



COMPENDIUM OF CANADA'S ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS AND INSTRUMENTS

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

SUBJECT CATEGORY:

Biodiversity / Ecosystems

TYPE OF AGREEMENT / INSTRUMENT:

Multilateral

FORM:

Legally-binding treaty

STATUS:

- Signed by Canada July 2, 1974
- Ratified by Canada April 10, 1975
- In force in Canada July 9, 1975
- In force internationally July 1, 1975
- Currently ratified by over 180 countries

LEAD & PARTNER DEPARTMENTS:

Lead: Environment and Climate Change Canada

Partners: Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Global Affairs Canada, Natural Resources Canada (Canadian Forest Service), Canada Border Services Agency, provinces and territories of Canada

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**Web Links:**

- [CITES Secretariat](#) website
- [Text of the Convention and Appendices](#)
- [CITES Canada](#) website
- [WAPPRIITTA Annual Reports](#)

Contacts:

[ECCC Inquiry Centre](#)

COMPENDIUM EDITION:

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PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

International wildlife trade is estimated to be worth billions of dollars and involves millions of plant and animal specimens. CITES is an international agreement between countries to help ensure this trade is not harmful for the survival of species. CITES works using a permitting system with different levels of permit control depending on risk to the species from international trade. Almost all countries in the world are members of CITES.

Canada has been involved in CITES since its beginning in 1975. Canada plays a leadership role in CITES: Canada has been Chair for several committees of CITES. As a significant exporter of animals and plants species, Canada helps to ensure the CITES agreement continues to support trade that is sustainable.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is to control the trade in species of wild animals and plants that are, or may be, threatened with extinction as a result of international trade.

KEY ELEMENTS

CITES Parties regulate international trade in animals and plants, identified in the [CITES Appendices](#) to ensure that trade does not threaten their survival and to facilitate appropriate trade.

Trade is regulated through a permit system. Permit requirements differ depending on which [CITES Appendix](#) a species is listed. Appendix-I includes species that are now threatened with extinction and may not be traded for primarily commercial purposes. Trade for scientific, captive breeding, and other limited uses is permitted under strict conditions. Appendix-II includes species that are not currently threatened, but may become so if their trade is not monitored. Trade is permitted as long as specimens are accompanied with appropriate CITES documentation. Appendix-III contains species that are under management regimes in individual countries and require the cooperation of other countries in the control of trade. For example,

Canada has listed the walrus (*Odobenus rosmarus*) in Appendix-III.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The Parties to the Convention agree to be bound by the provisions of CITES. Each Party needs to adopt its own domestic legislation to ensure that CITES is implemented at the national level. Each Party is expected to issue permits and monitor its trade to ensure that trade is not detrimental to the survival of CITES-listed species.

Changes to Appendix listings, to ensure trade controls reflect the needs of species, are made at the meetings of the Conference of the Parties (CoP), which are held every three years.

CANADA'S INVOLVEMENT

The Convention is important to Canada because Canada participates in the international trade of animals and plants and aims to ensure that such trade does not impact the survival of species.

In Canada, the Convention is implemented through the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act (1996) (WAPPRIITA), which is administered by Environment and Climate Change Canada in cooperation with other federal departments as well as provinces and territories.

Canada is engaged in decision-making at the international level to determine which species are controlled under CITES and how the controls should be implemented. Canada has a long history of international exports in wildlife and wildlife products (fur, fish, and plants) and we have a high interest in maintaining this sustainable trade. Canada supports legal trade of species when it is founded on principles of conservation and sustainable use, consistent with our [Canadian Principles for CITES](#).

RESULTS / PROGRESS

Activities

On an ongoing basis, Canada reviews and issues CITES permits for international trade for species that are listed on the CITES Appendices to ensure there will

be no detriment to the survival of the species as a result of trade. Canada ensures compliance and enforcement of these controls as part of our commitment to the Convention. Permit review and issuance and trade control is led by Environment Canada with participation of federal, provincial and territorial officials.

Canada has been engaged in CITES negotiations since becoming a Party to the Convention in 1975. Canada was an active participant in the most recent meeting of the CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP18, in August 2019), which is the primary decision-making forum of the Convention. Canada also actively participates in the meetings of the CITES Animals Committee CITES Plants Committee and the CITES Standing Committee which are held twice between each CoP and currently provides the chairperson for the Standing Committee. Finally, Canada also provides contributions to CITES decision-making through participation and leadership in key working groups that discuss and provide advice on implementation of the Convention.

Reports

Annual reports and biennial reports from Parties to CITES are required and these provide details on trade, and legislative, regulatory, and administrative actions taken to implement the Convention, respectively. These reports provide CITES Parties with the means of monitoring the implementation of the Convention and the level of international trade in CITES species.

In Canada, [WAPPRIITA Annual Reports](#) are submitted to Parliament and contain information on the purpose of the Act and our responsibilities under WAPPRIITA, legislative and regulatory amendments, issuance of CITES permits and certificates, plant and animal exports and imports, risk assessment, compliance promotion and enforcement, and international cooperation.

Results

The meeting of the 18th Conference of the Parties resulted in a number of changes to species trade controls, including the Shortfin Mako Shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*), with a natural range that extends into Canadian waters in the Atlantic Ocean. .