



Mom Grey Wolf and her newborn pup
sharing a tender moment.
Quebec, Canada



*Wild Animal and Plant
Protection and Regulation
of International and
Interprovincial Trade Act*

**ANNUAL REPORT TO
PARLIAMENT FOR 2021**



Female Raccoon Dog with offspring

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Highlights

Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act (WAPPRIITA)

- **International:** The ongoing pandemic sparked renewed interest in the role of wildlife trade in the spread of zoonotic diseases and revealed the critical importance of ensuring that evidence-based decisions on wildlife trade are taken in a timely fashion. Canada's proposal to establish a working group with a mandate of understanding the role of CITES in reducing risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with international wildlife trade was ratified at the 73rd meeting of the CITES Standing Committee in May 2021.
- **Domestic:** Despite the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impeding compliance promotion efforts in 2021, ECCC continued to promote compliance with CITES and WAPPRIITA by providing guidance on its [website](#). The [website](#) includes information on trade impacts on animals and plants, WAPPRIITA (and its regulations) and CITES. ECCC was also able to continue to promote compliance through more than 20 informational displays located at various venues, including: airports, science centres, zoos, customs offices and border crossings.
- **Exports:** The majority of shipments in 2021 were of cultivated American Ginseng and biomedical specimens related to vaccine research. In July 2021, the CITES office of ECCC implemented an artificially propagated ginseng export program, whereby Ontario ginseng growers in good standing with the Ontario Ginseng Growers Association (OGGA) could qualify for permits valid for 12-months which are automatically renewed. This has significantly reduced administrative burden.
- **Imports:** Canada issued 180 CITES import permits, which were mainly for the import of old ivory, captive bred Arowana for private collectors, personal pets, and zoo animals. In addition, nine import permits were issued for the import of species posing a risk to Canadian ecosystems, including Meerkats and Salamanders.
- **Enforcement:** ECCC conducted 1 269 inspections under WAPPRIITA. There were 194 violations of WAPPRIITA or its regulations, which resulted in administrative monetary penalties, tickets or warnings. Most inspections focused on foreign species at high conservation risk. This is attributed to the higher demand and volume of foreign species that are imported and exported internationally and transported inter-provincially.

1. Introduction

Under section 28 of the *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act* (WAPPRIITA), the Minister of the Environment must report annually on the administration of the Act. This report covers the administration of the Act for the year 2021.

Section 1 provides information on WAPPRIITA and outlines the responsibilities of Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) in administering the Act. Subsequent sections discuss:

- the management of wild animals and plants in trade;
- assessing the risk to species from trade;
- compliance promotion and enforcement;
- international cooperation.

1.1. WAPPRIITA AND CITES

The *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (**CITES**) came into force in 1975, and it has been adopted by over 180 countries. CITES sets controls on the trade and international movement of animal and plant species that are, or may become, threatened with over-exploitation because of trade pressures. Such species are identified by the Parties to the Convention and are listed in one of three appendices to the Convention according to the degree of protection they need.



WAPPRIITA and the *Wild Animal and Plant Trade Regulations* (WAPTR) came into force on May 14, 1996, and provide Canada with the authority to regulate trade in animal and plant species, helping Canada meet its international obligations under CITES.

The purpose of WAPPRIITA is to protect certain species of animals and plants, particularly by implementing CITES and regulating international and interprovincial trade in animals and plants. WAPPRIITA regulates the interprovincial trade of plants and animals as well as prohibits the import of species taken, possessed, distributed or transported in contravention of any law of any foreign state.

WAPTR includes authorities to issue permits, provide exemptions to permitting requirements, and to define the animals and plants that are subject to permitting. While the focus is mainly on the implementation of CITES,

WAPTR also has provisions for controlling the import of species which may be deemed injurious to Canadian ecosystems through a permitting regime. Species whose trade is controlled in Canada are listed on the three schedules of the WAPTR.

SCHEDULE I Includes all animals listed as fauna and all plants listed as flora in the three CITES appendices. These species require permits for import/export or interprovincial transport, unless otherwise exempted.

SCHEDULE II Lists other plant and animal species which do not necessarily appear in the CITES appendices but require an import permit. These are species that may pose a risk to Canadian ecosystems.

SCHEDULE III Lists the Schedule I species that are recognized as endangered or threatened within Canada.

1.2. RESPONSIBILITIES IN ADMINISTERING WAPPRIITA

ECCC is responsible for the administration and enforcement of WAPPRIITA, and is the designated Management Authority and Scientific Authority for the purpose of CITES.

As the Management Authority, ECCC has the overall responsibility for verifying and validating requests for international trade of specimens of animals and plants that are regulated under CITES originating from, or destined for, Canada. This responsibility includes issuing CITES permits and certificates.

As the Scientific Authority, ECCC has the overall responsibility for determining whether the international trade of a species is detrimental to its survival. This responsibility includes monitoring the international trade of wild animals and plants to and from Canada to ensure that current levels of trade are sustainable.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada is responsible for the issuance of permits and validation of export requests for specimens of CITES-listed aquatic species. Further information on the roles and responsibilities of federal departments in the implementation and administration of CITES can be found [online](#).

Furthermore, ECCC oversees the enforcement of WAPPRIITA, which is carried out in cooperation with other federal departments and agencies, such as the Canada Border Services Agency, and with provincial and territorial wildlife agencies. Border officials play an important role at ports of entry, manually verifying and validating permits and referring shipments to ECCC personnel for inspection, as required.

ECCC maintains enforcement agreements and memoranda of understanding with Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia and Nunavut. The agreements and memoranda of understanding establish a collaborative approach to enforcing WAPPRIITA with respect to interprovincial wildlife trade.

2. Management of wild animals and plants in trade

The effective implementation of CITES depends on international cooperation to regulate cross-border movement of listed species through a global system of permits that are verified at international borders.

2.1. PERMITTING OVERVIEW

In Canada, CITES permits are issued pursuant to WAPPRIITA. Schedule I of WAPTR includes all CITES-listed species.

2.1.1. Requirements

There are different permit requirements depending on the CITES appendix under which the species is listed.

- Appendix I species require both an import and export permit;
- Appendix II species require an export permit;
- Appendix III species require an export permit or a certificate of origin.



This photograph of a Saker falcon (*Falco cherrug*) was taken on a springtime afternoon near Victoria, British Columbia. Saker are a large species of falcon found breeding in Central Europe, Asia and Manchuria. Although a largely migratory bird and a powerful raptor (bird of prey), it is on the list of endangered species. Factors contributing to the decline of the Saker falcon, many of which are human caused, include: accumulation of pesticides in the food chain; lack of suitable nesting places; and illegal trade of nest-poached chicks and eggs.

Table 1 describes the various types of permits and certificates that are issued under WAPPRIITA.

Table 1. Types of Canadian permits and certificates under WAPPRIITA.

Type of permit or certificate	Description
Import permit	Issued for all specimens of species included in Schedule I of the WAPTR that are also listed in CITES Appendix I. An export permit from the exporting country is also required to authorize the importation into Canada. Import permits are valid for up to one year.
Export permit	Issued for all specimens of species included in Schedule I of the WAPTR that are also listed in CITES Appendix I and II to be exported from Canada. An export permit is required for species listed in CITES Appendix III that originate in Canada and proposed for listing by Canada (for example, Walrus). Multiple shipments under a permit can be authorized when the applicant intends to make multiple transactions during the period for which the permit is valid. Export permits are valid for up to six months.
Re-export certificate	Issued for all specimens of species included in Schedule I of the WAPTR to be exported from Canada after having been legally imported into Canada at an earlier time. Re-export certificates are valid for up to six months.
Certificate of ownership	Issued to authorize frequent cross-border movement of personally owned live CITES-listed animals (also known as a pet passport). Certificates of ownership are valid for up to three years.
Temporary movement/travelling exhibition certificate	Issued for specimens that are only temporarily exported from Canada and that will, within a limited amount of time, be returned to Canada. Authorization can be provided for orchestras, museum exhibits or circus specimens that are either pre-CITES, captive bred or artificially propagated. Authorization can also be provided for individuals travelling with musical instruments containing parts made from CITES-listed species (for example ivory, Brazilian Rosewood). Temporary movement certificates are valid for up to three years.
Scientific certificate	Issued for the exchange between CITES-registered scientific institutions of museum, research and herbarium specimens. Scientific certificates are valid for up to three years.
Injurious wildlife permit	An injurious wildlife permit is necessary for importing specimens of species posing risks to Canadian ecosystems that are included in Schedule II of the WAPTR. These could be for zoos and scientific institutions; or for the import of fur products or garments.

2.1.2. Exemptions

WAPPRIITA authorizes exemptions, in specific situations, for the import and export of CITES-listed species without permits. WAPTR specifies four exemptions: tourist souvenirs, personal effects, household effects and certain hunting trophies. The hunting trophy exemption applies to fresh, frozen or salted trophies of Black Bear and Sandhill Crane, acquired and possessed by individuals through legal hunting in Canada or the United States. Further information on exemptions is available [online](#).

Canadian threatened or endangered species listed on Schedule III of the WAPTR are not included in these exemptions and require all necessary CITES permits.



Sandhill Crane (*Antigone canadensis*)
family on lakeshore

2.1.3. Service standards under WAPPRIITA

ECCC has established service standards for WAPPRIITA permit decisions and the issuance of permits. ECCC's goal is to provide permit decisions within a certain number of days (depending on the permit type), and to meet these standards for at least 90% of all permit applications. The performance is tracked on a fiscal year basis. This report uses data from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022.

Performance targets for all CITES permit categories were met. The percentage of permit decisions made within the service standards were:

- 95% hunting trophy exports;
- 99% Polar Bear exports;
- 99% for all other permit types.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the CITES permitting staff has worked remotely since mid-March 2020 and continued in 2021. While CITES permits must be printed on special secure paper and then mailed or sent by courier to the applicant, alternative permit delivery methods were put in place in 2020 as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. They continued to be successfully implemented in 2021 and allowed the CITES office to meet their standards. The Department's performance against these standards is published [online](#).

Only six applications were received for WAPTR injurious wildlife permits during the year, and one application took longer than 70 days to complete. Therefore, 83% of the decisions were made within the standard of 70 calendar days. ECCC's performance against this standard is published [online](#).

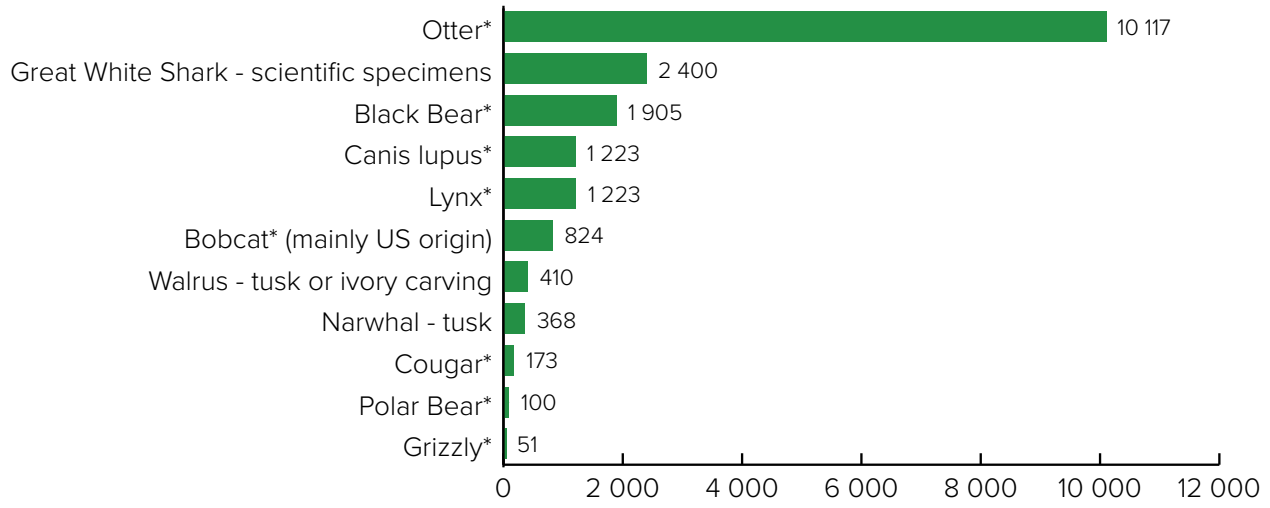
2.2. ANNUAL REPORT TO CITES

Every country that is Party to CITES is required to submit to the CITES Secretariat an annual report by October 31, covering actions in the preceding calendar year (for example, the 2020 annual report was due on October 31, 2021). The requirements for annual reports can be found [online](#). Data submitted by all Parties to CITES can be found in the [CITES trade database](#).

Figure 1 highlights some of the most important exports and re-exports reported by Canada in its 2020 CITES annual report. In 2020, Canada issued permits for 242 different CITES-listed species.

Figure 1. High volume exports or re-exports listed in the Canada 2020 CITES annual report (Canadian species).

Quantity of specimens



* May not include skin, body, trophy, garment or skulls.

Other high-volume exports and re-exports reported by Canada in its 2020 CITES annual report.

RE-EXPORT

Reptiles (alligator, crocodile, python, lizard)

- Leather products (e.g., watchstraps, handbags, shoes, belts) – 1 368

Macaques - scientific samples for biomedical research, including COVID19 research

- Grams – 98 780
- Milliliters – 11 712
- Specimens – 104 065

Elephant

- Ivory pieces (e.g. piano keys, instrument parts, chess sets), carvings or tusks
 - Export/re-export – 354
 - Import – 369

Birdwing butterflies

- Mounted butterfly bodies – 356



The show room of a state licensed business which sells alligator leather apparel, finished skins, heads and feet.



Rhesus Macaque family in Zhangjiajie National Forest Park, China.



Confiscated elephant ivory and rhino horn.



Carins Birdwing (Ornithoptera priamus Poseidon) in a petri dish.



Super Red Arowana, Jakarta, Indonesia.



The roots of the Saussurea costus are widely used in traditional Indian and Chinese medicine.

IMPORT

Arowana

- Ornamental fish – 899

Saussurea costus

- For medicinal purposes – 1 070 Kg

2.3. CITES PERMITS ISSUED IN 2021

CITES permits are issued by ECCC or Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Figure 2 sets out the division of responsibility for the issuing of permits and certificates.

Figure 2. Division of responsibility for the issuance of CITES permits and certificates.

ECCC	FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • export permits and re-export permits for non-indigenous species; • export permits and re-export certificates for specimens of indigenous species harvested in Canada; • import permits and other specialized CITES certificates; • import permits for species that may pose a risk to Canadian ecosystems (listed in Schedule II of WAPTR). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the majority of the export permits for CITES-listed aquatic species.



African Elephant poaching and illegal trade in elephant ivory are having negative impacts on their populations. The Government of Canada held public consultations on a range of potential actions to strengthen domestic measures on importation and exportation/re-exportation of elephant ivory. The consultation period was July 24, 2021 – September 22, 2021.

Many elephant skulls found and shown by 'Save the elephant' are from elephants killed by poachers.

2.3.1. Export permits and re-export certificates

Export permits are issued for specimens (animals, plants, their parts or derivatives) of CITES-listed species that originate in Canada and that are being exported from Canada for the first time.

Re-export certificates are used to track trade in specimens that entered Canada under the authorization of permits issued by foreign states and that were then re-exported from Canada.

Canadian CITES permitting offices issued 3 761 CITES export permits and re-export certificates under WAPPRITA. The number of permits issued declined 50% compared to 2019 (pre-COVID) and 26% compared to 2020 due to the continued impact of COVID-19 lockdowns and reduced international travel. Table 2 shows the number of export permits and re-export certificates issued in 2021 by Canadian CITES permitting offices, which totalled 3 761.

Table 2. CITES export permits and re-export certificates issued in Canadian CITES permitting offices in 2021.

Canadian jurisdiction	Number of export permits and re-export certificates issued	Percentage of total export permits and re-export certificates issued by Canada (Percentages are rounded)
Federal government		
Environment and Climate Change Canada	3 252	86.5%
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	106	2.8%
Provinces/Territories		
British Columbia	294	7.8%
Ontario*	6	0.2%
New Brunswick	32	0.9%
Yukon	71	1.9%
Total	3 761	

*The province of Ontario discontinued the issuance of CITES permits as of April 2021. The applicants now apply directly to ECCC via fax, mail or email, as per the established process by the CITES permitting office.

The number of permits issued is not indicative of trade volumes. There is not a one-to-one relationship between permits issued and the quantity of specimens on the permit. Each export permit or re-export certificate can authorize the export of multiple specimens or species. Each species and their parts or derivatives is listed on a permit. In the case of export of biomedical samples, for example, a permit could have hundreds of individual specimens listed (such as blood, serum, microscope slides, and paraffin blocks). In other cases, there may be few specimens listed on the permit, but large quantities for each specimen (for example, hundreds of Bobcat skins from a fur auction).

When a species is protected under CITES, a permit is required for all specimens of that species (unless exemptions apply). A specimen can be the live species, parts or derivatives of the species, or finished products made from those species. There are over 35 000 species listed under CITES with approximately 29 000 of those species being plants (such as Orchids, Cacti, and Rosewood). While there is a small number of species listed under CITES which are indigenous to Canada, many foreign species are imported into Canada and either re-exported, bred or propagated in Canada, or transformed into finished products in Canada.

In 2021, Canada issued export permits and re-export certificates for the following purposes using the transaction codes as defined in CITES Resolution 12.3¹:

- Hunting trophies
- Personal use
- Scientific research
- Commercial purposes
- Biomedical research
- Breeding
- Other

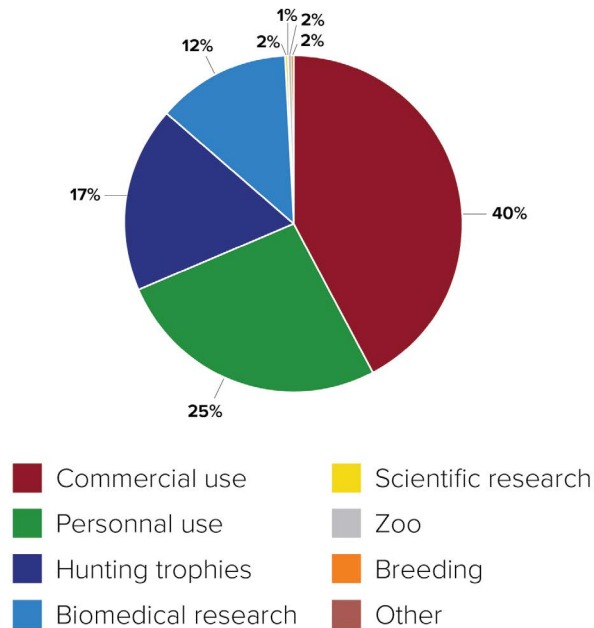
¹ CITES Resolution 12.3 on Permits and Certificates was agreed to in 2002 and reviewed in 2018.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of distribution of export permits and re-export certificates, by purpose of transaction, issued in 2021. Figure 4 shows the percentage of distribution of export permits and re-export certificates, by purpose of transaction, issued between 2012 and 2021.



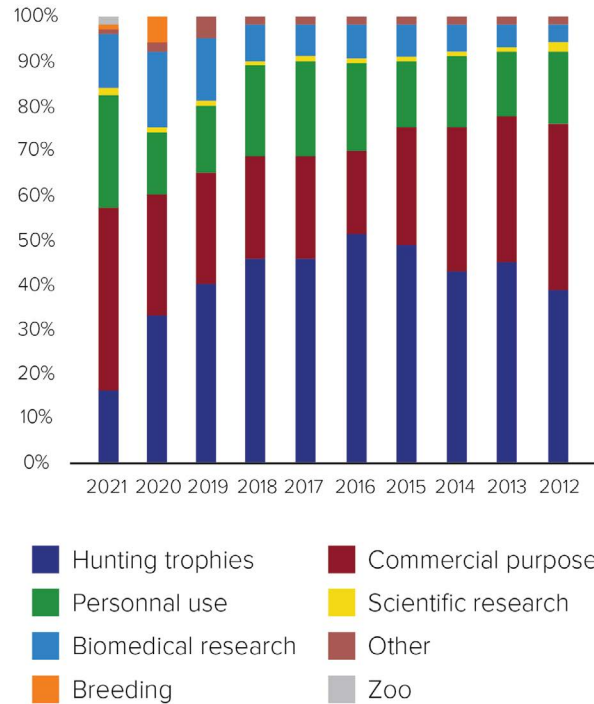
Pile of Ginseng slices, China

Figure 3. Percentage of CITES export permits and re-export certificates issued in 2021, by purpose of transaction.



Notes:
 Purpose of transactions for export and re-export permits are relatively constant from year to year.
 The "Other" category includes: exhibitions (16), educational (3), and enforcement (1).

Figure 4. Percentages of CITES export permits and re-export certificates issued in previous years, by purpose of transaction (some numbers have been rounded).



Notes:

The “Other” category for 2021 includes exhibitions, educational, and enforcement.

The “Other” category for 2020 includes scientific research, exhibitions, zoos, exhibitions, reintroduction in the wild, law enforcement and educational.

The “Other” category for 2019 includes breeding, exhibitions, zoos, law enforcement, and reintroduction in the wild.

The “Other” category in previous years includes exhibitions, zoos, law enforcement, botanical gardens and reintroduction in the wild.

Table 3 indicates the number of export permits issued in each of the past eight calendar years for Polar Bears harvested in Canada. The permits may include any Polar Bear specimen – for example skin, skull, claws, or baculum. Permits for scientific samples are not included in this analysis, since they are not related to Polar Bear harvest.



Table 3. Number of CITES export permits issued per year for Polar Bears harvested in Canada, and breakdown by the season in which the bears were harvested.

Year permit issued	Total export permits issued	Number of Polar Bears by harvest season*									
		2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
2021	169	0	20	29	22	21	14	13	6	21	13
2020	109	0	20	31	16	16	8	4	6	2	1
2019	148	0	0	29	45	21	20	7	12	6	2
2018	206	0	0	0	1	57	40	45	27	18	5
2017	215	0	0	0	0	0	45	79	29	24	16
2016	232	0	0	0	0	0	0	67	57	50	26
2015	292	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	87	88
2014	237	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	56	99

*Harvest season is counted from July to June of the following year. For example, harvest season 2018-2019 started on July 1, 2018, and finished on June 30, 2019.

Note:

Even if a permit for a specific Polar Bear is issued in a calendar year, the actual export may not take place for various reasons (for example the permit expired before shipment could take place, cancelled shipment, or changes from rug to full mount). A permit could be reissued in the same calendar year or subsequent years for a specific Polar Bear, which was never actually exported under a previously issued permit.

2.3.2. Export or re-export permits for multiple shipments

An export permit or re-export certificate may authorize multiple shipments of specimens. The permit or certificate holder is responsible for identifying the destination, specific specimens and quantities that make up each shipment. This provides a simplified procedure for permit holders who trade in specimens with very little or no impact to the conservation of species. Of the 3 761 export permits and re-export certificates listed in Table 2, there were 1 145 for multiple shipments, authorizing 21 501 shipments. By far, the largest share of multiple shipment permits was issued to growers and distributors of American Ginseng.

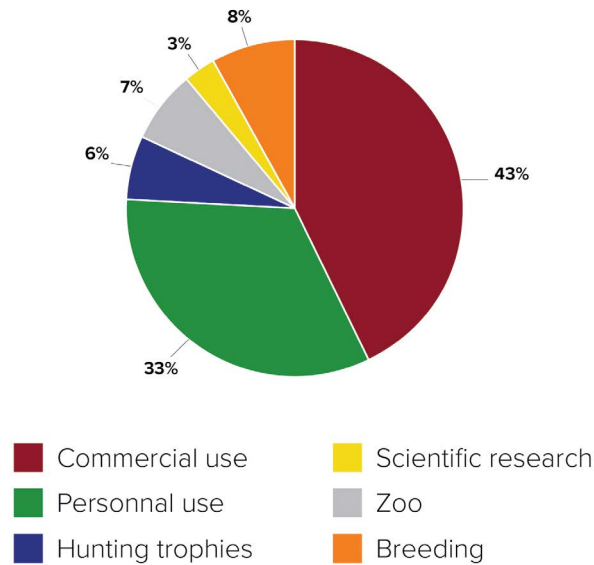
In Canada, the export of a small quantity of artificially propagated American Ginseng for personal use (up to 4.5 kg) is authorized through a simplified permitting procedure using ginseng stickers. A permit sticker identifying the permit number under which the multiple shipments are authorized accompanies each shipment. Individual stickers accounted for 63% (13 544 of the 21 501) of the multiple shipment permits authorized in 2021.

2.3.3. Imports into Canada

Figure 5 indicates the distribution of 180 CITES import permits issued in 2021, by purpose as indicated by the CITES transaction code. Figure 6 indicates the percentage of overall CITES import permits issued from 2012 to 2021, by purpose of transaction.



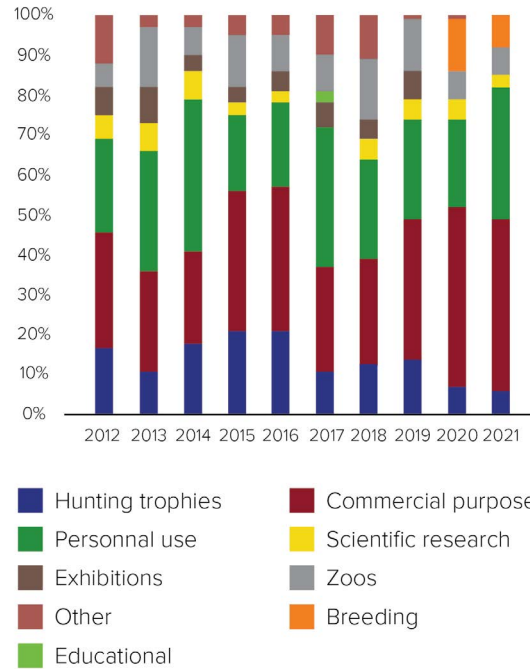
Figure 5. Percentage of CITES import permits issued in 2021, by purpose of transaction



Note:

The imports for commercial purposes consist mainly of artificially propagated plants, pre-Convention specimens (such as antiques containing ivory) and captive-bred animals (such as falcons and parrots).

Figure 6. Percentage of CITES import permits issued from 2012 to 2021, by purpose of transaction.



2.3.4. Specialized CITES certificates.

As indicated in Table 1, there are many types of permits and certificates issued under WAPPRIITA. The CITES certificate allows movement of CITES-listed specimens under specific circumstances. There are three types of specialized certificates:

- Certificate of Ownership – allows owners of CITES-listed species to travel across international borders for personal non-commercial use.
- Temporary Movement Certificate – allows for the temporary import, export or re-export of CITES-listed animals or plants, which may be alive or dead, whole or in parts, or any products made from them (for example, musical instruments) for travelling exhibition purposes only (for example, concert, circus or plant exhibition).
- Scientific Certificate – used by Canadian CITES-registered institutions to exchange specimens with CITES-registered institutions in another country. This facilitates the movement of scientific samples for research and cataloguing.

While these specialized certificates represent a modest number of permits issued each year, they serve a very important function by facilitating the movement of specimens of CITES-listed species in low-risk situations.

Table 4. CITES certificates issued from 2012 to 2020 by type.

Year	Certificate of Ownership	Temporary Movement Certificate	Scientific Certificate	Total
2021	62	10	11	83
2020	41	11	3	55
2019	81	52	5	138
2018	49	37	7	93
2017	65	41	11	117
2016	104	40	1	145
2015	68	27	5	100
2014	68	45	13	126
2013	88	33	5	126
2012	74	25	No data	99

2.4. PERMITS SPECIFIC TO WAPTR

Canada requires import permits, referred to as injurious wildlife permits, for certain species that may pose a risk to Canadian ecosystems, but do not necessarily appear in the CITES appendices. Injurious wildlife permits are most commonly issued to allow the import of live animals for exhibits at zoos or for research by scientific institutions. The targeted species are listed in Schedule II of WAPTR and include Raccoon Dogs, mongooses, Starlings, mynas, and Oxpeckers as well as all species under the order Caudata, which includes salamanders, newts and Mudpuppies.

Table 5. Injurious wildlife permits issued from 2017 to 2021.

Year	Live animals (Salamanders)	Garments/Scientific Specimens	Total
2021	9	0	9
2020	2	1	3
2019	4	6	10
2018	5	5	10
2017	4	1	5



Fire Salamander

2.5. CANADA'S TRADING PARTNERS

The United States, the member countries of the European Union and the countries of East and Southeast Asia continue to be Canada's major trading partners under CITES, particularly for exports. In 2021, exports to the United States and the European Union covered a wide range of specimens and species. In the case of East and Southeast Asia, cultivated American Ginseng was the most commonly exported species from Canada, with these regions accounting for the majority of Canada's exports for this species. Canada also exported a large number of captive bred falcons (428 in 2021) to Middle Eastern countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates).

Meerkat family



Four hungry, young Starlings cry for their next meal



3. Assessing the risk to species from trade

Countries exporting specimens of species listed in CITES Appendices I or II must provide a scientific determination that such export will not be detrimental to the survival of the species. This determination is referred to as a non-detriment finding (NDF). Some countries, such as the United States and member countries of the European Union, enforce regulations that are stricter than CITES, leading to a higher level of scrutiny when they are considering exports and NDFs from exporting countries.

3.1. NON-DETRIMENT FINDINGS

Canada's NDFs are consistent with a resolution adopted by the CITES Conference of the Parties, the international guidance for CITES Scientific Authorities, and guidance provided by the CITES Secretariat.

In Canada, NDFs are determined on a permit-by-permit basis. For frequently traded species, standing NDF reports are prepared to support the issuance of export permits. Canada's species-specific standing NDF reports are developed following the process that involves the federal-provincial/territorial CITES Scientific Authorities working group, as well as participation and review by species experts and Indigenous peoples. Canada has standing NDFs that cover the majority of Canada's trade, which include: American Ginseng, Atlantic Sturgeon, Black Bear, Bobcat, Canadian Lynx, Cougar, Goldenseal, Grey Wolf, Grizzly Bear, Narwhal, Polar Bear, River Otter, and Sandhill Crane. Standing NDF reports are reviewed periodically and, if necessary, updated with the most recent information.

No standing NDF reports were reviewed for 2021. Canada's Standing Non-Detriment Finding Reports can be found [online](#).

4. Compliance promotion and enforcement of CITES and WAPPRIITA

ECCC works in partnership with a broad range of enforcement partners to promote and secure compliance with WAPPRIITA. These partners include the Canada Border Services Agency, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Transport Canada, Natural Resources Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, provincial and territorial law enforcement and conservation authorities, as well as the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

ECCC also promotes and verifies compliance with the CITES on the international stage. ECCC is an active partner with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) participating yearly in Operation Thunder, an INTERPOL and World Customs Organization operation targeting the illegal trafficking of CITES species.

4.1. COMPLIANCE PROMOTION

Compliance promotion initiatives educate Canadians about the impacts of illegal wildlife trade and provide information on the plant and animal species that cannot be moved across Canadian borders without a WAPPRIITA permit.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impeding compliance promotion efforts in 2021, ECCC continued to promote compliance with CITES and WAPPRIITA by providing guidance on its website². The website includes information on trade impacts on animals and plants, WAPPRIITA (and its regulations) and CITES. ECCC was also able to continue to promote compliance through more than 20 informational displays located at various venues, including: airports, science centres, zoos, customs offices and border crossings.



² [International trade in protected animals and plants - Canada.ca](https://www.ec.gc.ca/CITES)

4.2. ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

Compliance with WAPPRIITA is verified by various means, such as: reviewing permits, auditing import and export declarations, conducting inspections at ports of entry, conducting routine or spot inspections of wildlife businesses, sharing information with border officials and national and international agencies, gathering information, developing intelligence and following up on tips provided by the public.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant challenges for conservation and enforcement efforts worldwide. The suggestion that wet markets³ could have facilitated the transfer of COVID-19 to humans brought to the forefront the links between the current global health crisis and illegal wildlife trade. Wet markets often contain foreign, rare, and sometimes endangered species which are in demand for medicinal purposes or as desired symbols of status. The transportation and storage of animals for wildlife trade at these markets enables the spread of diseases from animals to other animals or humans. The pandemic brought worldwide awareness and attention to illegal wildlife trade and highlighted its impact on public health, the economy and sustainability. This resulted in the tightening of restrictions on illegal wildlife trade and wet markets and spurred a call to action to increase national and international controls.

4.2.1. Inspections

Inspections are conducted to ensure that the import and export of animals and plants comply with the requirements under WAPPRIITA. Inspections are instrumental in obtaining ongoing information on trends and emerging non-compliance risks and threats. The analysis of information collected through inspections informs the development of risk-based priorities for compliance verification.

Inspections are either proactively planned or conducted in response to a referral from another federal department or agency, such as the Canada Border Services Agency, or provincial or territorial governments, or the public. Most of the inspections conducted under WAPPRIITA are focused on foreign species at high conservation risk (such as, CITES-listed shark fins, eels, turtles/tortoises and ivory horns/tusks of various mammals). This is attributed to the higher demand and volume of foreign species that are imported and exported internationally and inter-provincially.

In 2021, there were 1 269 inspections compared to 1 359 inspections in 2020. This marginal difference can be directly attributed to the continued restrictions on travel, border crossings and field operations which required adjustments in the way inspections are conducted.

4.2.2. Investigations

In 2021, ECCC opened 35 new investigations involving international and interprovincial movements of wildlife. The outcomes of ECCC's investigations, including media releases and enforcement notifications, are published [online](#).

4.2.3. Violations

There were 194 violations of WAPPRIITA or its regulations in 2021 that resulted in 6 tickets, 162 warnings and 25 administrative monetary penalties (AMPs, totalling \$25 000 dollars) which represented roughly a threefold increase in AMPs as compared to the previous year. No prosecutions were reported as case files are in progress.

³ A marketplace selling fresh meat, fish, produce, and other perishable goods as distinguished from "dry markets" that sell durable goods such as fabric and electronics.

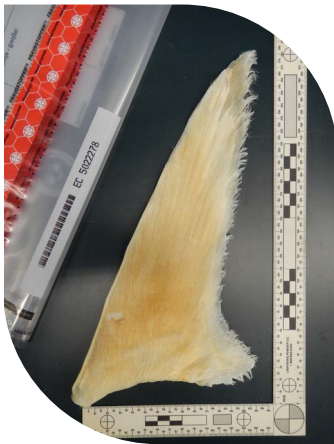
4.2.4. Convictions

In 2021, there were three convictions obtained for violations of WAPPRIITA:

1. On March 4, 2021, a British Columbia-based import company was ordered to pay \$163 776 for illegally importing meat of the European Eel, which is listed in Appendix II of CITES.⁴ Between October 2017 and May 2018, Environment and Climate Change Canada enforcement officers inspected and sampled, at the Port of Vancouver, seven 21-tonne shipments of eel meat. While the company declared that the shipping containers contained fillets of *Anguilla rostrata*, or American Eel, which is not CITES-listed, five of the seven containers inspected were found to contain, through extensive sampling and DNA analysis, CITES-listed European Eel meat mixed with legally imported American Eel meat.
2. On May 19, 2021, a British Columbia-based trading company was fined \$60 000 for the illegal import of 434 kg of fins from a threatened shark species. ECCC enforcement officers inspected the shipment, detaining nearly half of the boxes of shark fin to conduct DNA testing to confirm the species. The results of the testing indicated that more than 65% of the shark fins sampled were CITES-protected Silky Shark. The other fins were identified as Blue Shark and Shortfin Mako Shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*), both of which were non-CITES species at the time. The Shortfin Mako has since been CITES-listed. ECCC estimates that these boxes could represent up to 3 185 individual sharks.⁵

Silky Shark fin, individual sample, dried

Photo Courtesy of Environment & Climate Change Canada



Bag of dried shark fins in a shipping box

Photo Courtesy of Environment & Climate Change Canada



3. On August 31, 2021, an Ontario-based trading company was fined \$65 000 for illegally importing fins of threatened shark species including fins or fin cartilage from two different CITES-listed shark species: Silky Shark and Scalloped Hammerhead Shark. The charges stem from events in May 2018, when ECCC enforcement officers inspected an incoming shipment of shark products at the Canada Border Services Agency Container Examination Facility in Burnaby, British Columbia. Wildlife officers identified a box of Shark fins and assorted shark fin cartilage fragments.

All fines, as a result of these convictions, are directed to the Government of Canada's Environmental Damages Fund and used to support projects that benefit the natural environment.

⁴ [British Columbia-based import company ordered to pay \\$163,776 fine for illegally importing European eel meat - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/03/british-columbia-based-import-company-ordered-to-pay-163776-fine-for-illegally-importing-european-eel-meat.html)

⁵ [British Columbia-based trading company fined \\$60,000 for illegal import of 434 kg of fins from a threatened shark species - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/05/british-columbia-based-trading-company-fined-60000-for-illegal-import-of-434-kg-of-fins-from-a-threatened-shark-species.html)

4.3. COLLABORATION WITH PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL PARTNERS

As noted in Section 1.2, several provincial and territorial departments and federal agencies have memoranda of understanding or agreements with ECCC allowing designated officers to enforce WAPRIITA. The formal collaborations with federal departments and federal agencies include, but are not limited to, Canada Border Services, Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The collaboration between the federal government and its provincial and territorial partners is beneficial given their shared mandate, and results in better coordination of efforts and resources in undertaking wildlife enforcement actions, especially when dealing with large-scale operations.

5. International Cooperation

5.1. CITES CONFERENCES OF THE PARTIES

The CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP) meets once every three years. During the period between meetings of the CoP, the Animals Committee, the Plants Committee and the Standing Committee implement directives received from the preceding CoP and prepare for the next CoP. The next CITES CoP (CoP19) is planned for fall 2022 in Panama.

5.2. CITES COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

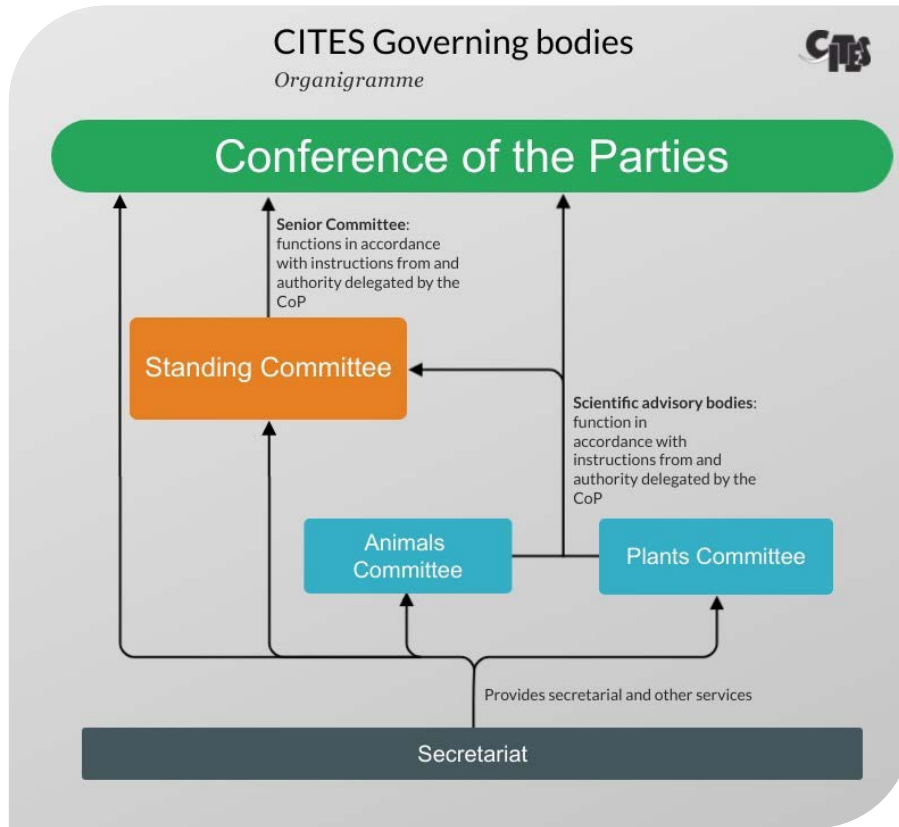
Canada participated in a number of committees and working groups to foster ongoing cooperation with international partners under the Convention. In particular, the meetings of the CITES Standing Committee, the Plants Committee and the Animals Committee are instrumental in developing international policy for the implementation of the Convention. Decisions made by these bodies may affect Canada's obligations under CITES and greatly influence the decisions ultimately adopted by the CoP.

Members of these committees represent six major geographical regions (Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Central and South America and the Caribbean, and Oceania). The North American region is comprised of Canada, the United States and Mexico. Canada continued to represent the North American region on the Standing Committee and Animals Committee. Ms. Carolina Caceres from ECCC continued to serve as Chair of the CITES Standing Committee following her re-election after CoP18. Ms. Cecilia Loughheed continued to serve as the alternate member on the Animals Committee.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 31st meeting of the Animals Committee and the 25th meeting of the Plants Committee (scheduled in Geneva for summer 2020) were both cancelled. The work of these Committees continued in 2021 by postal procedure and online meetings. The Animals Committee met virtually from May 31 to June 24, 2021 and the Plants Committee met virtually from June 2 to 24, 2021. The 73rd meeting of the CITES Standing Committee that was scheduled for 2020 was also cancelled and held virtually from May 5 to 7, 2021. Canada, as Chair, continued to lead the work of the CITES Standing Committee and held various informal briefing sessions with Committee members, including sessions to make decisions pertaining to the 74th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee and the 19th meeting of the CoP. Canada continued to lead and participate in the work of these Committees via email or through virtual meetings, and also chaired various intersessional working groups to help advance the implementation of the Convention.

The ongoing pandemic sparked renewed interest in the role of wildlife trade in the spread of zoonotic diseases and the critical importance of ensuring that evidence-based decisions on wildlife trade are taken in a timely fashion. To this end, Canada proposed the establishment of an intersessional working group to consider what role, if any, CITES could play in reducing the risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with the international wildlife trade. This proposal was ratified at the 73rd meeting of the CITES Standing Committee, held online for the first time in May 2021.

Figure 7. Organigram of CITES Governing bodies



© CITES Secretariat

5.3. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS

Poaching and trafficking of wildlife undermines conservation efforts and threatens the conservation of species⁶. Over-exploitation driven by illegal trade can decimate populations of species. Illegal trade can also threaten and destabilize the socio-economic benefits that legal trade in wildlife can provide to certain communities.

Wildlife trafficking worldwide has increased significantly over the past 20 years with illegal wildlife trade and environmental crime ranking as the fourth most lucrative form of organized crime worldwide. INTERPOL estimates illegal wildlife trade to be valued at approximately \$20 billion USD annually and this figure is rising 5% to 7% per year.⁷ According to the World Bank, economic losses worldwide due to illegal logging, fishing and wildlife trade combined are an estimated value of \$1-\$2 trillion USD annually.⁸

⁶ [Wildlife and forestry crime: Worldwide seizures in global INTERPOL-WCO operation](#)

⁷ [Wildlife crime: closing ranks on serious crime in the illegal animal trade \(interpol.int\)](#)

⁸ [Illegal Logging, Fishing, and Wildlife Trade : The Costs and How to Combat it \(worldbank.org\)](#)

In October 2021, ECCC's enforcement officers participated in INTERPOL's Operation Thunder 2021, an international enforcement effort in collaboration with the World Customs Organization, aimed at cracking down on wildlife crime including smuggling, poaching and trafficking. This operation, which involved 118 countries worldwide, focussed on identifying the illegal import and export of wildlife products at ports of entry and resulted in 1 000 seizures of illegally traded specimens listed by CITES. In partnership with the Customs and Border Services Agency, ECCC enforcement officers had a successful border blitz that uncovered various crocodile parts, CITES-listed tree seeds (*Dalbergia Nigra*), Hunting trophies of African primates, Burmese Star Tortoises and African Caracal trophies imported into the US and Canada. Canada continued to be a destination for illegal wood shipments with indication of large volumes of tropical wood imported into the country. There remained significant cross border smuggling of CITES species.⁹ COVID-19 travel restrictions between Canada and the US severely limited the number of inspections enforcement officers could conduct.

ECCC's enforcement officers responded to over 46 complaints and tips received from the public concerning habitat and wildlife destruction. Enforcement officers also conducted a dozen inspections, enforcement activities and hunter checks, and led a series of border crossing blitzes to look for evidence of illegal exports of Canadian species, as well as illegal imports of exotic species.

Over the course of the operation, officers intercepted items such as crocodile skulls and wrist watch straps, shark fins, alligator skulls and feet, Brazilian Rosewood, various species of reptiles, African hunting trophies, and migratory bird meat among other items. Several items were seized, or abandoned by the offenders, and several notices of violation were issued for the absence of CITES permits.

The initial results of Operation Thunder led to the identification of 300 suspects and triggered arrests around the world. Further arrests and prosecutions are foreseen as global investigations progress.



Photo courtesy of INTERPOL

Figure 8. Global seizures resulting from Operation Thunder 2021.



Figure 8 courtesy of INTERPOL

⁹ [Global arrests and seizures: INTERPOL-WCO operation strikes wildlife and timber trafficking networks](#)

5.4. UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME

ECCC collaborated with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to: exchange experiences and best practices in preventing and combatting wildlife and forest crime among countries in the Americas; get a better understanding of the link between wildlife and forest crime and organized crime in the Americas; and, to identify potential joint strategies and activities for cooperation.

6. Additional Information

For more information about WAPPRITA, please visit the website of the [Government of Canada](#) or contact ECCC at:

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Ottawa, ON K1A 0H3
Telephone: 819-938-4119
Fax: 819-953-6283
Email: CITES@ec.gc.ca