

Environment Quarterly

Ubume bendalo ngekota • Omgewings kwartaalverslag • Tša Tikologo ka Kotara



Saving the mighty elephant

**Discussions on enforcement
take centre stage at CITES COP17**



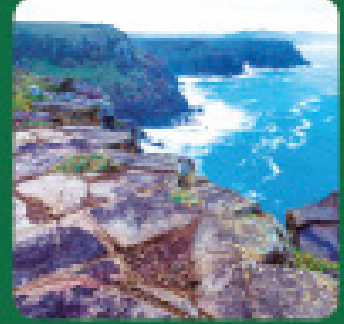
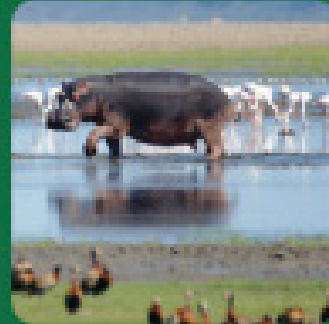
environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



2016

environment CALENDAR



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2 February
22 March
23 March
26 March
22 April
9 May
22 May
5 June
8 June

World Wetlands Day
World Water Day
World Meteorological Day
Earth Hour
Earth Day
World Migratory Bird Day
International Biodiversity Day
World Environment Day
World Oceans' Day

17 June
18 July
31 July
1 September
12 - 16 September
16 September
22 September
21 November

World Day to Combat Desertification
Nelson Mandela Day
World Ranger Day
National Harbour Day
National Parks Week
World Ozone Day
World Rhino Day
World Fisheries Day

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Guest Editorial:

CITES CoP17 was a success



Dear Valued Stakeholder

Welcome to a special edition of the Environment Quarterly. This edition is focussed on some of the important outcomes and decisions of the 17th Conference of Parties (CoP) to the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) recently held in Sandton, South Africa.

Opening the two-weeks-long conference, President Jacob Zuma encouraged delegates to take advantage of the CITES opening ceremony to explore South Africa's rich biodiversity.

An important outcome of CITES was the recognition of the need to address the underlying causes of species loss, habitat loss, poverty, human wildlife conflicts, lack of enforcement, governance and institutional challenges. Parties had also agreed to recognise that people need to benefit from the sustainable utilisation of its natural resources, including from legal international trade.

This Conference was a victory for science-based decision-making in the interests of species conservation.

It was also an opportunity to showcase our successful conservation history and leadership in diverse models that we use in conservation management such as National Parks, Provincial conservation areas, game ranches and community parks.

This was the first CITES COP to be held in Africa since 2000. Team South Africa did us all proud.

The 7th People and Parks Congress, held in the run-up to CITES, focussed on unlocking the economic potential of protected areas. This forum delivered a statement to the CoP which called for the institutionalised participation of rural communities in the CITES decision-making process. It was a proposal that saw CITES adopt a course of decision-making where the framework for the participation of rural people will be defined inter-sessionally – the first workshop of which was held in South Africa in November 2016.

We pride ourselves in having successfully led the country's hosting of this big conference where 152 parties and 3 500 environmentalists gathered to take a progressive stand against the extinction of wild species, their natural habitat and their livelihood.

We urge you to share this edition of Environment Quarterly with friends and colleagues. Remember that the edition is also available online at www.environment.gov.za under the Media & Publications page.

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IMPORTANT OUTCOMES OF CITES CoP 17

SOUTH AFRICA'S CONSERVATION SUCCESS LEADS TO CAPE MOUNTAIN ZEBRA'S DOWN LISTING



During CITES Minister of Environmental Affairs Dr Edna Molewa on behalf of the South African Party successfully proposed that the Cape Mountain Zebra be downlisted from Appendix 1 to Appendix 2. The transfer of Cape Mountain Zebra to Appendix II supports the management and conservation of this sub-

species, as it opens up additional economic opportunities that can support the expansion of available habitat and better management of subpopulations on private land. The recovery of the Cape Mountain Zebra is one of South Africa's conservation success stories. In 1950, the population was reduced to

less than 80 individuals; and in 2015, the population of Cape mountain zebra comprised a minimum of 4,791 individuals in no less than 75 subpopulations.

Images by: Bridgena Barnard

SOUTHERN AFRICAN WILD GINGER LISTED TO APPENDIX 2

Wild ginger is one of the top ten most popular traditional medicines in the traditional medicine trade. The rhizomes (creeping rootstalks and rootstocks) are widely used to treat coughs, colds and hysteria, as well as a protective charm against lightning. The conservation status of wild populations of this species in South Africa is of concern due to over exploitation for medicinal purposes. It is due to the increased cross-border trade from Mozambique, Swaziland and Zimbabwe, that a CITES Appendix II listing of the populations of these countries, as well as South Africa, was recommended to the 17th CoP to CITES.

Image source: <http://www.vegstalk.org>



PANGOLIN UPLISTED TO APPENDIX 1

In South Africa, this charismatic and poorly known animal is unfortunately severely threatened by electrified fences, local and international bushmeat and traditional medicine trades, road collisions and incidental mortalities in gin traps. They are very vulnerable to over-exploitation given their low reproductive rate. South Africa therefore decided to be a co-proponent of a proposal to list the species in Appendix I of CITES. The proposal was adopted by consensus by the 17th CoP to CITES and no commercial international trade in pangolins or any specimens of pangolin will therefore be allowed from 2 January 2016.

Image source: <http://www.awf.org/>



CITES CoP 17 in pictures

South Africa hosted the CITES CoP17 at the Sandton Convention Centre, where CITES Parties and observers engaged in robust discussions and came up with resolutions that will take forward the work already underway around the trade in flora and fauna.

The conference ran from 24 September to 05 October 2016. Minister Molewa said that CITES CoP17 afforded South Africa the opportunity to showcase the country's rich biodiversity and successful conservation initiatives based on sustainable use management practices. "This has resulted in us becoming one of the leading conservation countries in the world today; having saved species such as the black and white rhino and elephant from near extinction in the past century," Minister Molewa said.

The CITES CoP17 was the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES held on the African continent since CITES came into force on 1 July 1975, but the first on the continent since 2000.



Above: Chair: Committee I, Ms Karen Gaynor, CITES Secretary-General Mr John E. Scanlon, CoP17, Ms Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Minister of Environmental Affairs Ms Edna Molewa and Mr Jonathan



Above: Minister Molewa welcomes President Jacob Zuma to the podium to deliver the keynote address.



Above: Poets and musicians provide entertainment during the opening of CITES COP17.



Above: Minister Molewa welcomes delegates.



Left side: Minister, Molewa and CITES Secretary-General, Mr John E. Scanlon at the opening of the CITES Cop17 in Sandton.



Above: COP17 Chair and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, An Barzdo. Photo by: lisa/ENB/kiaraworth



Above: The final moments of the CITES COP17. Photo by: lisa/ENB/kiaraworth



Above: Environmental Affairs Minister, Mrs Edna Molewa, Deputy Minister Barbara Thomson, and Mr John E. Scanlon enjoying the drum beating during the CITES COP17 opening ceremony.



Above: African dance performers during the opening ceremony.



Above: Drum beating during the CITES COP17 opening ceremony.

Photos by: Zibuse Ndlovu

The fight against rhino poaching and illegal trade in rhino horn

The Parties and observers discussed an important document on Rhinoceros, which reported on a wide range of activities which have been undertaken by Parties, the Secretariat and the Standing Committee's Working Group on Rhinoceroses in the period from CoP16 (2013) to CoP17 (2016), in support of the implementation of the Decisions adopted by CoP16, and the recommendations adopted by the CITES Standing Committee its meetings in 2014 and in 2016.



The following Decisions, as adopted, are of importance to South Africa:

- All Parties should review their implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP17) (Resolution on the Conservation of and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses, and the strategies and proposed actions developed by the CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force. The aim of the review is to enhance implementation of the Resolution and the strategies and proposed actions, and to increase the effectiveness of the law-enforcement responses to rhinoceros poaching and rhinoceros horn trafficking.
- All rhinoceros range States should continuously review poaching and trafficking trends, to ensure that the measures they implement to prevent and combat rhinoceros poaching and rhinoceros horn trafficking remain effective and are quickly adapted to respond to any newly identified trends.

The following issues included in the amended Resolution on Conservation of and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses is of importance to South Africa:

- To adopt and implement comprehensive legislation and enforcement controls, including internal trade restrictions and penalties,:
 - i. aimed at reducing illegal trade in rhinoceros parts and derivatives; including any specimen that appears from an accompanying document, the packaging, a mark or label, or from any other circumstances, to be a rhinoceros part or derivative;
 - ii. incorporating specific provisions that apply to CITES-related offences, including the possession of rhinoceros specimens acquired in violation of the Convention, and to engage with the Secretariat as may be needed, for legal assistance

in the development of legislative measures aimed at tackling illegal trade in rhinoceros specimens and to ensure effective domestic enforcement and prosecution of offenders;

- iii. that make provision for strong penalties, including custodial sentences, to deter illegal killing of rhinoceroses and illegal possession of and trade in rhinoceros horn;
- To adopt legislation or draw upon existing legislation to facilitate the use of specialized investigation techniques such as controlled deliveries and covert investigations, where appropriate, in support of conventional investigation techniques, in particular for offences related to the illegal killing of rhinoceroses and the trafficking of rhinoceros horns;
 - To maximize the impact of enforcement actions to combat illegal killing



of rhinoceroses and the trafficking of rhinoceros horns, by using other tools and regulations, such as anti-money-laundering and asset forfeiture legislation, in support of wildlife legislation;

- To prosecute members of organized crime groups implicated in rhinoceros-related crimes under a combination of relevant laws which carry appropriate penalties that will act as effective deterrents, whenever possible;
- To immediately bring the seizure of illegal rhinoceros specimens made within their territories:
 - i. to the attention of authorities in countries of origin, transit and destination, as applicable, providing information associated with the seizure, for example on modus operandi, accompanying documentation, any identification marks on the seized specimens, where appropriate the details of the offenders involved, and any other information that could assist the initiation of investigations as appropriate, in countries of origin, transit and destination; or
 - ii. to the attention of the CITES Secretariat in cases where sufficient information is not available to identify the countries of origin, transit and destination of the seized rhinoceros specimens, including information describing the circumstances of the seizure;
- To collect samples from rhinoceros horn seized within South Africa for forensic analysis, to link such horns to crime scenes and implicated suspects, and to promote successful prosecution;

rensic analysis, to link such horns to crime scenes and implicated suspects, and to promote successful prosecution;

- To use the form for collection and sharing of data on rhinoceros horn seizures and on samples for forensic analysis provided in the Annex to this Resolution, as a standard format to collect and share information about seizures of rhinoceros specimens, and for the collection of relevant data to accompany samples collected from seized rhinoceros specimens for forensic analyses;
- To, prior to issuing permits or certificates, including pre-Convention certificates, authorizing the movement of specimens of rhinoceroses, consult with the country of destination, so that the trade may be confirmed and monitored;
- To consider introducing stricter domestic measures to regulate the re-export of rhinoceros horn specimens from any source;
- To identify, mark, register and secure all rhinoceros horn stocks, and declare these to the Secretariat each year before 28 February, in a format to be defined by the Secretariat;
- To be vigilant in our law-enforcement efforts, including the prevention of illegal hunting, the early detection of potential offenders and the application of appropriate penalties to act as effective deterrents;
- To ensure that law enforcement cooperation between and among range

and implicated States be increased through the existing international, regional and national law-enforcement mechanisms and, where necessary, for example, through the establishment of treaties on extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance in criminal matters, creation of such mechanisms in order to curtail rhinoceros poaching and illegal trade in rhinoceros horn; where an implicated State in this Resolution is a State or citizen(s) of a State significantly implicated or involved in legal and/or illegal trade in parts and derivatives; and

- To, as a matter of priority, work with all user groups and industries to develop and implement well targeted strategies for reducing the use and consumption of rhinoceros parts and derivatives, and to with the aim of achieving measurable change in consumer behaviour;
- To develop and implement strategies or programmes to enhance community awareness of the economic, social and environmental impacts of illegal wildlife trade, and to encourage the general public to report activities related to the illegal killing of rhinoceroses and the trafficking of rhinoceros horns to appropriate authorities for further investigation; and
- To provide information on the effectiveness of strategies or programmes referred to above to the IUCN/SSC African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups and TRAFFIC, to assist in identifying best practices and challenges experienced, and report on progress for inclusion into the joint IUCN/TRAFFIC reports;
- It is recommended that South Africa endeavour to implement the Biodiversity Management Plans for Black and White Rhinoceros as expeditiously as possible, and should undertake a review of the effectiveness of enforcement and trade control measures therein;
- Government should ensure that funds are available to implement rhinoceros conservation activities and the Resolution, to prevent the illegal killing of rhinoceroses and the illegal trade in rhinoceros horn.

Discussions on enforcement take centre stage at CITES COP17

By Frances Craigie

COP17 was also hosted at a time when wildlife crime is being prioritised at the highest levels of governments across the world, with numerous resolutions and commitments being made, as part of the collaborative international effort to tackle this sophisticated form of transnational crime said to be worth billions annually. We know the criminal syndicates involved exploit existing societal, legal, structural and enforcement weaknesses in countries, while taking advantage of poor and vulnerable communities.

As the complexities of wildlife crime must be understood alongside the legal trade that is permitted in line with CITES, it makes sense that mechanisms and commitments to strengthen our capabilities to combat this crime type would be interwoven into the decisions and ongoing work coming out of COP17. Document 25 emanating from Committee II (Committee II.25 with amendments in Rec 6 & 13 of the Plenary) is the most comprehensive document addressing compliance and enforcement and South Africa needs to consider how to respond to, among others, the following recommendations:

- strengthen cooperation relating to enforcement measures implemented across range, transit and destination States to address illegal wildlife trade. With a number of MOU's already in place with Mozambique, Cambodia, Vietnam, China, Kenya and signature of the latest one with Lao PDR during the COP17, it will be necessary to monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of the action plans developed in terms of these MOU's;
- report annually on illegal wildlife trade under the agreed reporting requirements. This will require all the different institutions involved (national and provincial environmental departments and parks authorities, the SAPS and SARS Customs) to consolidate this information into a single report to the CITES Secretariat;
- using wildlife detector dogs and scanning equipment as appropriate, in support of the detection of illegal wildlife shipments. Although the Dog Detection Unit (DDU) within SARS Customs has increased its capacity in regard to wildlife detector dogs and additional scanners have been rolled out at a number of ports, this is still not sufficient and further strengthening of detection capability is required. This would

ultimately become the responsibility of the Border Management Authority once established;

- to encourage national agencies responsible for wildlife law enforcement to establish informer networks, or expand existing networks, to combat wildlife crime, in accordance with relevant legislation regulating such matters, including putting in place or maintaining strict procedures for managing covert human intelligence sources;
- promote and increase the use of wildlife forensic technology and specialized investigation techniques, such as controlled deliveries, in the investigation of wildlife crime offences;
- implement national legislation to combat money laundering and facilitate asset forfeiture to ensure that criminals do not benefit from the proceeds of their crimes; and
- as appropriate, initiate intelligence-driven operations, and participate in the operations initiated at international level by organizations such as INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization, to mobilize resources and initiate targeted activities to combat wildlife crime.

The significant role that corruption plays in relation to wildlife crime was also emphasised and a new resolution was adopted on prohibiting, preventing and countering corruption facilitating activities conducted in violation of CITES. The implementation of the recommendations in this resolution is going to first require a national risk assessment regarding the link between corruption and wildlife trafficking (modus operandi, trends, security loopholes, lifestyle audits, etc.) from which specific actions would need to flow, including the design and implementation of integrity policies, necessary training and awareness, strengthening systems and mecha-

nisms for legal trade. The decisions linked to the combating of wildlife cybercrime will enable CITES and the parties thereto to better understand the full extent of how cybercrime is enabling illegal trade in wildlife, best practice models to regulate it and further work required both from a technical but also an enforcement perspective to strengthen our ability to tackle it.

Three important meetings relating to wildlife crime also took place in the margins of CoP17. The annual INTERPOL Wildlife Crime Working Group meeting was preceded by a meeting of over 90 representatives from wildlife enforcement networks across the world who discussed the strengthening of frontline cooperation and coordination to combat transnational organized wildlife and forest crime. The meeting was convened by the CITES Secretariat and its partners in the International the Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC). The Consortium is a collaboration of agencies comprising CITES, INTERPOL, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Bank and World Customs Organization (WCO).

The third meeting was that of the first ever Global Partnerships Coordination Forum which was convened by ICCWC to discuss how best to integrate law enforcement, development, environmental and social approaches to combating illegal wildlife trade. Wildlife crime increasingly involves transnational criminal groups targeting high value species and wildlife and environment agencies cannot beat them alone. This Forum provided a unique opportunity for officials to directly engage with the organisations that have the mandate, resources and technical expertise to assist countries in combating wildlife crime.



About the contributor: Frances Craigie

Ms Frances Craigie is the Chief Director: Enforcement in the Department of Environmental Affairs. Her task is to make sure the environment is protected and preserved for future generations.

The precious Pangolin



Above: When under threat the Temminck's ground pangolin rolls into a ball with the soft underbelly covered by a muscular tail.

Pangolins, also known as scaly anteaters, are small to medium sized mammals. They are distinct from all other mammals in that they are covered in an armor of keratinous scales. The name pangolin comes from the Malay word "pengguling", meaning "something that rolls up". Pangolins can curl up into a ball when threatened, with its overlapping scales acting as armour, while it protects its face by tucking it under its tail. The scales are sharp, providing extra defense from predators.

Like elephants and pandas, pangolins are EDGE species (Evolutionary Distinct and Globally Endangered), meaning they have few close relatives and represent a disproportionate amount of unique evolutionary history.

Pangolins are nocturnal and very secretive in nature. They spend the day in suitable earthen burrows, caves or in piles of plant debris, with Aardvark burrows being the most frequently used refuges.

Pangolins are bipedal, walking on their hind legs with the front legs and tail held off the ground and acting as counterweight. When they climb steep terrain or clamber over boulders in rocky areas, they use all four limbs.

Pangolins only eat a small number of specific ants and termites, which they capture using their long, specially

adapted tongues. A single pangolin can consume millions, if not billions, of ants and termites each year. They are largely water independent but will drink water when available.

They are highly priced by the Zulu people in South Africa and the species is considered the greatest gift you can bestow upon a tribal elder or chief.

In South Africa, this charismatic and poorly known animal is unfortunately severely threatened by electrified fences, local and international bushmeat and traditional medicine trades, road collisions and incidental mortalities in gin traps. They are very vulnerable to over-exploitation given their low reproductive rate.

Pangolins are under heavy harvesting pressure as their body parts, in particular the scales, are sought as traditional medicine (nationally and internationally) and pangolin meat is consumed locally as bushmeat and as luxury food items in Asia. Discussions on illegal trade in recent literature dated 2014, refers to an "alarming trend" that has developed in the increased trade in parts of all four African pangolin species, mainly scales, from Africa to Asia.

South Africa therefore decided to be a co-proponent of a proposal to list the species in Appendix I of CITES. The proposal was

adopted by consensus by the 17th CoP to CITES and no commercial international trade in pangolins or any specimens of pangolin will therefore be allowed from 2 January 2016.

It should be noted that the species have been classified as Vulnerable in terms of the IUCN Red List Assessment and its listed as a protected species in terms of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (NEMBA). Permits are required to carry out restrictive activities involving pangolins and its an offence if an activity is carried out without a permit.

“South Africa decided to be a co-proponent of a proposal to list the species in Appendix I of CITES. The proposal was adopted by consensus”

Adapted from the IUCN Red List of Mammals of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland

CREATING SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS THROUGH CONSERVATION

The Department of Environmental Affairs is acutely aware of the need for all South Africans to support conservation of our wildlife while promoting sustainable livelihoods. With this in mind, the Department has devised several community-oriented programmes aimed at building on the intersection between environmental protection and poverty reduction.



Aloe Harvesting Project

Did you know that the indigenous *Aloe ferox* or Cape Aloe is protected by CITES? Although not critically endangered it needs protection because communities who tap the aloes for the sap rely on the plant for jobs and sustainable livelihoods.



Black Mamba Anti-Poaching Unit

Did you know that the Black Mamba's Anti-Poaching Unit, a predominantly female unit part of the Department of Environmental Affairs' Environmental Monitors Programme, is tackling poaching. They have reduced snaring and poisoning by 76% and destroyed 10 poachers camps in the last 3 years.



Maloti-Drakensberg Vulture Project

Did you know that the Bearded Vulture could be extinct in 50 years? The Department of Environmental Affairs together with the Birds of Prey Programme of the Endangered Wildlife Trust uses state-of-the art monitoring, feeding sites and education to protect these majestic birds of prey.



Turtle Monitoring Programme in iSimangaliso Wetland Park

Did you know that every year 100 loggerhead and leatherback turtles come onto iSimangaliso Wetland Park beaches each year to lay eggs. Local community members run turtle monitoring walks to track the turtles. Thanks to them the loggerhead turtle numbers have increased significantly.



Khomani San Erin Game Ranch

Did you know that the Khomani San and Mier communities were allocated land in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park thanks to a land claim? Thanks to a donation of wildlife from the Department of Environmental Affairs and SANParks the community now run game lodges that generate income and create jobs.



Kids in Parks Programme

Kids from disadvantaged backgrounds seldom experience the joy of SA's 19 national parks, but did you know that the Kids in Parks Programme has worked for 11 years to change that? Trips into the parks brings biodiversity to life and shows young people that careers in conservation are rewarding and exciting!



Nambiti Private Game Reserve

Did you know that Nambiti Private Game Reserve has created 250 jobs for a community where only 19 people worked on the farms in the area previously? Thanks to a successful land claim the Senzo'kuhle Nkos'uNodada Communal Trust now rent the land to Nambiti Private Game Reserve and community members work on the reserve, in lodges and as Environmental Monitors protecting the endangered black rhino.

Learn more visit:
www.citescop17jhb.co.za



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



YOUTH CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

Inspiring a new generation of conservationists

The YCP is a programme that will mobilise previously disadvantaged youth neighbouring protected areas around conservation. It emphasises the importance of every individual playing a role in the protection of South Africa's natural wealth, while simultaneously highlighting the possibilities for socio-economic upliftment through conservation.

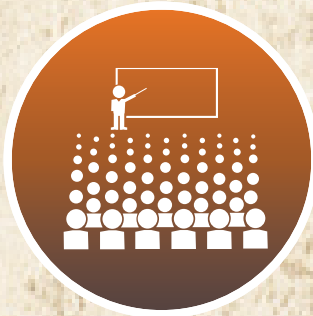
The YCP consists of **5** main platforms:

Facilitator Training



Facilitators are trained on the programme material.

Workshops



Facilitators guide the sessions with participants based on the YCP manual & handbook

Park Visit



Participants see how biodiversity theory manifests in real life with a protected area excursion.

Bioscope



Conservation education through entertainment!

Bursaries



Bursaries are available for further study in nature conservation for outstanding participants.

The Youth Conservation Programme is a key vehicle for **empowering young people** through conservation!

ELEPHANT

Decision making mechanism for a process of trade in ivory

At the 17th CoP to CITES the Parties to CITES decided to terminate the discussion on the establishment of a Decision Making Mechanism (DMM) for a process of future international trade in certain designated stocks of ivory. This brings to an end a protracted process that was being used to block the rights of certain countries to exercise their rights in terms of the text of the Convention to propose a legal, commercial international trade in ivory as part of the sustainable utilisation of their well-managed and growing elephant resources to the benefit of local communities and the conservation of this iconic species.

The South African Development Community (SADC), as the affected countries with 70% of the world's population of African elephants, now have the opportunity to freely exercise our rights in terms of the CITES Convention, including to pursue the possibility of submitting future proposals to CITES to request approval to trade in designated ivory stocks.

During the discussions the point was made strongly that the DMM was part of a package deal negotiated in good faith by SADC and its partners in 2007. This package included the following key elements:

- A nine-year moratorium on the submission of proposals to trade in ivory (this was applicable only to Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe and the nine years will come to an end in 2017);
- The development of the African Elephant Action Plan;
- The continued implementation of and consideration of outcomes of the Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) and the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS); and
- The development of a DMM by the 16th Conference of Parties to CITES.

With the exception of the DMM, all other aspects agreed to as part of this negotiated outcome were delivered. As a matter of principle and in the absence of the delivery of the DMM by the Standing Committee of CITES, therefore, at COP17, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe submitted a specific and fair proposal of a DMM.

This was not supported by the majority of Parties, showing that there was never a genuine intention to develop the DMM. Having made the principled point that Parties should honour the terms of the

agreement reached at CITES COP14 in 2007, South Africa and other SADC Member States welcome the opportunity to work with all Parties in a renewed spirit of cooperation to develop a new process to regulate the legal and sustainable international trade in ivory for the benefit of the conservation of the species and the socio-economic development of local communities.

Proposals to close all domestic ivory markets and destruction of ivory stockpiles

a number of African countries, referred to as the African elephant Coalition proposed that all domestic ivory markets should be closed down. The main reason this was proposed, was because these countries are of the view that domestic markets, whether regulated through national legislation or not, are contributing to poaching of African elephant and illegal trade in ivory. South Africa did not support the blanket closure of domestic ivory markets, due to the fact that CITES does not have the mandate to prescribe matters relating to national trade (the text of the Convention only mandates regulation of international trade (import, export, re-export and introduction from the sea). Furthermore, South Africa regulates the limited ivory trade that does take place at a national level through national and provincial legislation and the proposed blanket prohibition would have limited potential socio-economic initiatives.

The CoP adopted a revised proposal that urges Parties to close domestic markets where these markets contribute to poaching and illegal trade in ivory.

Proposal to list African Elephant populations of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe in Appendix I

Three proposals relating to the listing status of specific populations of African

elephant were considered by the 17th CoP to CITES, including a proposal by the African elephant coalition to transfer the populations of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe from Appendix II to Appendix I. This proposal was not supported by South Africa, because our elephant population does not meet the biological criteria to be listed in Appendix I. The biological criteria include the following:

- Wild populations are small and in decline
- Wild populations have a restricted area of distribution
- A marked decline in populations in the wild

South Africa's African elephant population was recently assessed in terms of the IUCN red list criteria and the population is considered to be of Least Concern. The African elephant population in South Africa is increasing and the 2015 Kruger National Park elephant survey shows that there was a minimum of 17 086 elephants living in the Park in 2015. Over the last elephant generation (Elephants have a generation time of 25 years), the population has increased at 4.2%. The total population of African elephant in South Africa is an estimated 28 000 in approximately 80 reserves.

The proposal by the african elephant coalition was rejected by the cites parties after a vote.

Namibia and Zimbabwe also submitted proposals to remove the annotation (conditions) to the Appendix II listing of their African elephant populations. The proposals were however rejected by the CITES Parties and it was clear that the majority of Parties were of the view that trade in ivory cannot be authorized while the levels of poaching in certain parts of the African continent remains at unsustainable levels and causing declines in those populations.

Saving the mighty elephant

By Jeanetta Selier

A gloomy and worrying picture was painted for the African elephants on the continent at the CITES Conference of the Parties in Johannesburg. The Great Elephant Census (2016) revealed that continent-wide elephant populations are declining at 8% per annum, and that less than 400,000 savannah elephants remain in Africa. The largest declines have been seen in Central, West and East Africa whereas not that long ago the majority of the African elephant population was found in those parts of Africa. Today, the picture looks very different. The majority of elephants are now protected in southern African countries, specifically Botswana, where currently more than a third of the continent's elephant population exists. However, when we look at the data from the Great Elephant Census in more detail it is apparent that, while there are major declines in large parts of Africa, a number of southern African elephant populations are either stable or increasing. Namibia and South Africa are such countries.

In Namibia, elephants occur across the entire north of Namibia with two main subpopulations in the north-east and north-western parts of the country. In 2002, the national elephant population was estimated at approximately 11,513 individuals while the current estimate (2013) is estimated at more than 19,446 animals. There are more elephants in Namibia today than at any time in the past 100 years. One of the reasons for their increase in numbers is that they have a value – communities have rights to manage and use wildlife, and are starting to earn significant income from wildlife and this is creating the incentives for them to look after and protect wildlife, including elephants, which leads to a positive conservation result.

Elephant populations in South Africa are also increasing across their range. Factors that contributed to the increase of elephants within South Africa are the involvement of the private sector, the ability to own and utilize elephants and the extensive use of perimeter fencing. Even though fencing has the benefit of increased protection for elephants, it has led to a fragmented population consisting of largely small subpopulations. At

present only three populations, two of which the Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Area and Greater Kruger Transfrontier Area are cross-border populations, consisting of more than a 1,000 individuals. The largest of these is the Greater Kruger elephant population spanning Kruger National Park in South Africa, the Limpopo National Park in Mozambique and the southern section of Zimbabwe. The population is estimated at approximately 20,000 elephants and makes up about two thirds of the South African elephant population. While the number of poaching incidences in this reserve has been extremely low compared to the rest of Africa, it has been increasing and, with two thirds of the South African elephant population protected in this reserve, this is cause for concern.

Since 2005, an estimated 30,000 elephants are killed each year for the illegal ivory trade. The illegal killing of elephants for their ivory thus remains the main threat to elephants throughout the continent. Two other drivers of elephant decline, which are in many ways linked to poaching, are human-elephant conflict, habitat loss and fragmentation. Several studies have highlighted the importance

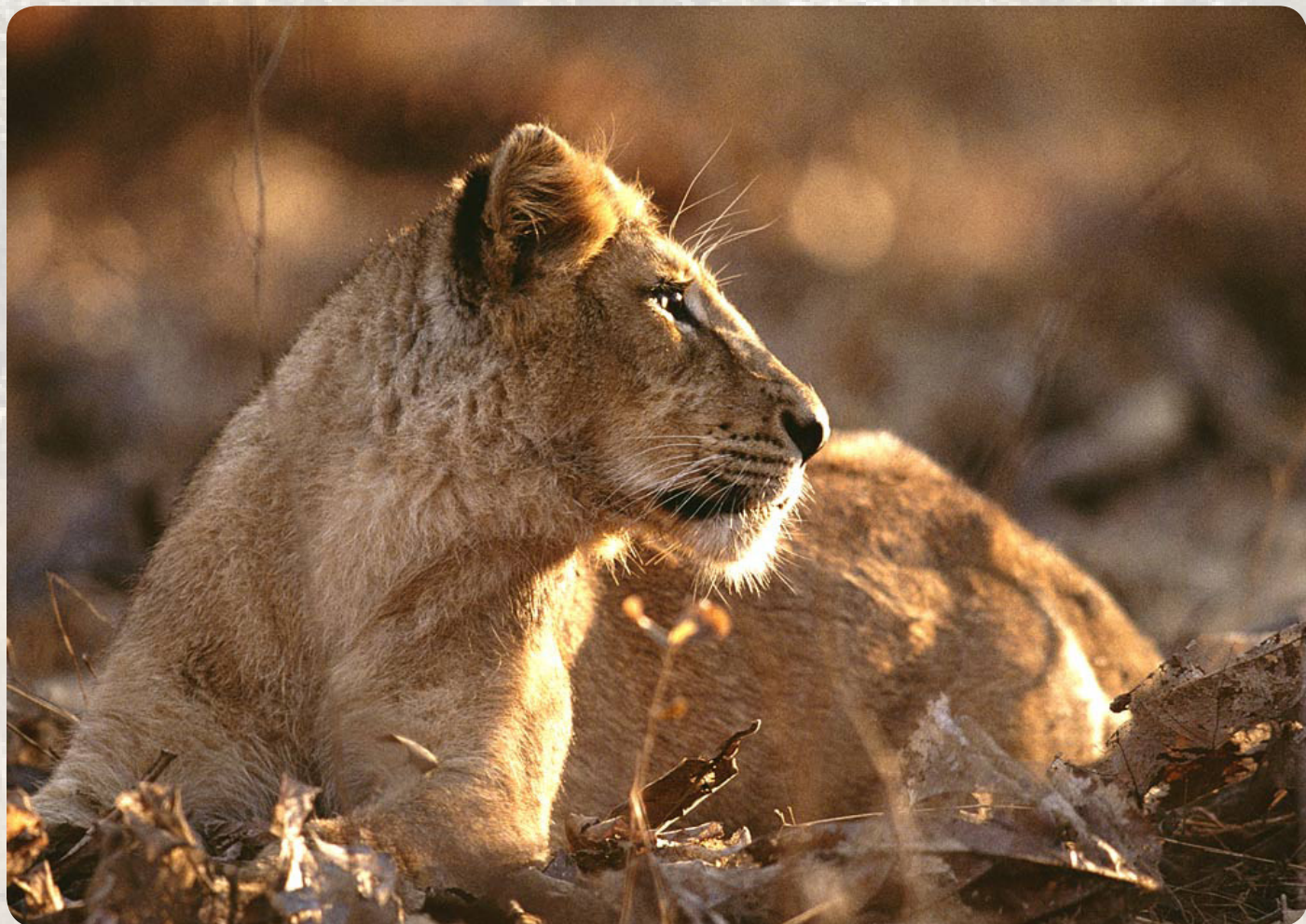
of socio-economic factors in curbing the illegal killing of elephants. For example, corruption and poverty have been highlighted as two of the main drivers in the illegal killing of elephants. This is a cause for concern, especially considering that the main CITES discussion points centred on improving the protection of elephants through increased regulations, reducing demand and improved enforcement.

Local communities often pay the costs of elephant conservation without tangible benefits. Making sure the benefits generated from nature-based tourism, such as ecotourism safaris and sustainable use, are shared with communities whom co-exist with elephants remains crucial to ensure the long-term persistence of this iconic species. Until we address the social and governance issues that threaten elephant populations across the continent, increased regulations will do little to save the African elephant.



The African Lion

The African lion symbolises strength, courage and leadership for a lot of people and is often referred to as the King of the Beast. It is therefore not surprising that any discussions relating to the African lion will solicit a lot passionate discussion and the discussions at the 17th CoP to CITES relating to the proposed transfer of all African lion population from Appendix II to Appendix I was therefore no exception.





A number of African lion range States proposed the aforementioned transfer and motivated for this transfer based on the a marked observed on-going and projected decline in the population size in the wild.

Although there is a decline in African lion populations at a global scale; this is not the case for all of the African lion range States.

A decline of more than 60% between 1993 and 2014 has been observed in sample lion populations outside of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe and India. The main threats to lion populations are: Habitat loss and conversion, prey-base depletion, human-wildlife conflict and in some area unsustainable trophy hunting practices.

In Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe lion populations have increased by 12% during the past 21 years.

The current number of lions in Africa is estimated at 18 726 with 55% of all lion occurring in southern Africa. In South Africa there are about 3 490 free-roaming (wild) lion, including those populations in trans-frontier conservation areas.

Sixty seven percent (67%) of the South African lion populations are well protected within national parks where lion popula-

tions are both stable and at their ecological carrying capacity.

In addition to the wild population, South Africa has approximately 6 000 lions in captive breeding facilities.

The current Appendix II listing is therefore an appropriate listing for the lion populations in southern Africa.

South Africa regulate all activities involving lion (including possession, hunting, breeding) through a permit system.

At the 17th CoP to CITES, the proposed listing of lion in Appendix I was discussed in detail and although the African lion range States agreed on a number of Decisions that includes conservation actions; studies on legal and illegal trade in lions, including bone trade; and a comparative study of lion population trends and conservation and management practices such as hunting; the range States could not reach agreement on the proposed transfer to Appendix I.

After protracted discussions, an annotation to the Appendix II listing was proposed. This meant that the African lion will remain in Appendix II, but with certain "conditions" attached to the listing, which excluded certain specimens from the Appendix II listing.

Various versions of a proposed annotation were discussed and the following annotation was recommended for adoption and finally adopted by the 17th CoP to CITES:

- 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

This means that no lion bones from wild lions may be exported for commercial purposes and South Africa must establish a quota for lion bones that are derived from captive breeding facilities in South Africa. South Africa's Scientific Authority will set the quota.

A number of people have questioned the decision to provide for a quota for bones derived from captive facilities. This is however regarded as a precautionary measure. An assessment of the South African trade in African lion bones and other body parts was undertaken by TRAFFIC (an NGO that monitors trade in fauna and flora) in 2014/15 and according to this assessment it appears as if measures adopted to protect tigers and Asian big cats was inadvertently one factor that catalysed a chain reaction of interlinking and unexpected events that resulted in a shift from the traditional use of tiger bones and products in Traditional Asian Medicine, to including the parts of other Asian big cats, and eventually the bones of Asiatic and the African lions.

The main concern is that a complete prohibition on the international trade in lion bones could result in a shift in the demand to illegally sourced bones from wild lions. The wild lion population will not be able to sustain the levels of off-take and therefore the decision to restrict and regulate a legal bone trade through a quota system was supported. The studies to be conducted, as contained in the Decisions adopted by the CoP, will assist in informing future decision making relating to the role of a legal trade in lion bones.

Cycads under threat

By Thea Carroll

South Africa is one of the world centres of cycad diversity with more than half the known African cycads occurring in the country. According to the latest Global Conservation Assessment for cycads conducted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (October 2010), cycads are now considered to be the most threatened taxonomic group of organisms with many species facing imminent extinction in the wild as a direct result of human activities.



Above: A National Strategy and Action Plan for the Management of Cycads in South Africa was also developed and is currently being implemented.

There are 308 species of cycads on the planet of which 38 species occur in South Africa. Of the 398 species, 37 are of the *Encephalartos* genus and one is of the *Stangeria* group. Of these 29 (76%) are endemic to the country, meaning that South Africa is one of the global hotspots for threatened cycads. 78% of South Africa's cycads are threatened with extinction compared to the global average of 62%. Thirty-one percent of South African cycads are classified as Critically Endangered, compared to the global average of 17%. Twelve species are Critically Endangered, while four are Endangered; and 10 species are classified as Vulnerable.

The high proportion of threatened cycad species therefore raises the risk profile for any trade in South African cycads. Globally, habitat loss at 60 percent is the highest cause of decline in cycads. This is followed by collection for trade and horticultural purposes (30%); biological invasion (5%) and lastly by traditional use at 5%. In South Africa, cycads are declining at a steady pace, mostly due to illegal collection or harvesting. South Africa risks losing these species within the next 10 years if various effective conservation measures are not put in place to protect and conserve wild cycad species. In curbing the cycad crisis, consideration needs to be given to other threats such

as the rise in unsustainable harvesting for muthi and habitat loss.

At a national level, cycads are protected through the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (NEMBA) and the Threatened or protected species Regulations promulgated in terms of NEMBA. Biodiversity Management Plans have been developed for a number of species to ensure their long-term survival in the wild and specific prohibitions have been implemented to restrict activities involving wild specimens to further protect these species. A National Strategy and Action Plan for the Management of Cycads in South Africa was also developed and is currently being implemented. At a national level, various actions have therefore been implemented to conserve the species, but international collaboration is needed to complement these national measures.

All species of the genus: *Encephalartos* are included in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). South Africa therefore requested the CITES Parties to assist in determining the scale of illegal international trade and to improve cooperation and collaboration relating to investigations and information sharing in instances where illegal trade has been detected. The Decisions proposed by South Africa in this regard were adopted by the 17th CoP to CITES and South Africa is of the view that this will assist in further enhancing the measures to conserve cycads; the oldest living seed bearing plants that have survived three mass extinction events in the earth's history.

The South African National Biodiversity Institute is responsible championing biodiversity. For more information, log onto: www.sanbi.org

Programme at CITES CoP17

Minister Edna Molewa Presents Department of Environmental Affairs' Youth Conservation Programme at CITES CoP17

On the opening day of the 17th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, South Africa's Minister of Environmental Affairs, Edna Molewa, presented the Youth Conservation Programme (YCP) – the legacy of CITES CoP17 on South African soil. The YCP is a programme that aims to mobilise young South Africans living in communities neighbouring protected areas around conservation. Through intensive workshops and practical experience, the programme stresses the important role young people play in conservation. Simultaneously, great emphasis is placed on the opportunities available for social-economic upliftment through sustainable participation in the biodiversity economy.

During the plenary discussion on youth engagement in conservation, Minister Edna Molewa noted the worldwide movement to elevate the youth voice in the dialogue on biodiversity. South Africa has contributed to this global undertaking through several platforms, including the pledge to the Sydney Promise. The Youth Conservation Programme is the next step in South Africa's commitment to forging a meaningful relationship between young people and nature on home soil.

The Youth Conservation Programme was brought to fruition by the Department of Environmental Affairs' People & Parks Programme, a branch that is charged with facilitating the socio-economic development of previously disadvantaged South African communities neighbouring protected areas through conservation and sustainable use. One of the primary objectives of the Youth Conservation Programme is formal integration of the youth voice into structures of governance. To achieve this, it is within the People & Parks Programme that the Youth Conservation Programme will find its home. Having piloted the programme in August 2016, it was presented to the 7th People & Parks Conference held earlier this week.

"It is with great pride and excitement for the future of this endeavour that we report that the Youth Conservation Programme has been fully endorsed by the People & Parks Conference as a key vehicle for empowering young South Africans to become pivotal in our conservation landscape," said Minister Molewa.

"One of the primary objectives of the Youth Conservation Programme is formal integration of the youth voice into structures of governance"

The Youth Conservation Programme will continue to be piloted in 2017 in several South African provinces with the goal of placing young people at the centre of decision making process, thereby empowering them to become current and future leaders for change.

In South Africa, coastal human settlements are also affected by the increase in sea-level due to climate change. The 3,650 km coastline is increasingly becoming vulnerable to storm surges, coastal erosion, sea level rise and extreme weather events such as flooding, that may result in the loss of coastal infrastructure.

"As a country, our policy approach is both developmental and transformational. It is developmental in that we are prioritising climate change responses that have significant mitigation or adaptation benefits, and have significant economic

growth, job creation, public health, risk management and poverty alleviation benefits," added Mr Mabuyakhulu.

The Department of Environmental Affairs' Head of Communications, Mr Albi Modise said government has declared June as the environment month. "In the month of June we celebrate World Day to Combat Desertification, and we celebrate World Environment Day, but also there is World Oceans Day. All these key environment days are found in the month of June, which is why we have set aside this month as an environment month."

The People and Parks Programme (P&PP) in South Africa was born out of the World Parks Congress held in Durban in 2003. On the eve of this congress, The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) [the then Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT)] organised for communities from the Richtersveld, Khomani San, Riemvasmaak, Makuleke areas and communities from iSimangaliso (then known as St Lucia) to meet at Cape Vidal. They represented the people who had been removed or directly threatened with removals from protected areas (PAs) to make way for wildlife and conservation.

The congress highlighted the important role PAs play in sustainable development, conservation and fighting poverty. It also highlighted the importance of involving local people as equal partners in PAs, which should include decision making, management and sharing of benefits.

Charming species need more than CITES

By Sam Ferreira

Photos by Itumeleng Motsepe

The Sandton Convention Centre is silent. Four-and-a-half-thousand CITES delegates left. They mulled over trade listings of species, used wine and food at lobbying side-events, and left an unknown carbon footprint. Was it worth it?



Above: The Minister of Environmental Affairs, Dr Edna Molewa and the Lao People's Democratic Republic Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, H.E Sommad Pholsena after the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in the Field of Biodiversity Conservation and Protection on 25 September 2016.

Delegates reached consensus on most proposals at CoP17. Listings changed for several plants and the pangolin is now on Appendix I banning all international trade.

Charismatic African elephants, rhinoceroses and lions, however, challenged parties. Poaching is one of the key drivers of continent wide declines for these species, especially outside southern Africa.

CITES canned an elephant ivory trade decision-making mechanism, but retained the listing of southern African elephants on Appendix II allowing controlled trade. Still, parties endorsed the closure of domestic ivory trade markets! In addition, side events for listing proposals by the African Elephant Consortium highlighted local lawlessness as a key challenge. Even so, delegates debated a listing mechanism to curb poaching!

CITES also rejected a proposal to trade in Swaziland rhinoceros horn. Passion-

ate appeals to allow horn sales to fund rhinoceros conservation quickly evolved to concerns that distant parties and non-government organizations with little liability influence those that have to save rhinos!

The proposal to list all lions on Appendix I failed. Lions decline when habitat disappears and diseases emerge. Bush meat trading remove lion prey while poisoning and poaching kill lions. The consortium of West African countries showed in a side event that lion prey is also declining. Problems for lions are thus firstly local and not at some distant market for lion bones in Asia.

Perfect poaching storms of elephants and rhinoceroses come from trade traditions, inelastic demand, profit potential, inadequate law enforcement, unclear rights and human-wildlife conflict. Ecological threats for lions come from bad law enforcement, unclear rights and human-lion conflict, while economic threats also

have trade histories, inelastic demand and profit potential as drivers.

The dichotomous trade or no trade debates at CoP17 on elephants, rhinoceroses and lions focus only on a few drivers and distract authorities from addressing all drivers. Several resolutions recognized that disrupting organized crime and fixing social injustices may be more important than a CITES species listing for the conservation of charming African mammals and the role they play in ecosystems.

John Scanlon, Secretary General of CITES, announced that the Cape Mountain Zebra is not on Appendix II anymore and congratulated South Africa for the outstanding conservation of the species. The Cape Mountain Zebra provides a message in the now silent corridors of the Sandton Convention Centre. Trade listings are not solutions to threats – trade is an opportunity if authorities have dealt with threats.



About the contributor: Sam Ferreira

Sam Ferreira is a large mammal ecologist enjoying his role to ensure that good science related to biological, social, economic, security and governance aspects underpins mammal management decisions of SANParks.



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