

**5th Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the
CMS Scientific Council (ScC-SC5)**

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CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE AFRICAN LION (*PANTHERA LEO*)

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

On the basis of CMS Decision 13.89 *Conservation and Management of the African Lion (Panthera leo)*, the Sessional Committee is recommended to review the *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa*, and formulate recommendations as appropriate for consideration by the African Lion Range States, IUCN and others, as needed.

This document is accompanied by one Annex: *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa*.

CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE AFRICAN LION (*PANTHERA LEO*)

Background

1. CMS Decision 13.89 *Conservation and Management of the African Lion (Panthera leo)* and directed to the Scientific Council provides:

The Scientific Council shall review the Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa, and formulate recommendations as appropriate for consideration by the African Lion Range States, IUCN and others, as needed.

2. The topic of Lion conservation has been under discussion at CMS and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) for a long time. In 2004, at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CITES COP13, Bangkok), African lion Range States agreed on a series of workshops facilitated by IUCN to develop lion conservation strategies for sub-Saharan Africa. These workshops were held in 2006, in the frame of which the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group produced two documents, namely the “Conservation Strategy for the Lion in West and Central Africa” and the “Conservation Strategy for the Lion in East and Southern Africa”.
3. In November 2014, CMS COP11 (Quito) adopted Resolution 11.32 *Conservation And Management of the African Lion, Panthera leo*; requesting Range State Parties to review these existing conservation strategies and recommending “a meeting of Range State Parties, other Range States, and partner organizations, including representatives from the CMS Scientific Council, to be convened [...] in order to assess and evaluate the implementation of the [two conservation strategies for Lions in Africa], and develop regional conservation action plans designed to reverse population declines and possible needs for capacity-building in Lion Range States”.
4. In December 2015, a ‘*Review of Lion Conservation Strategies*’ and its findings were prepared as a CMS working document in response to CMS Resolution 11.32, in preparation for the First Joint CMS-CITES African Lion Range State Meeting (Entebbe, Uganda), which took place in May 2016 as recommended by CMS Resolution 11.32. It was the first time that CITES and CMS jointly convened such a meeting. The final communiqué agreed at this meeting ([Entebbe Communiqué](#)) showed “consensus among African lion Range States on the importance of conserving Lions across the continent and identifies a number of practical actions.”
5. In October 2016, CITES COP17 (Johannesburg, South Africa) adopted *Decisions 17.241-17.245 on African lion (Panthera leo)*, with Decision 17.241 instructing the CITES Secretariat to, “in collaboration with African lion range States, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN): a) investigate possible mechanisms to develop and support the implementation of joint Lion conservation plans and strategies, taking into consideration existing Lion conservation plans and strategies”.
6. In November 2018, the First Meeting of the Range States of the African Carnivores Initiative (ACI1, Bonn, Germany) took place, where a first version of the *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa* (compiled by the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group) was presented and discussed. Based on the discussions held at this meeting, a second version of the *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa* was prepared and made available to CITES COP18 (2019, Geneva, Switzerland) in 2019 and CMS COP13 (Gandhinagar, India) in 2020.

7. In February 2020, CMS COP13 took note of the 'Executive Summary of the *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa*' under agenda item 26.3.1 Joint CMS-CITES African Carnivores Initiative. COP13 also adopted Resolution 13.4 *Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative* and Decisions 13.86 to 13.87 *Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative*, instructing the CMS Secretariat to cooperate closely with the CITES Secretariat, and in collaboration with IUCN, to develop a dedicated Programme of Work (POW) for the ACI. The *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa* form a basis for this draft POW.
8. In July 2020, the 31st meeting of the CITES Animals Committee (AC31) in its Doc.28 *Species specific matters: AFRICAN LIONS (PANTHERA LEO)* provided in its Recommendations that the "Animals Committee is invited to: establish an intersessional working group on African lions with a mandate to: a) review the *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa*". Subsequently, in December 2020, the CITES Secretariat shared the *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa* with the intersessional Working Group on African lions for review.
9. As instructed by COP13 Decision 13.89, the Scientific Council should review the *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa*, and formulate recommendations as appropriate for consideration by the African Lion Range States, IUCN and others, as needed.

Issue: Ongoing consultation of the CITES Animals Committee

10. As per CITES Decision 18.244(e) *African lions (Panthera leo) and the CITES Big Cats Task Force*, the *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa* and any relevant update have also been shared by the CITES Secretariat with the CITES Animals Committee for its review, as appropriate (see paragraph 8).
11. The Working Group established under the CITES Animals Committee (see paragraph 8) was mandated, inter alia, to review the *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa*. During the 31st meeting of the CITES Animals Committee, which took place from 31 May - 22 June 2021, the Committee established an in-session working group on African lions with the mandate to: a) agree on a process and way forward for implementing Decision 18.247, paragraph a); and b) draft recommendations for consideration by the Animals Committee later in this meeting.
12. The working group recommended that the Animals Committee agree to the following recommendations:
 - a) The CITES Secretariat is invited to convey the comments and suggestions on the *Guidelines for the Conservation of the Lion in Africa* generated by the Animals Committee's intersessional working group on lions to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), and to make the comments and suggestions available in an information document.
 - b) IUCN, in collaboration with the CITES and CMS Secretariats, and in consultation with African lion range States, is requested to develop the next version of the *Guidelines for the Conservation of the Lion in Africa* in the context of the implementation of the *Programme of Work for the Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative (ACI)*, taking into consideration the comments and suggestions referred to in paragraph a) and recent scientific literature pertinent to the conservation of African lion.
 - c) The ACI range States are encouraged to consider the revised *Guidelines for the Conservation of the Lion in Africa* referred to in paragraph b) at their next meeting, which is envisaged for 2022.

- d) The African lion range States are encouraged to share experiences and best practice recommendations in using and implementing the *Guidelines for the Conservation of the Lion in Africa* at their ACI range States' meetings and through the Joint CMS/CITES/IUCN web portal on African lions.
- e) The Animals Committee agrees to submit the following draft decisions for consideration at the 19th meeting of the Conference of Parties:

Directed to the Secretariat

19.AA The Secretariat shall inform the Animals Committee regarding the activities and outputs of the African Carnivore Initiative (ACI) that relate to the Committee's mandate and request advice from the Animals Committee, as appropriate.

Directed to the Animals Committee

19.BB The Animals Committee shall advise the Secretariat, as appropriate, on information that it provides regarding the activities and outputs of the ACI that are relevant to the Animals Committee's mandate.

13. The final written records of the outcome of the 31st CITES Animals Committee was not available online at the time of the revision of this document. Since the IUCN's *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa* were developed to guide Lion conservation activities of both CITES and CMS, they should reflect relevant policies of both Conventions, and each Convention body should remain informed about revisions made by the other.

Discussion and analysis

14. The *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa* were developed to provide practical guidance for the survey, conservation and management of Lion populations in Africa, and to facilitate the implementation of the Regional Conservation Strategies and National or Regional Action Plans developed based on these Strategies. They also form the basis for Lion conservation measures under the draft Programme of Work for the African Carnivores Initiative.
15. The Sessional Committee is informed that the *Guidelines for the Conservation of Lions in Africa* are intended to form a living document and therefore will continuously integrate new instruments, tools, concepts and experiences as they are being developed or as new insight becomes available. The proposed revisions of them should be discussed and agreed by ACI Range States, preferably at ACI Range State meetings, where CMS and CITES Parties are joined and no further back-and-forth exchange between Convention bodies is required.

Recommended actions

16. The Sessional Committee is recommended to review the document contained in the Annex of this document, and formulate recommendations as appropriate for consideration by the African Lion Range States, IUCN and others, as needed.