100 to 150 Euro/kg, which has led to the development of targeted fisheries for the species, supplying the Asian shark fin trade (Notarbartolo di Sciara et al., 2016).

Females are at greater risk than males as they are often larger, making their fins of higher value. In addition, the females move closer to the shore in order to birth. This makes increasing levels of coastal development a significant threat to the species (CoPI8 Prop 43).

5.4 Analysis

Although more data is required, IUU fishing is undoubtedly having a serious negative impact on all four guitarfish species present off the West African coast. The listing of the blackchin guitarfish on CITES Appendix II is an encouraging step towards ensuring that the threats to guitarfish are more widely recognized and addressed. Concerns have been expressed that guitarfish species could easily succumb to the same serious population crashes as sawfish if the present situation is not adequately addressed (CoPI8 Prop 43).

6 Commercial Fish Species

For several coastal West African nations, fish provides an important source of animal protein, as well as income and employment. Industrial trawlers are now fishing in waters that overlaps with artisan fisheries, stocks are decreasing and environmental damage is taking place. Although steps are being taken to reduce illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, it remains an enormous problem for West Africa, where an estimated US\$1.3 billion of IUU fishing takes place annually, comprising between one third and a half of the total catch (Africa Progress Panel, 2014). Species such as the endangered *Pseudotolithus senegalensis* and near-threatened *Galeoides decadactylus* are suffering from over exploitation (Environmental Protection Agency Sierra Leone, 2014) and their status is becoming increasingly precarious.

Interpol's Project Scale has produced a comprehensive review of environmental crime as it relates to fisheries in West Africa (Interpol, 2014) which contains a number of important recommendations. Although a thorough analysis of fisheries in West Africa may be outside the scope of this current report, the recommendations contained within the Interpol report are worth taking into consideration.

1.3 CITES DECISIONS CONCERNING WEST AFRICA

At the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP17), the Parties adopted Decision 17.97, which directed the Secretariat to: *"in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and with the support of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) and relevant stakeholders, commission a threat assessment report on illegal wildlife trade in West and Central Africa, to identify and collate information regarding trade routes, techniques and trends relating to wildlife trafficking in the two subregions, including recommendations on priority measures necessary to address and significantly reduce wildlife crime in the two subregions."*

The threat assessment report was presented to the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP18) in CoP18 Doc 34 Annex 4. Following discussion of this document, the Parties adopted the following Decisions concerning enforcement support for West and Central Africa:

CITES Decision 18.88: *Directed to Parties of West and Central Africa: Parties of West and Central Africa should: a) draw upon the information and recommendations provided in the West and Central Africa Threat Assessment Report available as Annex 4 to document CoP18 Doc. 34 and the recommendations in Annex 2 of document CoP18 Doc. 34, to strengthen CITES implementation and address wildlife crime; and b) identify priority actions that could benefit from support and present these to the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC), donors and the development community, in order to seek support to implement them.*

CITES Decision 18.89: *Directed to Parties of West and Central Africa: Parties in West and Central Africa identified as affected by illegal trade in wildlife within the region should engage in regional and bilateral activities to share information on their national legislative and regulatory measures to address such illegal trade, exchange experiences and best practices, and identify opportunities for regional and cross-border cooperation and joint actions, including where appropriate the formulation of national or regional action plans as anticipated by paragraph 14 a) ii) and 10 f) of Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP18) on Compliance and enforcement, taking into consideration the provisions of paragraph 15 q) of the same Resolution.*

CITES Decision 18.90: *Directed to Parties importing CITES specimens from West and Central Africa: Parties importing CITES specimens from West and Central Africa are encouraged to assist their counterparts in West and Central Africa, by implementing measures that will address wildlife crime and*

support legal trade that is limited to sustainable levels, in particular by: a) supporting efforts to determine and ensure sustainable levels of trade through scientific studies that can facilitate the making of robust non-detriment findings; b) closely scrutinizing consignments of CITES-listed species imported from West and Central Africa and accompanying CITES documents to ensure that illegal species are not laundered into legal trade; and c) as a priority, raise any concerns about imports with the exporting State, or with the Animals Committee, Plants Committee, Standing Committee, or the Secretariat.

CITES Decision 18.91: Directed to Parties, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations: Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to provide financial and technical assistance to Parties in West and Central Africa and mobilize resources to address the matters identified in the West and Central Africa Threat Assessment Report available as Annex 4 to document CoP18 Doc. 34; the recommendations in Annex 2 to document CoP18 Doc. 34, the guidelines in information documents SC70 Inf. 2 and SC70 Inf. 3; and any further recommendations made by the Standing Committee.

CITES Decision 18.92: Directed to the Standing Committee: The Standing Committee shall: a) consider the report from the Secretariat in accordance with Decision 18.93, paragraph d) and progress made by Parties in West and Central Africa in strengthening CITES implementation and make further recommendations as appropriate; and b) consider any report from the Plants Committee, in response to the recommendation agreed at its 70th meeting, concerning the inclusion of *Pterocarpus erinaceus* from all range States in the Review of Significant Trade and make recommendations as required.

CITES Decision 18.93: Directed to the Secretariat: The Secretariat shall: a) draw to the attention of relevant United Nations agencies, the African Union, the Commission of Central African Forests, the Global Environmental Facility, and development agencies, the West and Central Africa Threat Assessment Report available as Annex 4 to document CoP18 Doc. 34 and the recommendations in Annex 2 to document CoP18 Doc. 34, and the guidelines in information documents SC70 Inf. 2 and SC70 Inf. 3; and encourage these to be taken into consideration in the development of work programmes or activities initiated by these entities in the two subregions; b) subject to external funding, work with its partners in the International Consortium on Combatting Wildlife Crime (ICWC) to support Parties in West and Central Africa in addressing illegal trade in wildlife, including addressing the matters identified in the West and Central Africa Threat Assessment Report available as Annex 4 to document CoP18 Doc. 34; the recommendations in Annex 2 to document CoP18 Doc. 34, the guidelines in information documents SC70 Inf. 2 and SC70 Inf. 3; and any further recommendations made by the Standing Committee; c) subject to the availability of external funds and upon request from Parties, undertake general and targeted capacity-building activities to strengthen the effective implementation of CITES in the two subregions, taking into consideration the contents of information documents SC70 Inf. 2 and SC70 Inf. 3; d) report, as appropriate, to the Standing Committee on the results of the activities conducted in accordance with Decision 18.93 paragraphs a) to c); and e) the Secretariat shall give priority to the guidelines agreed by West African parties as contained in information documents SC70 Inf. 2 and SC70 Inf. 3 in the course of the implementation of its capacity-building work.

2.0 EXISTING WILDLIFE POLICIES AND LEGISLATION IN WEST AFRICA

2.1 OVERVIEW OF ROBUST LEGAL LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBATTING WILDLIFE CRIME

Illegal hunting and illegal wildlife trade have been identified as serious threats in the West African sub-region, affected by a lack of capacity and poor wildlife enforcement. Domestic legislation is often necessary to implement international obligations and it has the potential to provide both an effective offense and an effective defense against wildlife trafficking. Offensively, legislation must provide species listings that are protective of priority species, such as those listed in the CITES or CMS Appendices, those listed as threatened, endangered, or critically endangered on the IUCN Red List, and other high-value or targeted species. Legislation must give meaningful effect to any prohibitions or requirements deriving from international obligations, including “take” restrictions and permit requirements. Penalties must be sufficiently severe so as to act as a deterrent, and for those offences that warrant such status, penalties should meet the definition of “serious crime” under UNTOC, triggering a number of potentially useful avenues for regional and international collaboration, enhancing enforcement and prosecutorial capacity.

From a defensive posture, adequate domestic legislation must provide comprehensive and synergistic authorities to relevant enforcement officers, including park rangers, customs officers, police, and fisheries officers, amongst others. Violations of relevant legislation should be offences and criminalized as appropriate. Wildlife crimes should serve as predicate offences for corruption, money laundering, and organized criminal activity charges. Conspiracy should be applicable to wildlife crime, and extradition and mutual legal assistance should be available for wildlife crime prosecutions.

In consideration of these goals, the legal landscape relevant to combating wildlife crime can be thought of with a “hub and spokes” analogy. There exists a “hub” of core legislation, which includes wildlife, forestry and fisheries laws, and from this hub, relevant ancillary legislation must serve as effective spokes, so that together, wildlife legislation, criminal legislation, customs legislation, anti-corruption legislation, and all other relevant pieces of legislation work together in functional and effective ways.



FIGURE 1: HUB OF CORE LEGISLATION

As best practices suggest, a holistic perspective on relevant legislation is necessary in order to capture the range of species subject to trafficking, the range of actors who participate in trafficking, and the different activities that constitute trafficking, as well as the growing complexity of trafficking operations. When synergies exist between all relevant legislation, prosecutors have the widest range of options for bringing wildlife offenders to justice and enforcement officers have the widest range of authority to inspect, search, arrest, and confiscate wildlife, forestry, and fishery products.

2.2 REGIONAL ASSESSMENT OF GAPS IN LEGAL FRAMEWORKS SET UP TO ENFORCE CITES

As recognized repeatedly by internationally agreed documents, a strong framework for combating illegal wildlife trafficking through the supply, transit, and demand chain requires a robust suite of synergistic laws, policies, and enforcement strategies at domestic, regional, and international levels. CITES is arguably the single most important international treaty in the fight against wildlife trafficking, but can only reach its full potential through the implementation of strong, adequate domestic measures.

The Convention itself identifies specific measures that must be included in CITES implementing legislation, and the Secretariat and various consultants have further elaborated on legislative best practices for implementation of CITES.

According to Article VIII of the Convention, all Parties must take appropriate measures to enforce the provisions of the Convention and to prohibit trade in specimens in violation thereof, including measures to penalize trade in, or possession of, such specimens, and to provide for the confiscation or return to the State of export of such specimens. Additionally, Article IX requires that all Parties designate at least one Management Authority and one Scientific Authority. Together these requirements form the basis of the CITES National Legislation Project, which the Parties devised to assess the adequacy of Parties’

domestic implementing legislation.² In order to have “adopted all appropriate measures for implementation of the Convention,” a Party must have domestic measures that provide the authority to:

1. designate at least one Management Authority and one Scientific Authority
2. prohibit trade in specimens in violation of the Convention
3. penalize such trade; and
4. confiscate specimens illegally traded or possessed.

2.2.1 DESIGNATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF AUTHORITY

Unlike other CITES requirements, the designation of at least one Management Authority and one Scientific Authority need not be specifically executed via “domestic measures,” meaning that the designation, as long as official, need not be specifically contained in a Party’s legislation or other formal legislative or regulatory measure. Instead, the designation may be by decree or some other form of administrative declaration. The requirements for the National Legislation Project deviate slightly, suggesting that the Parties must include in their “domestic measures” the *authority to* designate at least one Management Authority and one Scientific Authority. While every ECOWAS Member State has designated at least one MA and one SA according to the CITES website, few formally did so via decree or other type of legislation, as shown Table I below.

In addition to the designation of a Management and Scientific Authority, each entity must be authorized to perform the tasks assigned in the Convention. For the Management Authority, this means issuing necessary permits and certificates as well as making specific findings, including that the specimen has been legally acquired and that it will be humanely prepared and shipped if alive for export permits and that a specimen will not be used for primarily commercial purposes in the case of import permits. Again, as shown Table I below, few ECOWAS Member States explicitly laid out the authority of the Management Authority and Scientific Authority in their implementing legislation.

2.2.2 PROHIBIT TRADE IN VIOLATION OF THE CONVENTION

Underlying the requirement that Parties “prohibit trade in specimens in violation of the Convention” is the requirement that domestic CITES legislation or relevant domestic measures cover all CITES-listed species. Because often Parties are using hunting or national park legislation to implement CITES, this is a common deficiency—instead, legislation often covers only species endemic to that particular country. For the purposes of addressing wildlife trafficking, this presents a major threat because it restricts the possibility of charging individuals with trafficking in species that may not be found or have not been taken from that country. Relatedly, legislation must also provide adequate coverage as to the types of specimens of species. CITES includes, for the most part, “all readily recognizable parts and derivatives” of species. Domestic legislation must provide at least equally as extensive coverage in order to avoid the creation of loopholes that facilitate wildlife trafficking.

Also underlying the requirement that trade in violation of the Convention be prohibited are clear definitions and provisions applying to import, export, re-export, and introduction from the sea. These terms define the set of transactions that the CITES permit regime covers, and domestic legislation and other measures must substantively mirror these terms and definitions so that the scope of domestic permitting authority and prohibitions aligns with CITES requirements.

² Resolution Conf. 8.4 (Rev. CoP15).

Domestic legislation and measures must also clearly provide the prerequisites required prior to issuance of any CITES permit or certificate. In this way, it is not enough that domestic legislation penalizes illegal trade; in fact, it is critical that domestic legislation provides the parameters for what is required to trade legally. This includes outlining the findings and determinations that the Scientific and Management Authorities must make prior to issuing a specific permit or certificate. Again, only a handful of ECOWAS Member States meet this requirement, as shown below in Table I.

Finally, legislation or other domestic measures should identify clearly the form and any features identifying the validity of CITES permits. The CITES Parties have adopted a model CITES permit, which Parties can adapt and use. It can be helpful for a Party to include in its regulations, or perhaps as an Appendix to its legislation, an example of a legal CITES permit with a description of any special features that must appear for a permit to be legally valid, such as a permit number, a special seal, or a specific signature.

2.2.3 PENALIZE ILLEGAL TRADE AND CONFISCATE ILLEGALLY TRADED SPECIMEN

The CITES National Legislation Project requires that Parties' legislation penalize trade in contravention of the Convention, and the Convention itself requires Parties to "penalize trade in, or possession of (...) specimens [traded in violation of the Convention], or both." Similarly, CITES Article VIII and the National Legislation Project require that national legislation or regulations grant the authority to confiscate specimens illegally traded or possessed.

TABLE I I: ASSESSMENT OF CITES IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION

	BN	BF	CI	GA	GH	GUI	LIB	MAL	NG	NGA	SG	SL	TO
Formal designation of Management Authority and Scientific Authority	✓			✓			✓	✓		✓			✓
Sufficient assignment of authority to Management Authority and Scientific Authority	✓			✓						✓			✓
Prohibit trade in violation of CITES	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Definition of "specimen" in accordance with CITES	✓			✓			✓	✓		✓			✓
Coverage of all CITES-listed species	✓			✓		✓		✓		✓			✓
Specification of permit conditions meets CITES	✓			✓				✓					✓
Penalties for trade in violation of CITES	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Authority to confiscate specimens	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Prohibit the violation of permit conditions													
Prohibit false or misleading statements	✓			✓			✓	✓		✓			✓

	BN	BF	CI	GA	GH	GUI	LIB	MAL	NG	NGA	SG	SL	TO
Prohibit and criminalize forgery of permits	✓			✓				✓		✓			
Criminalize use or possession of forged permits	✓			✓						✓			

Many ECOWAS countries are in the process of modernizing their CITES legislation, which should lead to more countries meeting the criteria set out in the table above. Nigeria (for English speaking countries) and Mali (for French speaking countries) are good examples of CITES legislation meeting most of the criteria.

When enacting new CITES legislation, countries should give due regard to

- assigning the Scientific Authority and Management Authority the authority to make necessary findings under the Convention;
- specifying the conditions for import, export, re-export, and introduction from the sea permits and certificates as laid out in the Convention;
- adopting a definition of “specimen” that meets the definition of the Convention and adopting the CITES Appendices to ensure that the scope of the CITES implementing legislation is broad enough to cover all CITES-listed species;
- clearly penalize trade in violation of the Convention, preferably in a way that allows greater international cooperation (for example, by providing for sentences that make illegal wildlife trade of Appendix I species a “serious crime” under UNTOC);
- address issues of permit fraud and forgery.

2.3 Region-wide Recommendations to Strengthen the Legal Landscape

2.3.1 NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

A review of wildlife-relevant legislation across West Africa reveals that many gaps identified in core wildlife legislation come in part from the fact that those laws are often outdated and have not been revised in decades, making it difficult to face new challenges with regard to illegal wildlife trade and hunting. Many of these laws are currently being revised or have been revised and are under review by parliaments for adoption. In some cases, these reviews have been ongoing for years, and political will is necessary to finalize and adopt important legislation. On the other hand, most ECOWAS countries have recently enacted new criminal legislation, focusing especially on corruption and money-laundering offences. These areas of law are thus strengths for the West African sub-region.

The following table provides a summary of region-wide recommendations identified during the review of legislation in 13 West African countries.

Summary of Priority Recommendations for National Legal Frameworks
<p>Clarify overlapping jurisdictional scope and authority amongst forestry, fauna, fisheries, and customs legislation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often the different laws regulating hunting, forestry, and fisheries activities fail to establish a clear jurisdictional scope. This can lead to conflicting regulatory provisions applying to specific areas such as national forests or national parks, where it is not always clear which law applies to a given situation. It can also lead to fragmented jurisdiction when species are sometimes found in protected areas but are also found outside of protected areas. Commonly, overlapping jurisdiction exists over protected tree and marine species. • Similarly, enforcement authority given under those laws should be harmonized to clearly identify which agents have authority to enforce legislation vis-à-vis specific species and specific areas.

Summary of Priority Recommendations for National Legal Frameworks

Secure Effective CITES implementation

- While some of the 13 countries reviewed recently enacted CITES-specific legislation that effectively implements the Convention, many still rely on outdated laws that do not provide adequate regulatory and enforcement frameworks to combat illegal wildlife trade.
- Common gaps include the failure to clearly specify the need for requisite permit findings prior to the granting of an export, import, re-export, or introduction from the sea permits and certificates, the lack of provisions regarding permit fraud and validity, the lack of clarification of CITES exceptions and exemptions, and inadequate penalties for illegal trade or possession of illegally traded specimens.

Address Transit Hub Challenges

- Although customs legislation, as well as additional legislation regulating the import, export, transport, and possession of illegal wildlife specimens generally exists in ECOWAS Member States, a better understanding of the search and seizure authority that flows from this legislation may be necessary.

Prohibit the violation of permit conditions in fauna, forestry, and fisheries legislation

- Very few countries explicitly prohibit the violation of permit or license conditions, or address issues regarding permit fraud and validity in fauna, forestry, and fisheries legislation.

Provide adequate penalties for wildlife crimes

- Often, illegal trade, illegal hunting, or other wildlife offences are not adequately penalized to create a deterrent effect, and to trigger the availability of international cooperation.
- Apart from creating a deterrent effect, the availability of strong penalties is important for two reasons: first, it can trigger the availability of greater international assistance when an offence meets the UNTOC definition of “serious crime.” Second, whether extradition or mutual legal assistance are available often depends on whether the crimes subject of those requests are punishable by significant enough prison sentences.

Regulation of connected activities and attempts to engage in such activities

- While most countries regulate the harvest of wildlife resources, there are other related activities that are equally important to regulate to better address wildlife crime and wildlife trafficking. Such activities include the buying, selling, processing, possession, transport, and trade of wildlife products. A strong regulatory and enforcement framework around these activities is key to address threats facing wildlife in West Africa.
- Relatedly, many countries do not prohibit attempts to engage in any of these activities, or activities that may be regulated, such as take.

Clarity regarding disposal of confiscated specimens

- Few laws reviewed in the context of fauna, fisheries, forestry, and customs legislation provide adequate authority to confiscate illegal wildlife specimens or adequate guidance to dispose of confiscated specimens.

Consider expanding asset forfeiture and recovery provisions

- Forfeiture of wildlife specimens will not always be an adequate penalty against an individual because the specimen has already changed hands. In such cases, allowing the forfeiture of assets that are the proceeds of wildlife crime is important.

Criminalize bribery of a foreign public official

- While most countries criminalize the bribery of public officials, few extend the offence to foreign public officials and officials of international organizations. This is important because, for wildlife moving across border, corruption offences might involve foreign officials.

Adoption of witness and whistleblower protection legislation

- While some countries do provide for witness protection or protection of reporting persons in the context of money-laundering or corruption offences, few countries have enacted general whistleblower protection provisions, or provisions that would apply to wildlife crime whistleblowers.

2.3.2 REGIONAL ENFORCEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

ECOWAS is an important forum for collaboration, and important for working toward harmonization of laws and policies across the region. The adoption of documents, such as the West Africa Strategy for Combating Wildlife Crime, provide a means of collectively agreeing regional priorities and motivating political will. Thus, while ECOWAS provides an important forum for high-level galvanization, little space is dedicated specifically to coordination, cooperation, and collaboration on enforcement. Wildlife trafficking in West Africa spans fisheries, forests, and terrestrial fauna, yet tackling illicit activities in the region, in many cases, requires similar law enforcement techniques and strategies, overlapping

personnel, and application of the same laws. Additionally, many of the same criminal networks are involved. For this reason, the ECOWAS region may find it useful to organize a wildlife enforcement network.

Priority Regional Enforcement Recommendation :

A West Africa Wildlife Enforcement Network

By most accounts, wildlife enforcement networks (WENs) are strategically important components of any region-wide plan to combat wildlife trafficking. The model for a wildlife enforcement network includes both regional and national components. The regional WEN is a multi-agency, intergovernmental law-enforcement network that serves as a platform for regionally integrated and coordinated enforcement activities and for bolstering the capacity and capabilities of national WENs to act domestically. Each national WEN comprises a task force of police, customs, environmental officers, prosecutors, and any other relevant State-level actors in the fight against wildlife crime. In the case of West Africa, fisheries, national park, and forestry enforcement officers should be included on the task force as they represent the frontline in addition to traditional police and customs officers.

The West Africa region is relatively adept at developing national and regional conservation and sustainable use policies and at participating in relevant international policy-making fora; a West Africa WEN would complement the robust legal and policy landscape by acting as a home-base for regional coordination, collaboration, and cooperation to enforce all relevant laws and policies.

3.0 NATIONAL STRUCTURES SET UP TO IMPLEMENT CITES

CITES is a multifaceted Convention and the national structures tasked with its implementation need to be adequately equipped to ensure each member State can meet its numerous CITES obligations. This Chapter provides an overview of these national structures and their effectiveness in CITES implementation across each of the 13 focal ECOWAS member States. The Chapter further analyses which processes could be used to strengthen CITES implementation and the ability of the national authorities to fulfil their CITES roles adequately.

3.1 OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL STRUCTURES

3.1.1 CITES MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES

Article IX of CITES requires each Party to designate a Management Authority. The CITES Management Authority is central to CITES implementation. Without a functional and effective Management Authority, it is unlikely that any other agencies and structures tasked with CITES implementation will be able to meet their CITES responsibilities fully. CITES Management Authorities have a complex set of roles and responsibilities and require adequate resources to ensure that the Authority can fulfill those responsibilities. It is therefore important that CITES is recognized by decision-makers as an important international responsibility of each country.

The only Parties that have adequate legislation in place that designates a Management Authority *and* assigns it the proper authority are Benin, Gambia, Mali and Nigeria. All other Parties either have:

- Legislation that fails to designate a Management Authority and/or
- Legislation that does not assign authority to the Management Authority

Given the essential role of the Management Authority in CITES implementation, it is critical that all other West African Parties take steps to ensure that their Management Authorities are legally mandated to carry out their responsibilities. For more information about CITES Legislation in each West African country, please refer to Annex I.

3.1.2 CITES SCIENTIFIC AUTHORITIES

Article IX of CITES requires each Party to designate a Scientific Authority. The Scientific Authority has an important role that is considered *essential* for the effective implementation of CITES. For example, the Scientific Authority is responsible for (*inter alia*) Non-Detriment Findings, monitoring exports of Appendix II specimens and reviewing proposals submitted to CITES Conference of the Parties.

The only Parties that have adequate legislation in place that designates a Scientific Authority *and* assigns it the proper authority are Benin, Gambia, Mali and Nigeria. All other Parties either have:

- Legislation that fails to designate a Scientific Authority and/or
- Legislation that does not assign authority to the Scientific Authority

Given the essential role of the Scientific Authority in CITES implementation, it is critical that all other West African Parties take steps to ensure that their Scientific Authorities are legally mandated to carry

out their responsibilities. For more information about CITES Legislation in each West African country, please refer to Annex I.

3.1.3 NATIONAL WILDLIFE CRIME STRATEGIES AND TASK FORCES

Analysis of information collected during wildlife crime threat assessment missions to all 13 ECOWAS focal countries, has clarified the vital role of coordinated inter-agency structures in the implementation of CITES and in combating wildlife crime. Therefore, it is encouraging that the West Africa Strategy on Combating Wildlife Crime (WASCWC) requires each member State to create a National Wildlife Crime Strategy and a National Wildlife Law Enforcement Task Force.

Although none of the 13 focal countries have both a National Wildlife Crime Strategy and National Wildlife Law Enforcement Task Force, there are some existing structures that contribute, at least in part, to successful inter-agency cooperation on wildlife law enforcement. Below is a summary of these structures:

- **Benin:** Currently there are no formal inter-agency structures in place to tackle wildlife crime and no MoUs or information-sharing agreements. However, there are good levels of cooperation in place at ports, airports and land boundaries, whereby officials meet regularly to discuss aspects of law enforcement, including wildlife trafficking. There are wildlife authorities posted at airport, seaport and some land borders, however, sharing of information from headquarter level and/or INTERPOL with officers at the borders is currently minimal.

Under the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime AIRCOP project, an Airport Anti-Traffics Cell (CAAT) has been established at Cotonou International Airport. The unit was originally comprised of 15 officers from Customs and Police, but the scope has been expanded to include wildlife officers. The team is responsible for profiling and searching persons and goods entering and exiting the airport. Their main priorities are narcotics, weapons, wildlife and foreign currency. There is an Intelligence Unit within CAAT and they have contact with approximately 60 other airports around the world who they are able to share information with via CELCOM. Some of the team members have also received CITES training in Dakar, Senegal.

UMCC is a multi-agency unit based at Cotonou Seaport. There are 22 officers within the unit from wildlife authority, Customs and Police and are responsible for the detection of all contraband entering or departing the seaport. The UMCC has an Intelligence Unit that undertakes profiling work. Once they detect illegal wildlife, they pass the case on to the wildlife authority.

- **Burkina Faso:** Currently there are no formal inter-agency structures in place to tackle wildlife crime and no MoUs or information-sharing agreements. There are Water and Forests Directorate officers placed at airports, however, their knowledge of CITES is limited. There are Water and Forests officers at some land borders but none at the main Railway Station. Ad hoc cooperation between agencies is sometimes initiated by a phone call, but there is no formal process.
- **Côte d'Ivoire:** There are good levels of cooperation in place at ports, airports and land boundaries, whereby officials meet regularly to discuss aspects of law enforcement, including wildlife trafficking. There are wildlife authorities posted at airport, seaport and some land borders.

The Unité de lute contre la Criminalité Transnationale organisée (UCT), has been operating since 2017, established by a decree and coming under the Ministry of Interior. There is a Pilot Committee comprising representatives from Police, Gendarmerie, Maritime Police, Customs and Water and

Forests who provide staff to the unit and oversee their work. They in turn report to a consultative committee of ministers. UCT's mission is to fight different transnational crimes and money laundering, and includes crimes involving drugs, human trafficking, protected species, environmental crime, illegal gold extraction and anti-smuggling. It is a multi-agency unit of 100 officers, made up of 40% Police, 30% Gendarmerie, 10% Maritime Police, 10% Customs, and 10% Water and Forests. There is a reporting and planning committee for UCT where senior managers from all the law enforcement agencies who staff the unit meet to review and plan future activities. Water and Forests are represented in this committee and so wildlife trafficking is included. UCT rely on synergy with Eagle Network and Water and Forests to investigate wildlife offences. Eagle does the undercover work and provides the intelligence for them to investigate with Water and Forests. They have dismantled many trafficking organizations including those behind a seizure of 5 tons of pangolin scales and carried out arrests with the help of the US, Eagle Network and Water and Forests.

The Water and Forest Airport Inspection Service was formed in January 2018 and collaborates with Customs, Police, security and others to detect wildlife trafficking at Abidjan International airport.

- **Gambia:** Currently there are no formal inter-agency structures in place to tackle wildlife crime and no MoUs or information-sharing agreements. There are no wildlife authority officers at airport, seaport or land borders. There are Forestry officers but these only address forestry related crimes and defer wildlife issues to the Wildlife Authority. Collaboration between the Wildlife Authority and other enforcement authorities is reportedly very rare. A multi-agency team is present at the airport, however their priority is controlling for drugs, security and cigarettes and there are no wildlife or forestry personnel in the unit. There is currently minimal information shared from the headquarter level and/or INTERPOL to the border and airports.

A Joint Airport Interdiction Task Force (JAITF) was set up in Gambia in 2014. It was established under the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) AIRCOP project³, which

threats targeting airports

State Intelligence Service (SIS), Customs, Public Health, Police investigation Unit, National Drug and Law Enforcement Unit and Agriculture Food Inspectors. Neither the DPWM nor Forestry are represented in the team.

- **Ghana:** Currently there are no formal inter-agency structures in place to tackle wildlife crime and no MoUs or information-sharing agreements. Inter-agency cooperation among national law enforcement agencies to combat wildlife trafficking takes place rarely and is normally driven by the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission. Besides ad hoc cooperation initiated by a telephone call, there is no formal process or structure. According to officials at the Wildlife Division, attempts to establish networks collapsed due to financial challenges.
- **Guinea:** Guinea has established a formal CITES Committee, comprising six focal points from: the national police/INTERPOL, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Environment, Water and Forest (MEEF),

³ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/AIRCOP/2-aircop-project.html>

Customs, CITES Management Authority, and the non-governmental organization GALF – WARAA (EAGLE Network for Guinea).

The Committee focal points reportedly work closely together with the aim of ensuring transparency and collaboration in the decisions made by the CITES Management Authority. The Committee also helps coordinate investigations between the national police, INTERPOL, MEEF and GALF. Investigations are usually led by GALF and findings are discussed by the Committee to decide upon the appropriate course of action. INTERPOL carries out overseas enquiries when operations require it. Cooperation between agencies is therefore very good, except for Customs, which reportedly has poor levels of communication with the other agencies. Joint operations led by INTERPOL, GALF, and the MEEF are very frequent in Guinea. In a high-profile case, on 14 August 2015 the former director of the CITES Management Authority, Mr. Ansoumane Doumbouya, was arrested for his suspected role in the issuance of fraudulent CITES export permits. This arrest was welcomed by the CITES Secretariat, who congratulated the national law enforcement agencies involved.⁴

- Liberia: Despite the presence of several formal mechanisms for inter-agency cooperation in Liberia, there currently appears to be little coordination between the various government agencies. The Forestry Development Authority (FDA) appears to have limited authority or synergy with other enforcement authorities and would benefit from having the importance of its role in wildlife law enforcement strengthened and clarified. The relationship between FDA and Customs in particular would benefit from improvement. There is no FDA presence at Roberts International Airport, or at seaports or land border posts.

The Biomonitoring and Law Enforcement Technical Working Group (BLETWG) was established in 2016 by the FDA in collaboration with Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF), Fauna and Flora International, Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia, United States Forest Service and World Resources Institute, to facilitate the development of national strategies for biomonitoring and law enforcement for the FDA. Instituting the BLETWG for Liberia opens up an avenue for consistent and coordinated standards and protocols with the goal of ensuring biodiversity conservation is implemented to the highest standards utilizing multidisciplinary expertise and proven strategies. This includes standardized sampling methodologies and law enforcement strategies with a view to ensuring effective conservation and management of Liberia's protected areas and wildlife.

A Confiscation Unit is in the process of being set up by the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation. It will be comprised of FDA agents, police, community representatives and organization leaders. This will support the work of WCF and FDA in tackling the illegal possession/sale of chimpanzees and other live animals.

Transnational Crime Unit (TCU): In 2009, to address transnational organized crimes, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and INTERPOL launched the West African Coast Initiative (WACI)⁵, to support the implementation of the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) Action Plan to Address the Growing Problem of Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse in West Africa. The TCU is operational in Liberia, thus allowing national and international cooperation to be centralized in one inter-agency unit, making use of a wide array of

⁴ https://cites.org/eng/guinea_arrest_20150903

⁵ <https://www.unodc.org/westandcentralafrica/en/newrosenwebsite/TOC/waci.html>

law enforcement expertise and benefiting from the synergies of this cooperation. The FDA is not currently included within the TCU structure although the TCU has previously been active in tackling wildlife trafficking.

The Joint Monitoring & Surveillance Committee includes the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Commerce, Bureau of National Fisheries, Liberian Maritime Authority, Ministry of National Defence, Bureau of Immigration, UN Mission in Liberia and the National Port Authority. Although the FDA is not currently part of this Committee, the Bureau of National Fisheries has indicated to the assessment team that the FDA would be welcome to join. Wildlife trafficking is not on the Committee's agenda, but there is the potential of including protected marine species in their planning and coordination meetings.

- Mali: Currently there are no formal inter-agency structures in place to tackle wildlife crime and no MoUs or information-sharing agreements. However, there are good levels of cooperation in place at ports, airports and land boundaries, whereby officials meet regularly to discuss aspects of law enforcement, including wildlife trafficking. There are no Water and Forests officials based at the airport. INTERPOL also appears to have a good relationship with Water and Forests.
- Niger: Although there are no formal inter-agency structures in place to tackle wildlife crime, Niger has good levels of coordination between agencies and has begun the process of developing a national wildlife crime strategy. It can be expected that formal inter-agency coordination structures will be included in that strategy. There are Water and Forestry personnel present at the airport.

A CAAT (Cellule Aeroportuaire Anti-Traffics) multi-agency team is based at the airport, comprising Gendarmerie, Police and the National Guard. There are plans to include Customs and Water and Forestry authorities. The unit was established to combat all illicit trafficking with the main focus on narcotics. The team was initially named the Anti-Drug unit but due to a United Nations initiative was transformed to CAAT in 2014. They have specialized training in profiling and detection but no specific training in CITES or fauna and flora crime. One of the unit officers was responsible for the detection and seizure of over 800 kg of pangolin scales on 27 October 2019. The seizure was made at the cargo section with the description of the manifest being that of snail shells. Even though he had no specific training in wildlife identification this officer had heard about pangolin scales being trafficked around the world and became suspicious, which led to the seizure. The case was handed over to Water and Forestry who are currently conducting the investigation.

- Nigeria: Currently there are no formal inter-agency structures in place to tackle wildlife crime and no MoUs or information-sharing agreements. Existing mechanisms for inter-agency cooperation in Nigeria are limited. Seizures made by an agency are turned over to NESREA, which is responsible for enforcing all the environmental laws in Nigeria and is the designated enforcement authority for CITES. The government has reportedly reduced the number of agencies working at the airports and seaports, and NESREA can no longer operate there. In addition, information is rarely shared between the various agencies, and is limited to when a seizure occurs.

An interagency committee exists and gathers on an ad hoc basis but is not proactively tackling wildlife trafficking issues. During its last meeting the committee consisted of the following agencies: Director General/CEO, NESREA (chairman), FDF, National Park Service (NPS), Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria, Nigeria Intelligence Agency, Nigeria Police Force, Nigeria Customs Service, Nigeria Conservation Foundation, Federal Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

- Senegal: Currently there are no formal inter-agency structures in place to tackle wildlife crime and no MoUs or information-sharing agreements. However, there are good levels of cooperation in place at ports, airports and land boundaries, whereby officials meet regularly to discuss aspects of law enforcement, including wildlife trafficking.

There are regular active investigations into wildlife trafficking. The EAGLE Network gathers intelligence and works closely with the CITES Management Authority who assists with undercover operations and is responsible for overseeing the case through to prosecution. Police and Gendarmerie are involved when the operation to arrest and search suspects' properties take place. Between 2014 and 2018, 48 persons were sentenced to between three and six months in prison over 20 court cases.

- Sierra Leone: Currently there are no formal inter-agency structures in place to tackle wildlife crime. Multi-agency joint operations are rarely conducted in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone customs reported having MoUs, and working on the front-line with national security, immigration, police, and airport security. There are no representatives from the Wildlife Authority based at the airport, seaport or land borders.

In 2014, a resolution adopted by the INTERPOL General Assembly encouraged all 190 countries to each set up a department to tackle environmental crime. As a result, the Sierra Leone national police created a special unit to deal with environmental crime; around 10 officers work in the unit. It appears, however, that other enforcement units call on the resources of the Environmental Crime Unit (ECU), which is therefore considering becoming autonomous. It is not clear whether the ECU has recently conducted any wildlife trafficking investigations.

- Togo: Currently there are no formal inter-agency structures in place to tackle wildlife crime and no MoUs or information sharing agreements. Inter-agency cooperation among national law enforcement agencies to combat wildlife trafficking takes place rarely and on an ad hoc basis. There are no representatives from the Wildlife Authority based at the airport, seaport or land borders.

3.2 EFFECTIVENESS OF CITES IMPLEMENTATION

CITES regulations cover an array of issues ranging from permitting to non-detriment findings, enforcement, captive breeding and disposal of confiscated specimens. The implementation of the Convention, which regulates trade in more than 35,000 species, presents a significant challenge to all national authorities tasked with its implementation. The effectiveness of CITES implementation across the 13 focal countries assessed by Born Free USA varied, but all countries face considerable challenges and issues that impede adequate implementation.

3.2.1 POLITICAL COMMITMENT AND PRIORITIZATION OF CITES

Insufficient political commitment to environmental crime and wildlife trafficking issues significantly affects the ability of most ECOWAS countries to implement CITES. In many countries, a lack of political commitment means that authorities responsible for CITES are under-resourced and under-staffed. The majority lack the necessary training for undertaking their CITES responsibilities. Senior managers and decision-makers in many countries do not prioritize CITES (e.g. customs authorities often do not include wildlife as a priority issue when checking shipments). In countries where wildlife law enforcement is deemed a high priority, such as in Ghana, a lack of sensitization about wildlife trafficking remains a problem.

However, some countries have recognised the need for wildlife crime to be prioritized – in Guinea, for example, the CITES Committee provides a good example of raised political commitment and organized inter-agency cooperation, which has led to improved levels of compliance and enforcement.

3.2.2 STAFFING

Many CITES Management and Scientific Authorities in the region are significantly understaffed. They operate without an appropriate mix of full-time, part-time, and casual staff and professional, technical, investigative and administrative staff as needed to carry out the required activities. For some countries, this can result in a lack of adequate representation at airports, seaports and land borders. Furthermore, the common policy of staff rotation every two or three years results in less experienced staff placed in important frontline CITES enforcement positions.

3.2.3 COLLABORATION WITH NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Many CITES enforcement authorities (e.g. customs, police) do not regularly collaborate with the CITES Management Authority. Therefore, these authorities are usually not in a position to undertake collaborative CITES investigations or enforcement actions. This compounds the problem those authorities face with regard to a lack of training.

3.2.4 COLLABORATION WITH REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

In West Africa, INTERPOL is generally viewed as the main mechanism through which international cooperation can take place on CITES issues. However, most West African INTERPOL National Central Bureaus (NCBs) do not have a dedicated wildlife officer. Therefore, aside from some specific law enforcement initiatives, such as Project GAPIN (a regional project led by the World Customs Organization (WCO) focusing on protecting great apes from wildlife crime) there are significant challenges to international cooperation with regard to CITES implementation.

Where transboundary law enforcement Units or Task Forces exist, they sometimes do not include the wildlife authorities. In Liberia, for example, The Transnational Crime Unit (TCU) allows for national and international cooperation to be centralized in one inter-agency unit, making use of a wide array of law enforcement expertise and benefiting from the synergies of this cooperation. However, the FDA is not currently included in the TCU.

3.2.5 COLLABORATION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

An important component of any national effort to implement CITES is the development of a mechanism for engagement with relevant civil society stakeholders in each country. Stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, universities, research institutes and experts, can provide an extremely valuable contribution towards efforts to implement CITES and eradicate wildlife crime. They can contribute intelligence information about the nature and extent of wildlife crime and enhance the enforcement process through technical skills and knowledge. Stakeholders are also often responsible for the development and management of wildlife sanctuaries for the disposal of confiscated specimens.

The current ability of stakeholders across West Africa to combat wildlife crime is mixed. Some countries (such as Guinea and Liberia) have organized Committees in which stakeholders interact with government authorities in an organized way. However, for the majority of ECOWAS countries, there is currently no coordination or collaboration between stakeholders engaged in activities to combat wildlife crime. The experiences of Guinea and Liberia clearly demonstrate that bringing stakeholders together

into a national stakeholder network provides an effective forum to support stakeholder implementation of CITES.

3.2.6 TRAINING

Most authorities tasked with CITES implementation in West Africa have not received adequate CITES training, including within the CITES Management and Scientific Authorities, customs, airport and seaport security, police, judiciary and prosecution services. Without appropriate training in CITES and wildlife enforcement, these authorities cannot be expected to implement CITES adequately.

3.2.7 AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES

A lack of equipment to conduct basic implementation and enforcement measures is a persistent problem throughout the West African region. Examples of equipment regularly cited by Management Authorities as lacking include:

- Laptop computers with appropriate software
- Smartphones with relevant apps
- Cameras/lenses and body cameras
- Identification manuals
- Night vision equipment
- Field binoculars
- Handheld thermal imagers
- Detection dogs imprinted for wildlife contraband
- Handheld microchip scanners
- Tracking devices and electronic tablets
- Equipment for handling live animals

The majority of Scientific Authorities are vastly under-resourced, and therefore are unable to conduct the necessary scientific research to enable them to make Non-Detriment Findings. Existing scientific research for many of the species in trade in the region is often lacking entirely or very out of date. Lack of resources also means that the Scientific Authorities usually cannot therefore be responsible for gathering and analysing information on the biological status of species affected by trade to assist in the preparation of proposals to amend the Appendices.

3.3 PROCESSES TO STRENGTHEN CITES IMPLEMENTATION

Combating wildlife crime and implementing CITES across the West African region will require all relevant national authorities along the entire enforcement chain to collaborate and coordinate operations. Training and other capacity building measures will be ineffective if the agencies are unable to collaborate, share information and conduct coordinated enforcement operations.

3.3.1 NATIONAL PROCESSES

All ECOWAS member States currently lack a national coordinated strategy for wildlife law enforcement. As a result, the various national authorities tasked with CITES implementation face numerous challenges, including inadequate collaboration, training, resources and capacity to fulfil their CITES obligations.

Without the necessary levels of investment in the CITES Management and Scientific Authorities, and without strategies that encourage inter-agency and international cooperation, implementation and

enforcement of CITES will likely remain inadequate to meet the complex requirements of the Convention.

Formal inter-agency National Wildlife Crime Strategies will ensure that high-level decision makers recognise that combating wildlife crime must be a priority for every ECOWAS country, increasing the level of political commitment towards wildlife crime in general. A Wildlife Crime Task Force will further enable the coordination, distribution and exchange of criminal intelligence information. It will provide each member State with the capacity to conduct intensive and comprehensive law enforcement investigations both nationally and regionally.

3.3.2 REGIONAL PROCESSES

The Abuja Recommendations on the Development of a Coordinated Counter Wildlife Trafficking Response in West Africa included a proposal for the development and adoption of a West Africa Strategy on Combating Wildlife Crime (WASCWC), a West Africa Network to Combat Wildlife Crime (WAN), and sustainable funding mechanisms to ensure that the WASCWC can be implemented in the long term. In Abuja, on 22nd September 2020, the ECOWAS Specialized Technical Committee of Ministers in Charge of Forests and Wildlife validated the West Africa Strategy on Combating Wildlife Crime. It was agreed that the the ECOWAS Department in charge of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources would then submit the strategy to the next ECOWAS Council of Ministers for adoption.

The WASCWC provides the region with a comprehensive framework for conducting activities that will greatly enhance enforcement and implementation of CITES across the region. However, it is vital that each member State also develops their own national strategies and task forces to ensure they can fully engage in WASCWC processes.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND A ROADMAP FOR DEVELOPING A STRATEGY TO STRENGTHEN WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT AND COMBATTING WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING IN THE REGION

Biodiversity in West Africa is of immense importance and value, but it is being heavily degraded due to illegal wildlife trade and wildlife crime. Threatened species are being captured for the pet trade (e.g. grey parrots and great apes) or poached and trafficked to a variety of markets, from luxury furniture (e.g. African Rosewood), traditional medicine (e.g. West African seahorses) or food (such as shark and ray fins). The severe level of threat this poses (as recognized by various inter-governmental and non-governmental bodies) continues largely unabated. In order to stem the tide, and prevent the degradation from becoming irreversible, the following recommendations need to be implemented as a matter of urgency.

4.1 OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1.1 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation A1: Develop a Regional Biodiversity Strategy Integrating a Coordinated Response to Wildlife Crime for ECOWAS States. Protection of biodiversity, and response to wildlife crime in West Africa must be coordinated and highly collaborative. Conservation of ecosystems transcends borders – as biodiversity loss in one country can have profound impacts on the economies, environments and climate of other countries (such as the status of Guinea as a vital watershed for the West African region). Furthermore, criminals are entirely disrespectful of borders, so that species poached in one country are often transited, sold and exported by other countries (such as the sale of lion skins in Côte d’Ivoire or the export of ivory from Togo). Therefore, the development and adoption of a framework strategy that recognizes the real impact of threats to biodiversity on a regional level, and that promotes positive actions for prevention of wildlife crime, must be a vital step towards protection of West Africa’s rich and diverse ecosystems.

Recommendation A2: Conduct an Assessment of West African Flora. Current knowledge of the status of flora species across the region is surprisingly poor, considering that much of the area is recognized as a biodiversity hotspot with high levels of plant endemism. Meanwhile, habitat destruction and illegal logging (seemingly often motivated by timber trafficking), are taking place at unprecedented and unsustainable levels, but in reality little is known of the impact of this threat on the fragile West African ecosystems. A comprehensive assessment of the flora in West Africa, of status and levels of threat is required, particularly for illegally exploited tree species. It is impossible to determine the true nature and scale of the threat to critical habitats until this assessment is undertaken. Timber species known to be targeted by loggers for illegal trade should be given priority. A roundtable discussion for ECOWAS States to identify priority species for assessment should be the first step in this process.

Recommendation A3: Develop A Regional Timber Enforcement Action Plan. Illegal exploitation of rosewood and other timber species is having a damaging impact on ecosystems across West Africa. Although Recommendation A2, above, is an essential aspect in addressing the problem, it could be a long-term process. In the meantime, a short-term regional action plan, focused solely on tree species being illegally exploited for timber, will greatly enhance our current knowledge of the extent and scale of illegal exploitation. This can be developed in conjunction with robust national action plans for tackling the problem. A regional enforcement unit, tasked with investigation of criminal activities relating to timber, would be an essential component of such a regional action plan.

Recommendation A3: Establish A Network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in West Africa. Despite a heavy dependence on marine resources for the economies and livelihoods of millions of West African people, there is currently very little investment in prevention of large-scale wildlife crime that affects marine and freshwater species. It is critical that more is done to ensure nursery grounds, coral reefs and other important habitats are protected, to ensure the continued survival of key commercial marine species, as well as those being targeted for international illegal trade, such as seahorses. Currently the size of Marine Protected Areas in the coastal focal countries is alarmingly small (e.g. Ghana 0.09%, Guinea 0.53%, Liberia 0.1%, Nigeria 0.02%, Sierra Leone 0.1%, Togo 0.2%). The adoption of a network of West African Marine Protected Areas would serve to enhance enforcement efforts and provide a solid framework for protection of the region's marine biodiversity.

Recommendation A4: Support for Non-Detriment Findings from Importing States: An overarching concern for many exploited species across West Africa is that national authorities do not have the capacity to undertake adequate Non-Detriment Findings. This can lead to unsustainable legal harvest, ineffective export bans and laundering of species into the black market. UNODC and CITES have recognized that importing countries could play an important role in supporting Parties in West (and Central) Africa to protect their wild fauna and flora from unsustainable legal trade and wildlife crime (CoP18 Doc 34 Annex 4). West Africa should therefore consider how to actively encourage the implementation of CITES Decision 18.90 which calls on importing Parties to support the region in undertaking scientific assessments for the preparation of scientifically robust non-detriment findings. ECOWAS could, for example, invite high-level diplomats to a meeting to discuss the issue and create a strategic roadmap.

Recommendation A5: Enhance Political Awareness of Wildlife Crime in West Africa. In order to more comprehensively support protection of biodiversity on the ground (or in the water), it will be necessary to dramatically increase the level of political support for the fight against wildlife crime across the ECOWAS region. Examples of how this could be achieved include:

- i. Development of a 'biodiversity & wildlife crime' working group within the ECOWAS regular meetings;
- ii. Engagement on issues relating to biodiversity and wildlife crime within the Pan African Parliament (PAP);
- iii. Engagement on issues relating to biodiversity and wildlife crime within the African Union.

Recommendation A6: Recognize Efforts to Combat Wildlife Crime. Although much more needs to be done to combat illegal trade in wild flora and fauna in the region (as evidenced by this report) there are already many people investigating and combatting criminals on a daily basis in West Africa. It is important to provide encouragement and an incentive to those rangers and other enforcement officers who may be regularly risking their lives by confronting, arresting and prosecuting those criminals. An annual ECOWAS Wildlife Enforcement Award, presented at a high-profile meeting

(such as an ECOWAS Heads of State meeting, or a CITES Standing Committee meeting) would go some way towards recognizing those on the front line of wildlife crime.

4.1.2 SPECIES-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

African Elephant Recommendations

There is clearly a significant level of concern about African elephants and a broad variety of initiatives have been dedicated to elephant conservation, ranging from field conservation to enforcement efforts and stockpile destruction. Nevertheless, activities undertaken thus far have not been adequate enough to protect West Africa's fragile populations from population collapses and for many countries in the region the elephant faces an uncertain future.

MIKE, while providing a valuable contribution to data concerning poaching across the continent, has a serious problem in West Africa, which needs to be addressed directly by the MIKE authorities. Given that MIKE is a long-established program that has already utilized significant funds (and has further secured a large amount of funding from the European Union) it seems preferable to turn focus towards the African Elephant Action Plan. The elephant range States developed this to be an overarching action plan, and while it is encouraging that some funds have so far been donated to the African Elephant Fund, if it is to adequately address all of the problems outlined in this report, significantly more investment will be needed. In addition, the National Ivory Action Plans for Nigeria and Togo deserve serious attention. Concerning the Review of the ETIS Program, it is essential that there be adequate input provided by the relevant authorities and experts within the African elephant range States.

The following recommendations focus on a series of initiatives to support West African elephant range States with the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan and the National Ivory Action Plans, elephant surveys, and implementation of the various CITES requirements.

Recommendation B1: Elephant Surveys. It is clear that many West African elephant range States are in urgent need of updated elephant surveys. It is difficult to develop targeted conservation activities based on guess-work or very old data. It is therefore recommended that a plan for undertaking surveys in the region is developed, identifying priority sites. This will not be necessary for areas recently surveyed or with surveys planned (such as Parc W which was recently surveyed, and Liberia which is going to be surveyed with support from the EPI);

Recommendation B2: National Elephant Management Plan Development and Implementation. Those countries without up to date National Elephant Management/Action Plans should be given the necessary assistance to develop them;

Recommendation B3: African Elephant Action Plan implementation across West Africa. The AEAP is a critical document for the conservation of elephants in West Africa (and across the continent). To support West Africa in the implementation of the AEAP, it is recommended that the following be undertaken:

- i. All West African elephant range States be given (where necessary) technical assistance to develop proposals for submission to the AEF Steering Committee. These proposals should, in the short-term, focus on the top three prioritized objectives of the AEAP, and in particular Objective 1;
- ii. That ear-marked funds are provided to the AEF specifically for the implementation of West African elephant proposals.

Recommendation B3: Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants. MIKE is currently not functioning well in the West African region. It is recommended that a request be made to the CITES Standing Committee, asking for a specific review of MIKE in the West African region, including for example, why sites that hold no remaining elephants continue to be considered MIKE sites. This review could, for example, be in the form of a questionnaire to be filled out and submitted by the regional MIKE representatives;

Recommendation B4: The ETIS Program Review. Concerning the Review of the ETIS Program, it is essential that there be adequate input provided by the relevant authorities and experts from African elephant range States. It is therefore recommended that the West African elephant range States approach the appointed independent experts directly upon their appointment, to request their inclusion in the process, including providing recommendations for improvement of the ETIS Program;

Recommendation B5: West African Regional Strategy. It is encouraging to see that a new IUCN Regional Strategy for elephants in West Africa is being developed. However, it is essential that all African elephant range States in the region are engaged in the process. It is therefore recommended that representatives from the region are given the necessary support to engage with IUCN in this regard;

Recommendation B5: National Ivory Action Plans. Assistance should be given to Nigeria and Togo, to support implementation of their NIAPs, particularly with regard to enhancing enforcement, intelligence gathering, and tackling domestic ivory markets. Every effort should be made to ensure compliance with the recommendation to have seizures larger than 500kg forensically analyzed;

Recommendation B6: Ivory Stockpiles: It is important that the region begin to implement the recommendation in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev CoP17) to provide details of stockpile inventories to the Secretariat by the required date each year. It may be possible for countries to find assistance from organizations such as Stop Ivory / the EPI to conduct inventories where necessary.

Grey Parrot Recommendations

Given that African greys only reproduce once they reach ten years of age, their ability to recover from huge population losses is poor. This is further exacerbated by the fact that they are easy to capture in large numbers, where they roost in big flocks or gather at mineral licks. Their current status in West Africa is highly precarious, with populations becoming extinct across the range and, in some areas, only tiny numbers being found where once huge flocks were known. The situation for *P.e.timneh* in particular seems extremely fragile.

The recent uplisting of African grey parrots to CITES Appendix I will likely improve the situation, however, there clearly remains a criminal element that will be willing to traffic birds regardless of their CITES status. Therefore, it is vital that enhanced enforcement efforts are made to ensure that the small populations remaining in West Africa can be protected and allowed to recover. The following recommendations focus on implementation of the various CITES Decisions, uniting range States to enable a regional approach to the enforcement of the CITES listing and protection of remaining African Grey Parrot populations.

Recommendation C1: Development and Implementation of a West African Regional Grey Parrot Management Plan. In accordance with CITES Decision 17.254 and 17.255, a West African regional grey parrot management plan should be developed and implemented as a matter of urgency. This should include, as a priority, a regional effort to crack down on the illicit trade in grey parrots through a coordinated enforcement initiative.

Recommendation C2: Development and Implementation of National Grey Parrot Action Plans. In accordance with CITES Decision 17.256, National Grey Parrot Action Plans should be developed within each of the range States and implemented as a matter of urgency.

Recommendation C3: Demand Reduction. In conjunction with relevant authorities in the EU, US, Arabian Peninsula and other markets, alongside experts from NGOs such as the World Parrot Trust, a comprehensive campaign to inform consumers of the threats imposed by the illicit trade in grey parrots should be carried out. A reporting mechanism, whereby consumers can confidentially report potential illicit trade, should be initiated.

Recommendation C4: Monitoring the Impact of the Appendix I listing: Noting the reported increase in price of grey parrots on the black market in Central Africa following the CITES Appendix I listing, and the potential impact on levels of illicit trade, authorities will need to operate increased vigilance to ensure that poaching levels do not increase in the West African region. Support should be provided to enable authorities to monitor the markets and conduct operations to detect illegal activities.

Recommendation C5: Monitoring Remote Flights: According to UNODC, the greatest weakness in the illegal trafficking chain for grey parrots is that criminals usually rely on flights from remote regions. Monitoring such flights would make it much more challenging to move wild parrots out of the field cost effectively (CoPI8 Doc 34 Annex 4). Identifying smaller domestic airports in range States that connect to international airports would likely result in successful enforcement operations and provide a deterrent to criminal networks utilizing these airports.

African Lion Recommendations

Given their distinctiveness from other African lions, and their precarious and declining population status, conservation activities focused on the remaining West African lions must be seen as a priority action for the region. In addition to the initiatives being undertaken by CITES, there have been some recent efforts to promote their conservation, including the Conservation Strategy for the Lion in West and Central Africa, developed by the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group (2006) and the newly developed African Carnivore Initiatives. However, these initiatives urgently need to be backed up by action on the ground. Time is running out to secure the long-term survival of the West African lion subpopulation.

There needs to be a combined short-term effort to ensure that:

- a) CITES Decisions are implemented as soon as possible;
- b) Conservation Action Plans are finalized and implemented;
- c) Enforcement efforts are undertaken as a high priority to:
 - Close-down local markets;
 - Arrest and prosecute criminals involved in the illicit trade of lion parts and products;
 - Prevent poaching of any remaining lions in the region;

Recommendation DI: Action Plan Development and Implementation. National Lion Action Plans need to be urgently developed for the region. Furthermore, development of a regional strategy should be undertaken as a matter of urgency. The National Lion Action Plans should include enhanced ground patrols and public awareness campaigns. Implementation of these plans is likely to require capacity building of enforcement authorities in the field. A West African regional meeting of lion range States and experts may be necessary to complete this recommendation;

Recommendation D2: Domestic markets. Initiate a regional crack-down on domestic markets for lion parts and products. While the demand for products in these markets continues, there will continue to be a threat to the future survival of African lions in West Africa;

Recommendation D3: Regional Enforcement Planning Initiative. As it has been demonstrated that lion parts and products are on sale throughout the West African region, it is recommended that a regional enforcement planning initiative be undertaken, to include relevant authorities and enforcement experts, including INTERPOL and EAGLE representatives.

Pangolin Recommendations

Pangolin trafficking poses a severe threat to the long-term future of African pangolins. A strong and coordinated West African Pangolin Initiative is required to protect all three species across their West African range. There needs to be an urgent enhancement of enforcement efforts and strict implementation of CITES regulations. Furthermore, research is required to enhance knowledge of pangolin population status and range, and of the impact that trade is having on these species.

Recommendation E1: Development of a Regional Management Strategy for West African Pangolins. A coordinated approach seems critical to ensure that enforcement activities adequately address pangolin poaching and trade within the region. Given the new heightened levels of demand for pangolins, a regional approach to capacity building and enforcement appears to be the quickest way forward to address the threats.

Recommendation E2: Development of in situ conservation field programs. In line with CITES Resolution 17.10, it is recommended that range States be supported to provide the necessary capacity building and technical equipment to rangers in the field to protect pangolins. Given the challenges associated with detecting and protecting them, the initial development of a toolkit of resources for pangolin conservation, which can be distributed to all range States for adaptation as necessary, may be a beneficial approach.

Great Ape Recommendations

As our closest living relatives, great apes are of special importance. They play a significant cultural, social and scientific role as part of our natural heritage. The status of great apes in West Africa is precarious and they face a number of serious threats, including poaching for bushmeat and trafficking for the pet trade and for entertainment. Trafficking live great apes appears to be a specialist field for criminals, given the complexity of shipping and 'storing' live animals.

Recommendation F1: Stolen Ape Action Plan. The issue of great ape trafficking was comprehensively addressed in the 2013 report 'Stolen Apes – The Illicit Trade in Chimpanzees, Gorillas, Bonobos and Orangutans' (Stiles et al., 2013). The recommendations contained within this report remain relevant today. It is recommended that a workshop of West African great ape range States, together with GRASP, be organized. This workshop would review these 'Stolen Ape' recommendations, in addition to any other recommendations suggested by the range States, and produce a short-term action plan for West Africa;

Recommendation F2: Ape killing and conflict. Much of the literature suggests that in addition to the trapping and trafficking of live great apes, there is also a considerable problem of illegal killing of apes for various reasons, including bushmeat and conflict. An initiative to ease the causes of conflict, and to address the use of great apes as bushmeat, appears to be a key component to their long-term survival.

Reptile and Amphibian Recommendations

Conservation of reptiles and amphibians can sometimes be overlooked. However, the presence or absence of reptiles in an ecosystem can be a key indicator of its health. Despite the lack of a comprehensive analysis of illegal trade in reptiles and amphibians in the region, it is evident from the number of seizures, and the diversity of species involved in those seizures, that trade appears to be booming. This trade is apparently both regional and international. Furthermore, given that there are also significant amounts of legal trade in reptile and amphibian species from the region, the actual combined impact of legal and illegal trade may be a cause for concern for some species. Providing support to the region to research these impacts, and to provide input into the CITES processes reviewing significant trade in the species, would be an important step for the region

Recommendation G1: National Reptile and Amphibian Action Plan Development.

Supporting the region to undertake a review of the conservation status of reptiles and amphibians and develop appropriate actions, will enable each country to focus on which species require further attention. Actions will need to focus, in particular, on researching species in trade (both legal and illegal). Research data will provide input into the development of CITES non-detriment findings. It will also enable countries to take the necessary measures to prevent illegal trade from occurring.

Northwest African Cheetah Recommendations

The Northwest African cheetah is emblematic of the precarious conservation status of many species in the West African region. The cheetah also emphasizes the importance of the Park W complex for the region's biodiversity. If this subspecies of cheetah is not to be lost altogether a comprehensive program for its protection must be implemented immediately.

Recommendation H1: Northwest African Cheetah Strategy: A meeting of WAP Complex range States to coordinate the development of a comprehensive Northwest African Cheetah Strategy, would provide a vital contribution to the conservation and long-term regional protection of this iconic species.

Recommendation H2: West Africa Participation in Cheetah Data Sharing: The World Customs Organization (WCO) and the CITES Secretariat have established a closed user group for cheetahs, on the WCO CENComm platform. This is a secure communication system for enforcement authorities. It is recommended that all West African cheetah range States become members of this closed user group if they have not already done so.

Black Crowned Crane Recommendations

The Black Crowned Crane is both an iconic and a vulnerable species. It is Nigeria's National bird. The threats it faces are numerous, ranging from illegal trade to habitat destruction. Scientists have been calling for the species to be uplisted to CITES Appendix I for more than a decade, due to the serious threat posed by the trade in live cranes (Williams et al., 2003, Diagana et al., 2006). At CoP18 the Black Crowned Crane was uplisted to Appendix I (CoP18 Prop.19), following a proposal by Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal. It is therefore now imperative that follow-up actions are taken to ensure compliance with the CITES listing.

Recommendation II: Black Crowned Crane Action Plan. Black Crowned Crane would benefit from a regional action plan, to help guide conservation actions to protect the species. A roundtable

discussion of range States to provide input into such an Action Plan would be beneficial. This Action Plan should contain activities to ensure compliance with CITES.

Leopard Recommendations

The previous widespread distribution of leopards, and their ability to adapt to different habitats, have led to a misconception that leopards are more resilient to many of the threats facing large carnivores in sub-Saharan Africa. Among other problems, this has led to a paucity of adequate data about the species in the West African region. However, the massive loss of estimated range within West Africa (86% - 95%) provides strong evidence that leopards in the region are in serious need of increased conservation efforts. The true scale and nature of the illicit trade in leopard parts and products is unknown, but the ongoing seizures of leopard parts in the region, and the fact that leopards are regularly being traded alongside other illicit wildlife products, means that the impact of the illegal trade in leopards is likely to be highly significant and requires urgent attention.

Recommendation J1: Survey of Leopard Status and Review of Threats to leopards in West Africa: Without adequate data concerning the status of leopards and the threats they face in the region, it will be impossible to develop adequate conservation methods for the species. Leopard surveys are regularly conducted in other countries. Protocols and methodology (e.g. camera trapping, call play-back) are well established. This should facilitate accurate surveying in the West African region.

Recommendation J2: Development of an Action Plan for the Conservation of Leopards in West Africa: Utilizing data from the status survey and threat review (as per Recommendation J1) develop an Action Plan for the Conservation of Leopards in West Africa.

Common Hippopotamus Recommendations

Hippopotamus conservation in West Africa does not get the attention it warrants, perhaps due to the widespread distribution of the species across the region, giving the false impression that populations are healthy. Unfortunately, with the exception of Burkina Faso, all populations in West Africa are either in a downward trend or the trend is unknown. Population sizes are also small and, again with the exception of Burkina Faso, all populations number 500 individuals or less. This troubling conservation status, combined with evidence of illegal trade in the region, is cause for concern. Trade routes for the species in the region, and the source of illegal hippo ivory seized is unknown. More information is required with regard to the conservation requirements of the species, and more awareness is required concerning the important ecological role that hippopotamus plays in the freshwater ecosystems of West Africa.

Recommendation K1: Investigate Trade Routes: It would be beneficial to conduct forensic analysis on hippo ivory discovered in West Africa, to see from which populations it has been sourced, and therefore to understand more about the trade routes for illegal hippo products. Discussion with forensic experts, such as Professor Sam Wasser of the University of Washington in Seattle, would be the first important step in this initiative.

Recommendation K2: Public Awareness Campaign: Undertake a public awareness campaign concerning the importance of hippopotamus for the protection of local freshwater fish stocks.

Recommendation K3: Identify Conservation Priorities for Hippos: Each range State should undertake a process of identifying conservation priority actions for hippopotamus. Focus should be on reducing illegal killing, protecting habitat, and mitigating against conflict with farmers. Given

Hippopotamus conservation will inevitably be linked to riverine conservation, there are multiple linkages and conservation-multipliers associated with increased protection for the species.

West African Vulture Recommendations

Vultures play a vital role in the wider ecosystem, removing carcasses and other waste from the environment. This reduces disease and contamination of water. In areas in which vultures are lacking, there are implications for the spread of disease, potentially affecting both domestic livestock and human communities (CoP18 Doc 97). Given the alarming rates of decline for all species of West African migratory vulture, efforts are urgently required to reduce threats to vultures. Efforts should particularly focus on curbing rates of illegal poisoning and reducing demand for the species across the region. Indeed, given the migratory nature of these six vulture species, West Africa has a critical responsibility to protect the species not only for their value to its own ecosystems, but for all the other regions in which the species are present.

Recommendation L1: Support the implementation of CITES Decisions: support should be provided to ensure that the CITES Decisions adopted at CoP18 are fully implemented. Parties from West Africa should submit all available data as requested and should be well represented in the Working Group to be established by the CITES Animals Committee.

Recommendation L2: Support implementation of the Multi-Species Action Plan to Conserve African Eurasian Vultures (Vulture MsAP): Liaison with CMS concerning implementation of the Vulture MsAP, which aims to restore populations of Old World vultures to a favourable conservation status by 2029, will be essential to ensure the long-term survival of the species in the region. It may be necessary for West Africa to develop its own regional Vulture Action Plan for the species, to assist with implementation of the Vulture MsAP.

West African Tree Species Recommendation

Recommendation M1: West African Representation and Participation in CITES African Tree Species Working Group. Currently Senegal is the only member of the African Tree Species Working Group (CITES Decision 17.302). The outcomes of this Working Group could be influential upon the conservation of important tree species for the West African region. It is therefore vital that more West African countries join the Working Group, to provide more extensive representation from the region. Assessing if support (such as translation) is necessary to facilitate participation of the West African countries in the working group could prove helpful.

Recommendation M2: Reforestation of High-Value Woody Plants: A program of reforestation, specifically of high-value trees utilized by rural populations, would go some way towards the protection of threatened and endangered tree species in the region. For example, a program of reforestation of *Prosopis africana* in Niger, of which all parts are utilized by the rural community (as fodder, building materials, cooking utensils, charcoal and for traditional medicine), could support rural populations while taking the pressure off other threatened species in the area.

African Rosewood Recommendations

The ongoing unsustainable exploitation of African Rosewood for international trade is having serious negative impacts on the biodiversity and ecology of the West African dry forests and the communities that depend on them. The true extent of these impacts is largely unknown given a lack of information concerning the status of the species in many range States. However, the huge volumes of

logs being exported from West Africa for the Hongmu trade, alongside anecdotal evidence that *P. erinaceus* has already become commercially extinct in many areas (Lawson, 2015), mean that it should be a high priority for conservation activities in the region. In addition, it is conceivable that such commercial extinction will result in a new focus on other rosewood species in the region, thus further damaging West Africa's fragile ecosystems.

Recommendation N1: Analysis of Status of *P. erinaceus*. There needs to be urgent research into the conservation status of *P. erinaceus* across West Africa. This information may, as suggested by the IUCN analysis of CoP17 Prop 57, reveal that the species meets the requirements for an Appendix I listing.

Recommendation N2: Pre-emptive Measures. Create a forum for regional plant and enforcement experts to discuss, among other things, what is likely to happen should *P. erinaceus* become commercially extinct and develop pre-emptive measures to prevent over-exploitation of other tree species in the region. This forum should report its findings to the CITES Plants Committee as necessary.

Shark and Ray Recommendations

The high value of shark and ray products in Asia means that criminal elements are taking advantage of the West African region's limited capacity to enforce the law when it comes to protected species of sharks and rays. Nevertheless, much of the West African region (including all six of the coastal focal countries) has demonstrated its strong support for shark and ray CITES listings, and evidently is committed to taking measures that ensure CITES regulations are adequately implemented and enforced. Given that a framework for this process already exists, through the two declarations developed at the 2014 and 2016 regional shark workshops, it is appropriate to promote ongoing implementation and, where necessary, expansion of these declarations. Priorities from these declarations are:

- 1) capacity building and training (focused on CITES and on the identification of sharks);
- 2) regional enforcement coordination;
- 3) education and outreach;
- 4) improved capacity and data to enable issuance of Non-Detriment Findings;
- 5) improved capacity to enable reporting to CITES.

Recommendation O1: Support for the West African Declarations. The signatories of the 2014 Declaration (the Dakar Action Plan) and the 2016 Declaration (Recommendations concerning CITES shark listings) should be supported in their work to ensure their ongoing implementation. A meeting of the signatories may be necessary for this process. Specific actions required include:

- 1) Decisions from CoP17 to be incorporated into existing activities;
- 2) Research and capacity support to enable the issuance of adequate NDFs;
- 3) Regular training of personnel responsible for CITES shark/ray listing implementation;
- 4) Targeted and regular enforcement efforts to be carried out across the region. These efforts should be conducted in collaboration with INTERPOL and other appropriate enforcement agencies;
- 5) Outreach to nations whose flagged vessels are found to be committing illegal fishing and finning;
- 6) Reporting to CITES of illegal activities (such as through the new Annual Illegal Trade report, as outlined in CITES Notification No. 2016/007);
- 7) A regional public outreach campaign to inform the public of the illegality of trafficking in shark and ray products.

Marine Turtle Recommendations

Overall, information about marine turtle biology, conservation and threats in West Africa is significantly lacking (CoPI8 Inf18). Marine turtles are vulnerable both at sea, where they are trapped for meat and shells, and on land, where the eggs and hatchlings are harvested. There is clearly an active illegal trade in the region, although it is not known whether consumption remains within the region, or whether specimens are exported to other regions. The extent of the impact of this illegal trade on the status of the four species of marine turtles is also unknown. CoPI8 Inf18 notes that “*Previous studies have extensively highlighted the importance of developing (together with coastal communities) sustainable alternative livelihoods along western Africa for those that rely on marine turtles. Increasing legal protection, continuing awareness and beach protection projects in proximity with local communities, preserving core nesting areas from urbanization, and demonstrating the economic income potential of alternative activities are necessary to safeguard marine turtle populations in the eastern Atlantic.*”

Recommendation P1: West African Marine Turtle Trade Study. Given the general lack of information concerning the illegal trade and consumption of marine turtles in West Africa, it is recommended that a study on illicit trade in West African marine turtles be conducted, to incorporate the six coastal focal countries of this report (or the entire West African region, if resources are available).

West African Manatee Recommendations

As the least-studied sirenian in the world, the true status of the West African manatee is largely unknown, as is the impact that wildlife crime is having upon the species. However, given its low reproductive rate, illegal killing is undoubtedly a serious threat. Manatee body parts are highly sought after in the region, and although much killing is incidental or opportunistic, there is also an organized illegal trade. This illegal killing is widely regarded as the primary threat to the survival of manatees, and whilst there is cross-border illegal trade, the market appears to be mainly centered within West Africa. Given that there is already an Action Plan developed for the species, focus should be placed on implementation of this Action Plan.

Recommendation Q1: Coordinated Enforcement. Objective 1 in the *Action Plan for the Conservation of the West African Manatee* calls for enforcement of legislation relating to manatee conservation. Although illegal trade in the species is widespread, it is likely that there are only a limited number of poachers involved in the organized trade. Therefore, targeted conservation enforcement actions may be highly effective in stemming the illegal trade in the short-term. A coordinated enforcement effort among all range States, to take place as a matter of urgency, is therefore recommended.

Recommendation Q2: Study on Status and Threats to West African Manatees. Objective 2 in the *Action Plan for the Conservation of the West African Manatee* calls for an improvement in the understanding of the West African manatee, and the use of this information for its conservation management. Therefore, a comprehensive study on the species, with a broad scope to incorporate status, distribution and threats, would be of significant benefit to ascertain what specific actions are required to ensure the long-term survival of the species. Information from this study can be used in the development of National Action Plans for West African manatees.

Recommendation Q3: Awareness Raising. Objective 4 in the *Action Plan for the Conservation of the West African Manatee*, calls for targeted communication and education to promote awareness of the

value of the species. Given that consumption of manatee parts appears to be largely regional in nature, such an awareness campaign must be a critical part of conservation efforts in the region.

West African Seahorse Recommendations

The trade in West African seahorses is of a magnitude that must be of concern to the international community. It is unknown what the impact of this trade is on the survival of the species but trade (both legal and illegal) is unlikely to be highly sustainable. Although Guinea and Senegal are both subject to a recommendation to suspend legal trade, more robust measures may be required to ensure protection of the species from illegal trade, the scale of which can only currently be guessed at.

Recommendation R1: Consider uplisting West African seahorses to CITES Appendix I. The species may meet the criteria for a CITES Appendix I listing. This needs careful consideration in advance of the next CITES Conference of the Parties, and an uplisting proposal submitted should it be deemed appropriate.

Recommendation R2: West African Seahorse Action Plan. The species would benefit from a regional action plan, to help guide conservation actions to protect it. A roundtable discussion of seahorse range States to provide input into such an Action Plan would be beneficial.

Guitarfish Recommendations

Although more data is required, IUU fishing is undoubtedly having a serious negative impact on all four guitarfish species present off the West African coast. The listing of the blackchin guitarfish on CITES Appendix II is an encouraging step towards ensuring that the threats to guitarfish are more widely recognized and addressed. Concerns have been expressed that guitarfish species could easily succumb to the same serious population crashes as sawfish, if the present situation is not adequately addressed (CoPI8 Prop 43).

Recommendation S1: Consider Further CITES Proposals. All four guitarfish in the West African region may meet the criteria for listing on CITES Appendix II. It is therefore recommended that the three species of guitarfish that are not listed on CITES are also considered for listing at the next Conference of the Parties.

Recommendation S2: Guitarfish Action Plan. Guitarfish would benefit from a regional action plan, to help guide conservation actions to protect guitarfish species. A roundtable discussion of guitarfish range States in West Africa, to provide input into such an Action Plan would be beneficial.

4.2 ROADMAP FOR DEVELOPING A STRATEGY TO STRENGTHEN WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT AND COMBATTING WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

The WASCWC provides the region with a comprehensive strategy for strengthening wildlife enforcement and combatting wildlife trafficking. Next steps should therefore focus on the implementation of the WASCWC and establishment of the WAN and associated implementation and funding mechanisms. The following activities should be prioritized in order to ensure the remaining activities can be implemented.

- I. National Strategies and Task Forces (WASCWC Action 2.5):** The development of National Strategies for Combating Wildlife Crime and associated Task Forces must be considered of primary importance to all ECOWAS Member States in implementation of the WASCWC. A Task Force will enable the coordination, distribution and exchange of criminal intelligence and surveillance

information. It will provide each member State with the capacity to conduct intensive and comprehensive law enforcement investigations both nationally and regionally, under the auspices of the WAN. Furthermore, creation of Task Forces will enable member States to apply to the WASCWC Fund and to implement activities in coordination with the WAN.

- 2. Sustainable Funding Mechanism** (WASCWC Action 8.1): The mobilization of financial and technical resources is an essential precursor to WASCWC implementation. Ensuring adequate resources are available will be fundamental to the strategy's success. A WASCWC Fund, set up to receive contributions from multiple donors and accessible to each ECOWAS member State, should be established as a matter of priority.
- 3. West Africa Network to Combat Wildlife Crime** (WASCWC Action 2.3): as the primary regional mechanism for WASCWC implementation, establishment of the WAN will be critical to the success of the strategy. Identification of the WAN Directorate and development of a detailed proposal for establishing and operationalizing the WAN Secretariat will be vital first steps in the process. Funding for this specific process may need to be secured in advance of the establishment of the WASCWC Fund.
- 4. Political Commitment and Awareness of Senior Managers** (WASCWC Actions 3.1 and 3.2): For WASCWC implementation to be successful, it will be necessary for those tasked with implementation to be supported by senior managers and government. Initiatives to raise awareness and political support should therefore be undertaken as a priority. The development of protocols to define roles and responsibilities of relevant authorities will be a critical component of this (WASCWC Action 2.9).
- 5. Database and Communications System** (WASCWC Actions 2.2 and 4.2): The establishment of an autonomous communication system between the regional enforcement authorities, as well as a centralized wildlife law enforcement database, will greatly enhance the ability of each ECOWAS member State to implement the WASCWC.
- 6. Training** (WASCWC Action 1.2): Having enforcement mechanisms in place will be ineffective if relevant authorities do not have the necessary training to implement those mechanisms. The development of train the trainer curricula and related reference materials for all authorities and institutions, to be made available for use by all countries, will be key.

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ANNEX. I CITES TRADE SANCTIONS CURRENTLY AFFECTING ECOWAS MEMBER STATES

(I) Sanctions for a Single Species:

Country	Notification	Basis	Species	Common	Valid From
Benin	No. 2020/006 (20/01/2020)	Significant Trade	<i>Pandinus imperator</i>	Emperor Scorpion	02/05/2013 (SC63)
Benin	No. 2020/006 (20/01/2020)	Significant Trade	<i>Chamaeleo gracilis</i>	Slender Chameleon	03/02/2016 (SC66)
Benin	No. 2020/006 (20/01/2020)	Significant Trade	<i>Chamaeleo senegalensis</i>	Senegal Chameleon	03/02/2016 (SC66)
Benin	No. 2020/006 (20/01/2020)	Significant Trade	<i>Kinixys homeana</i>	Home's Hinge-back Tortoise	03/02/2016 (SC66)
Côte d'Ivoire	No. 2020/006 (20/01/2020)	Significant Trade	<i>Pericopsis elata</i>	African Teak	07/09/2012 (SC62)
Ghana	No. 2020/006 (20/01/2020)	Significant Trade	<i>Pandinus imperator</i>	Emperor Scorpion	12/08/2014 (SC65)
Ghana	No. 2020/006 (20/01/2020)	Significant Trade	<i>Chamaeleo gracilis</i>	Slender Chameleon	03/02/2016 (SC66)
Ghana	No. 2020/006 (20/01/2020)	Significant Trade	<i>Chamaeleo senegalensis</i>	Senegal Chameleon	03/02/2016 (SC66)
Guinea	No. 2020/006 (20/01/2020)	Significant Trade	<i>Hippocampus algiricus</i>	West African Seahorse	03/02/2016 (SC66)
Mali	No. 2020/006 (20/01/2020)	Significant Trade	<i>Uromastix dispar</i>	Sudan Mastigure	22/08/2008 (SC57)
Niger	No. 2020/006 (20/01/2020)	Significant Trade	<i>Chamaeleo africanus</i>	African Chameleon	07/09/2012 (SC62)

Country	Notification	Basis	Species	Common	Valid From
Nigeria	No. 2018/084 (01/11/2018)	Compliance and enforcement – Article XIII	<i>Pterocarpus erinaceus</i>	African rosewood	05/10/2018 (SC70)
Senegal	No. 2020/006 (20/01/2020)	Significant Trade	<i>Hippocampus algiricus</i>	West African Seahorse	03/02/2016 (SC66)
Togo	No. 2020/006 (20/01/2020)	Significant Trade	<i>Poicephalus fuscicollis</i>	Cape Parrot	09/07/2001 (SC45)
Togo	No. 2020/006 (20/01/2020)	Significant Trade	<i>Pandinus imperator</i>	Emperor Scorpion	02/05/2013 (SC63)

(2) Sanctions for All Commercial Trade:

Country	Notification	Basis	Scope	Valid From
Guinea	No. 2019/075 (19/12/2019)	Compliance and enforcement	<i>All commercial trade</i>	16/03/2013
Liberia	No. 2018/012 (22/01/2018)	National legislation	<i>All commercial trade</i>	15/03/2016

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