



## **CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES**

UNEP/CMS/Saiga/MOS5/Inf.7

Original: English

### **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING CONSERVATION, RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE SAIGA ANTELOPE**

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FIFTH MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES TO THE  
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING  
CONSERVATION, RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE  
USE OF THE SAIGA ANTELOPE

Astana, Kazakhstan, 12 – 14 March 2025

#### **REPORT OF THE CITES SECRETARIAT**

*(Prepared by the CITES Secretariat)*

## REPORT OF THE CITES SECRETARIAT

### Saiga listings in the CITES Appendices

1. *Saiga tatarica* and *Saiga borealis* have been included in CITES Appendix II since 1995. The taxonomic reference for *Saiga* spp. is Wilson & Reeder (2005);<sup>1</sup> details can be found in the Annex of [Resolution Conf. 12.11 \(Rev. CoP19\)](#) on *Standard nomenclature*.
2. At the 18th meeting of the CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP18, Geneva, 2019), the listing of both species in Appendix II was amended by adding the following annotation: “A zero export quota for wild specimens traded for commercial purposes” (Annotation A2; [CoP18 Com. I Rec. 10](#)). These amendments were on the result of discussions of proposal, [CoP18 Prop. 2](#), submitted by Mongolia and the United States of America, proposing to transfer *Saiga tatarica* from Appendix II to Appendix I. The annotation to the Saiga listing came into effect on 26 November 2019.
3. The implications of this amendment to the listing of *Saiga* spp. that was adopted at CoP18 are the following:
  - The annotation applies to exports of saiga specimens for commercial purposes authorized under the provisions of Article IV, paragraphs 2 and 3. It does not apply to their re-exports under the provisions of Article IV, paragraphs 4 and 5, which can continue for commercial and non-commercial purposes.
  - Range States of *Saiga* spp. cannot authorize the export of saiga specimens of wild origin for commercial purposes, using source codes W and R, and purpose code T in the relevant CITES permits and certificates<sup>2</sup>. Examples are commercial shipments of live animals, horn, bones, skulls, meat or hides.
  - Range States may authorize the export of saiga specimens of wild origin (source codes W and R) for non-commercial purposes (purpose codes Z, Q, S, H, P, M, E, N, L) provided that the conditions for authorizing trade are fulfilled. Examples are trophies, live animals for zoos or reintroduction, scientific or judicial samples, educational exchanges or personal effects.
  - Range States can authorize the export for commercial or non-commercial purposes saiga specimens from other sources than wild, i.e.:
    - captive bred (source code C)
    - animals ‘born in captivity’ [source code F; F1 or subsequent generations that do not fulfil the definition of ‘bred in captivity’ in Resolution Conf. 10.16 (Rev. CoP19)]
    - pre-Convention specimens (source code O)
  - Parties (i.e. range States and non-range States) can re-export saiga specimens from wild or other origins for commercial or non-commercial purposes.

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<sup>1</sup> WILSON, D.E. & REEDER, D. M. (ed.) (2005): Mammal Species of the World. A Taxonomic and Geographic Reference. Third edition, Vol. 1-2, xxxv + 2142 pp. Baltimore (John Hopkins University Press).

<sup>2</sup> See Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP19) on *Permits and certificates*

- Parties should dispose of seized saiga specimens in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and consistent with the provisions of Resolution Conf. 17.8 (Rev. CoP19) on [Disposal of illegally traded and confiscated specimens of CITES-listed species](#), and may authorize exports of such specimens, if the stockpiles do not originate from wild specimens of saiga antelopes.
4. The annotation for *Saiga* spp. in the CITES Appendices can only be amended by the CITES Conference of the Parties, through the submission of an amendment proposal by a Party (or group of Parties) in accordance with Article XV on *Amendments to Appendices I and II* of the Convention text:
    1. *The following provisions apply in relation to amendments to Appendices I and II at meetings of the Conference of the Parties:*
      - (a) *Any Party may propose an amendment to Appendix I or II for consideration at the next meeting. The text of the proposed amendment shall be communicated to the Secretariat at least 150 days before the meeting. The Secretariat shall consult the other Parties and interested bodies on the amendment in accordance with the provisions of sub-paragraphs (b) and (c) of paragraph 2 of this Article and shall communicate the response to all Parties not later than 30 days before the meeting.*
      - (b) *Amendments shall be adopted by a two-thirds majority of Parties present and voting. For these purposes "Parties present and voting" means Parties present and casting an affirmative or negative vote. Parties abstaining from voting shall not be counted among the two-thirds required for adopting an amendment.*
      - (c) *Amendments adopted at a meeting shall enter into force 90 days after that meeting for all Parties except those which make a reservation in accordance with paragraph 3 of this Article.*
  5. A Party planning to submit an amendment proposal should take into consideration the provisions in [Resolution Conf. 9.24 \(Rev. CoP17\)](#) on *Criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II* and should include a proposal, list of proponents and a supporting statement based on the format for proposals to amend the Appendices contained in Annex 6 of the Resolution.

### **CITES Decisions on Saiga antelopes**

6. At the 19th meeting of the CITES Conference of the Parties, a set of Decisions on *Saiga antelope* (*Saiga* spp.) was adopted which are presented in Annex 1 to this document.
7. The CITES Secretariat reported on the implementation of these Decisions to the 32nd meeting of the Animals Committee (AC32; Geneva, June 2023, [AC32 SR](#)), the 77th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC77; Geneva, November 2023, [SC77 SR](#)) and the 78th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC78; Geneva, February 2025, [SC78 Sum.10](#)).

#### *32nd meeting of the CITES Animals Committee*

8. AC32 considered the report by the Secretariat in document [AC32 Doc. 35](#) on *Saiga antelope* (*Saiga* spp.) and document [AC33 Doc. 14.2](#) on *Selection of new species/country combinations for review following CoP19* as part of the Review of Significant Trade

process that included an analysis of trade data relevant to Saiga. The Animals Committee invited the CITES Secretariat to convey to the Standing Committee concerns relating to the re-export of *Saiga* spp. when there is a zero export quota for wild specimens traded for commercial purposes, the possible incorrect use of purpose code M (Medical) and to follow up with Ukraine on its use of source code U (source unknown) for trade in *Saiga tatarica*.

#### *77th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee*

9. The Secretariat presented document [SC77 Doc. 65](#) on *Saiga antelopes* (*Saiga spp.*) to SC77, which reported responses from range States of saiga antelope and consumer and trading countries or regions of saiga parts and derivatives on measures and activities undertaken to implement the Medium-Term International Work Programme for the Saiga Antelope for 2021-2025 during the period 2021-2025 including establishment of internal market controls for saiga parts as directed in Decision 19.213, paragraphs a) and b). The information received from Kazakhstan, Japan, Malaysia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam were presented in the document.
10. SC77 also reviewed the information provided by the CITES Secretariat on the exports of specimens of source code U and recommended that range States of the saiga antelope (*Saiga spp.*) and important consumer and trading countries and regions of saiga parts and derivatives refer to Resolution Conf. 18.7 (Rev. CoP19) on *Legal acquisition findings* when verifying the origin of specimens and only use source code “U” in accordance with the provisions of Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP19) on *Permits and certificates*.
11. The Standing Committee noted the concerns relating to the potential impact of application of source code “U” on saiga antelope and invited Parties to submit a document in this regard for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its 20th meeting, as appropriate, and reminded Parties to use the Guide to the application of CITES sources codes when applying source code “U”.

#### *78th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee*

12. At SC78, the Committee considered document [SC78 Doc. 68.1](#) submitted by Kazakhstan and [SC78 Doc. 68.2 \(Rev. 1\)](#) submitted by the Secretariat on *Saiga antelopes* (*Saiga spp.*). The Standing Committee also considered document [SC78 Doc. 53](#) on *Stocks and stockpiles*, including a summary of the information provided by Parties on the management of saiga stockpiles.
13. The Committee encouraged range States of saiga antelopes and important consumer and trading countries of saiga parts and derivatives to put in place measures to effectively manage saiga specimen in stockpiles. The Committee furthermore invited the Secretariat to issue a Notification to the Parties to seek information on stockpile controls and other information concerning the management of and trade in saiga specimens to help inform the preparation of documents to be considered at the 20th meeting of the Conference of Parties to CITES.

14. In addition, the Committee noted the concerns expressed by Kazakhstan and Russian Federation relating to the use of source codes U and O for saiga specimens due to challenges linked to the making of legal acquisition findings.
15. Given that the fifth meeting of the CMS Saiga MOU signatories (MOS5) is planned for March 2025 in Astana, Kazakhstan, the Committee invited the CITES Secretariat to submit draft decisions on saiga antelopes based on outcomes of MOS5, the status of implementation of Decisions 19.213 to 19.217 and the outcomes of the discussions at SC78 to ensure synergy between CITES and CMS and the joint CMS-CITES work programme to the 20th meeting of the Conference of Parties

### **International trade in specimens of Saiga spp.**

#### *Information on international trade in specimens of saiga antelope: Legal trade*

16. The CITES Secretariat queried the CITES Trade Database on 5 November 2024 for international trade in specimens of saiga antelope between 2016 and 2022 as reported by Parties. The following sections summarizes the outcome of the query.
17. The majority of the recorded trade between 2016 and 2022 are of *Saiga tatarica* (488 shipments) with a few shipments of *S. borealis* (3 shipments). The trade in *S. borealis* consists of one shipment of seized/confiscated (source code I) specimens for personal purposes in 2017 and two shipments of wild-sourced (source code W) specimens for medicinal purposes in 2018.
18. The *S. tatarica* records were examined and records with source code I and purpose code S were excluded to focus on commercial trade of saiga antelopes and its parts and derivatives. The number of shipments of *S. tatarica* trade records have decreased over the seven-year period (see Figure 1). As *Saiga* spp. are included in Appendix II, Parties are not obliged to issue or report on import permits. However, several importing Parties do issue import permits (as a stricter domestic measure) and report on these in their annual reports.

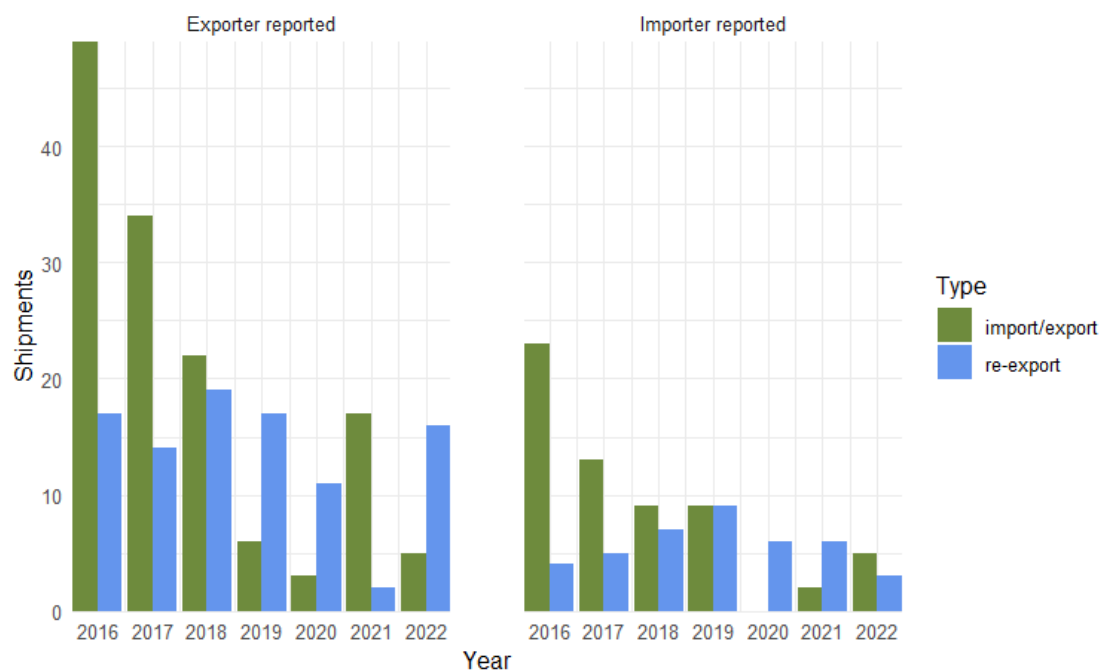


Figure 1. Number of shipments reported by exporters and importers between 2016 and 2022 shown by type of trade (import/export or re-export).

19. Since the adoption of the annotation on *Saiga* spp. at CoP18 of a zero export quota for wild specimens traded for commercial purposes, there has been a decline in export/import of saiga and the trade has been exclusively in source codes “O” and “C” (Figure 2). The majority of the export in 2021 consists of small shipments of medicine exported from Japan to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China under source code “O”. For 2022, all reported export of saiga specimens (skulls, horns and skins) are of source code “C” from Ukraine to China and Japan.
  
20. The majority of the re-exports of saiga products in 2021 reported were of source code “W” horns from Singapore to Japan, originally from Kazakhstan. In addition, Hong Kong SAR of China reported importing source code “O” horn medicine from Japan, originally from either Hong Kong SAR of China or unknown origin. The majority of the re-export in 2022 consists of small shipments of medicine re-exported from Japan to Hong Kong SAR of China but with an unknown original country and source code “O”.



Figure 2. Number of shipments reported by exporters and importers between 2016 and 2022 shown by type of trade (import/export or re-export) and colour-coded by source code.

21. When examining the terms used and specimens reported in weight of trade in *S. tatarica* over the seven-year period, the majority are of horn and smaller quantities of medicine (Figure 3). The horn exported and imported in 2021 is of source code “U” and the Standing Committee may recall that this was considered at SC77 (see summary record [SC77 SR](#)). Source code “U” seems to have been used by Ukraine to reflect the various sources of the specimens concerned, which might have included specimens imported from different places within the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics before 1990. The Secretariat noted that the use of source code “U” in these export permits does not seem to meet the requirements of Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP19) on *Permits and certificates*.

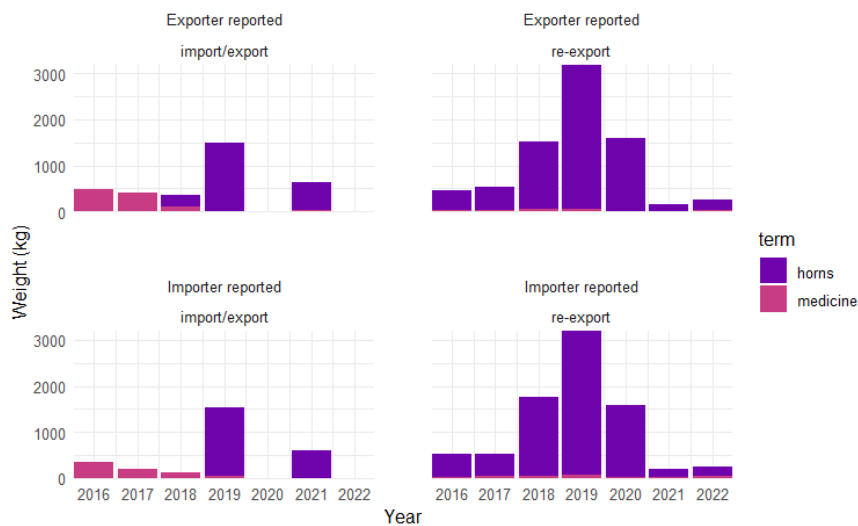


Figure 3. Weight of shipments reported by exporters and importers between 2016 and 2022 shown by type of trade (import/export or re-export) and colour-coded by type of specimen.

*Information on trade in specimens of saiga antelope: Illegal trade*

22. Records for *S. tatarica* and *S. borealis* seizures in the [CITES Illegal Trade Database](#) were queried for the period between 2016 and 2022 on 19 November 2024. A total of 523

records with four records of *S. borealis* seizures, 516 records of *S. tatarica* and three seizures at the genus level reported by 21 Parties are included in the database.

23. The decreasing trend in the number of seizures between 2016 and 2020 has stabilized with similar number of seizures in 2021 and 2022 (see Figure 4). The decreasing trend in seizures is maintained despite an increasing submission of annual illegal trade reports by saiga range States in the recent years: Mongolia has reported for the years 2016 – 2018, Uzbekistan for the years 2016 – 2020 and 2022, Kazakhstan for the years 2020 – 2022 and the Russian Federation for the year 2022.

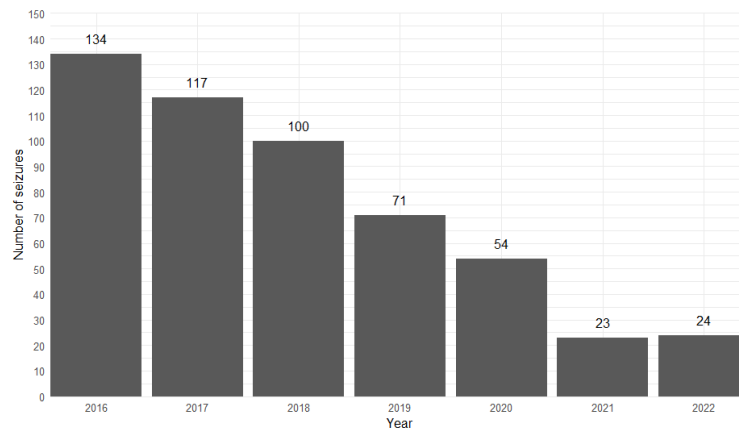


Figure 4. Number of *Saiga* spp. specimen seizures between 2016 and 2022 as reported in CITES annual illegal trade reports.

24. The majority of the seizures are reported by New Zealand and the United States of America, followed by the Netherlands. The decline in seizures over time is due to less saiga-related products being seized by these three countries in 2021-2022 (see Figure 5).

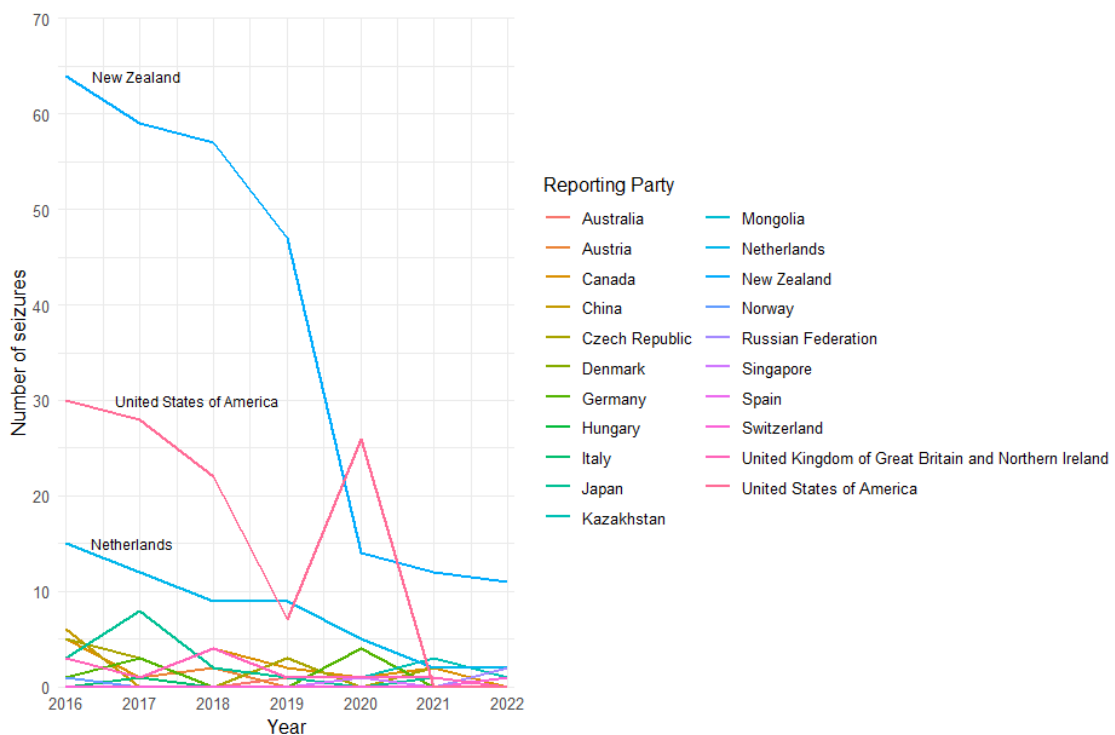


Figure 5. Number of *Saiga* spp. specimen seizures between 2016 and 2022 by reporting Party.

25. The majority of the seizures continues to be of medicine (477 records), followed by a small number of seizures of horn (22 records), extracts (8 records) and powder (8 records) [Figure 6]. Medicine is reported in a number of different ways: as bottles, boxes, grams, kilograms, litres, numbers, pills and packages. The majority of medicine is reported in numbers (433 records), followed by kilograms (19 records) and boxes (13 records).

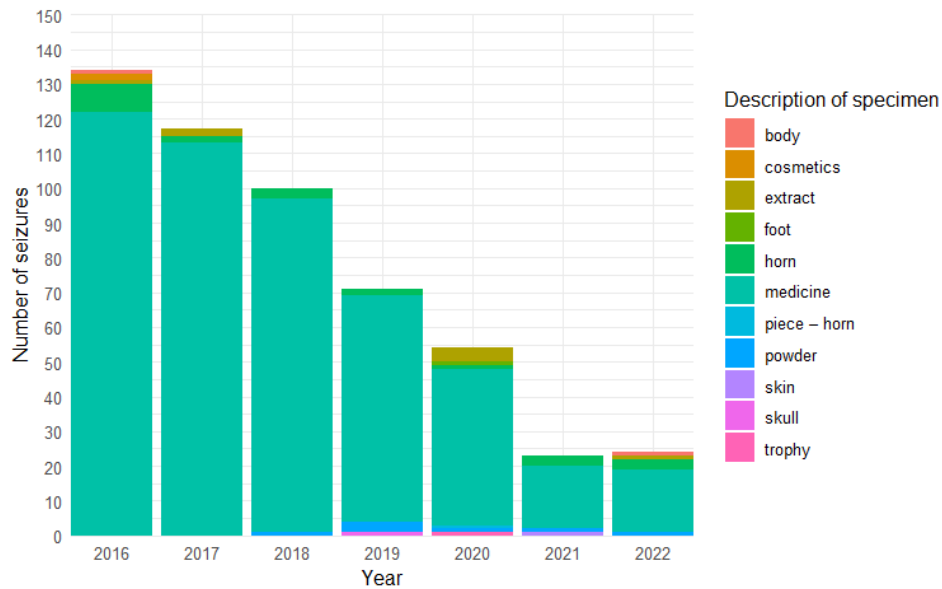


Figure 6. Number of *Saiga* spp. seizures between 2016 and 2022 coloured by specimen type as reported in annual illegal trade reports.

26. The detecting agency of the seizures has changed over the period from 2016 to 2022. Customs and border agencies continue to be the main detecting agencies, but wildlife agencies' role in seizures is also notable (Figure 7). The reported reason for seizure is “No CITES permit” for 376 shipments and “Other” for one shipment. The remaining seizure records did not have any information on the reason for seizure.

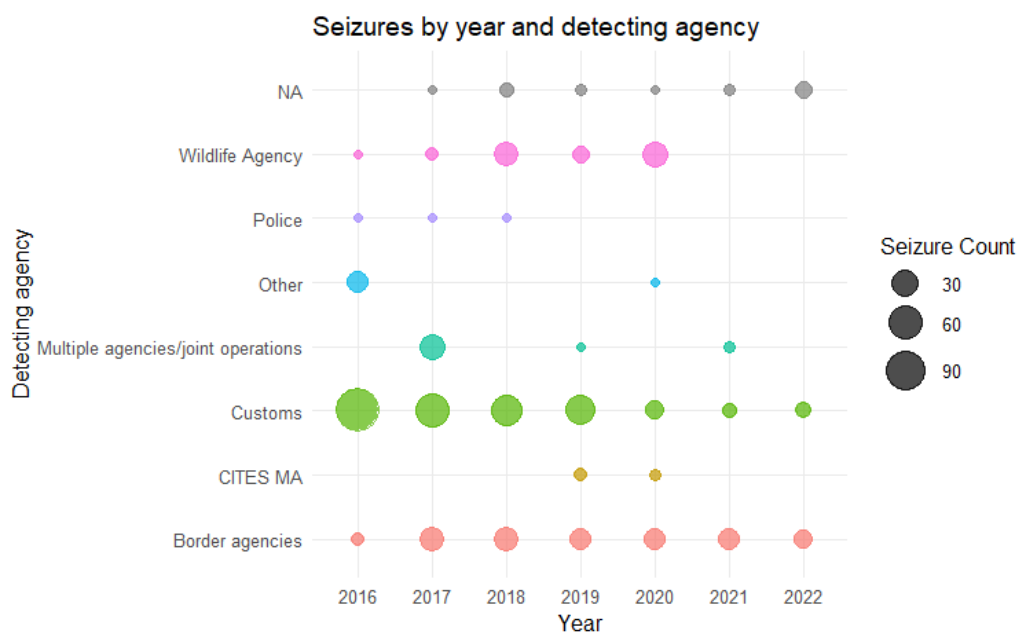


Figure 7. Number of *Saiga* spp. seizures between 2016 and 2022 shown by the detecting agency as reported in annual illegal trade reports.

27. The reported mode of transportation of the seized products has also changed over the period (Figure 8). “Air” was the most common mode of transport until 2020 (327 seizures total between 2016 and 2022) and this decline is tied to the smaller number of seizures made by New Zealand in years 2020, 2021 and 2022. The number of seizures of products moved by “mail” (67 seizures) has stayed stable over the years with a low number of seizures of products moved by “road” (7 seizures) and “maritime” (7 seizures).

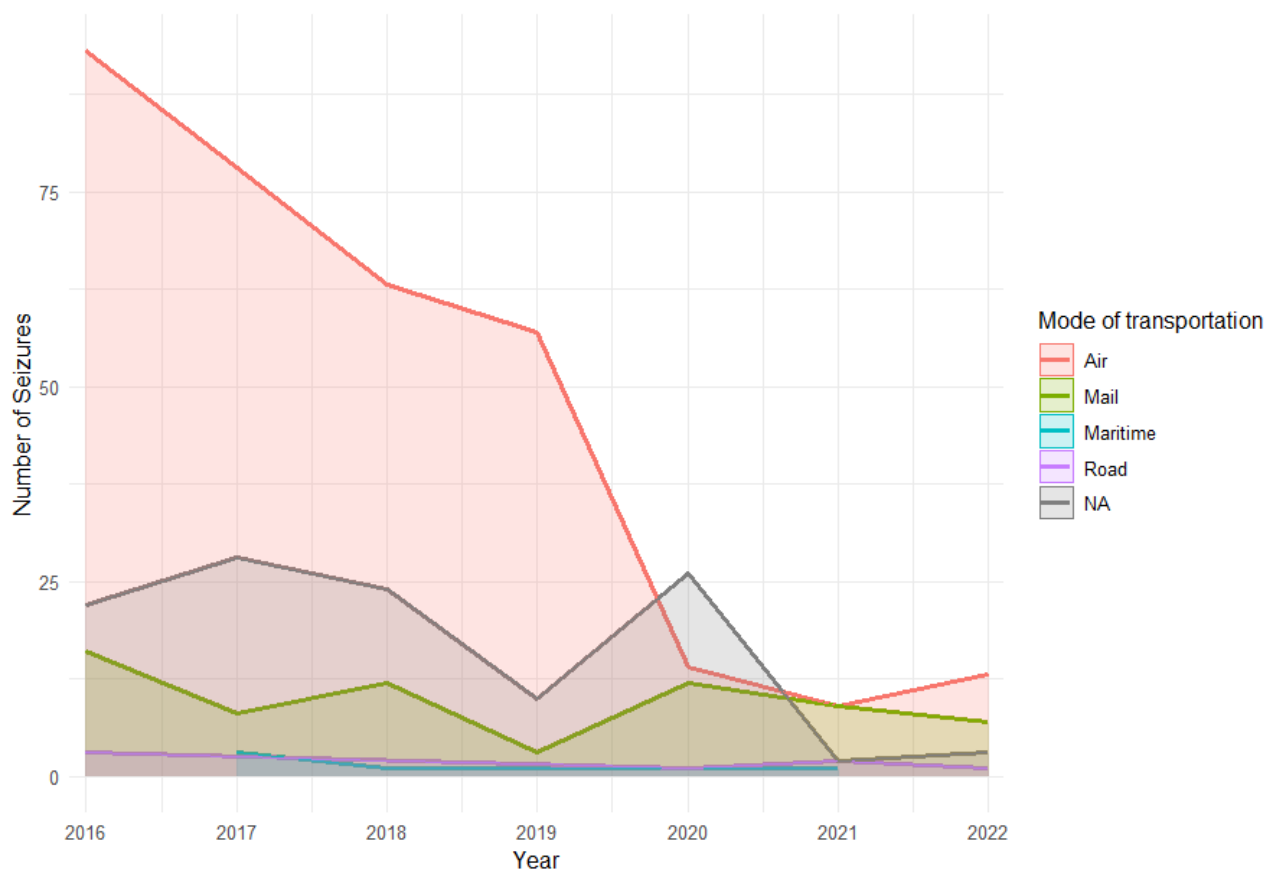


Figure 8. Number of *Saiga* spp. seizures between 2016 and 2022 shown by the standardized mode of transportation as reported in annual illegal trade reports.

### **Stockpile management guidance**

28. In accordance with CITES Decisions 17.171 and 17.172, the Secretariat developed practical guidance on the management of ivory stockpiles, including disposal, entitled [“Ensuring effective stockpile management”](#) (attached as Annex 2 in English and Russian).

29. The guidance includes a checklist to assess the status of stockpile management at the national level including legal framework, institutional mandate/responsibilities, capacity for management, financial mechanism. These aspects may be helpful in management of potential stockpiles of saiga antelope specimens.

30. As mentioned above in paragraph 13, the CITES Standing Committee discussed *Stocks and Stockpiles* and agreed the following definition of stockpiles for consideration at the

20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES for inclusion in the [CITES Glossary](#):

*'Stockpiles' refer to any quantity of legally stored dead specimens, including parts and derivatives, of CITES-listed species held by public or private entities. Specimens included in permanent collections held by scientific institutions for non-commercial purposes or by individuals as personal or household effects, as well as seized or confiscated specimens still under an enforcement procedure, are excluded from the definition. In general, provisions related to stockpiles in CITES Resolutions and Decisions are intended to ensure that these are secured, managed and disposed of in such a way that the specimens would not enter or re-enter illegal trade and for specimens of species listed in Appendix I not to be used commercially.*

31. The Committee encouraged Parties to use the [Practical Guidance](#) and [Ensuring Effective Stockpile Management: A Guidance Document](#) (attached as Annex 2) as needed for the management of stockpiles of rhino horn, elephant ivory, pangolin scales and saiga horn, as well as stockpiles of other species where the guidance can be applied and provide feedback to the CITES Secretariat on the use of the guidance.

## ANNEX

Decisions on Saiga antelope (Saiga spp.)adopted at the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES**19.213 Directed to range States of saiga antelope (Saiga spp.) (Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), and important consumer and trading countries of saiga parts and derivatives**

- a) *The range States of the saiga antelope (Saiga spp.) and important consumer and trading countries of saiga parts and derivatives, as identified by the Secretariat on the basis of CITES trade data, should fully implement the measures directed to them in the Medium-Term International Work Programme for the Saiga Antelope for 2021-2025 [MTIWP (2021-2025)], developed in support of the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (Saiga spp.) and its Saiga Action Plan; and*
- b) *Consistent with the measures directed to saiga range States in MTIWP (2021-2025), the range States of the saiga antelope are encouraged to establish internal market controls for saiga parts, including registration of stockpiles, labelling of parts and products, and registration of manufacturers and traders, and report such information to the CITES Secretariat.*

**19.214 Directed to the Secretariat***Subject to the availability of external resources, the Secretariat shall:*

- a) *review, in consultation with the CMS Secretariat, the conservation of and trade in saiga antelope, Saiga spp., based on available data on legal and illegal trade, materials and outcomes of the fourth meeting of Saiga MOU signatories, and stakeholder consultations, and report any consequent findings and recommendations to the Animals Committee, and to the Standing Committee in the context of the implementation of Resolution Conf. 13.3 on Cooperation and synergy with the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and the Joint CMS-CITES work programme;*
- b) *consult saiga range States and major trading and consumer States concerning their management of stockpiles of saiga specimens; review processes and practices; and provide assistance in ensuring effective stockpile management and monitoring, including the development of inventories and strengthening stockpile security;*
- c) *provide training to strengthen cross-border cooperation in CITES implementation, identification of saiga products and techniques for countering illegal trade; and*
- d) *report to the Animals Committee and Standing Committee on the implementation of this Decision, as appropriate.*

**19.215 Directed to the Animals Committee***The Animals Committee shall, as appropriate, consider any findings and recommendations submitted by the Secretariat in accordance with Decision 19.214, and make recommendations to the Standing Committee.*

**19.216 Directed to the Standing Committee**

*The Standing Committee shall, as appropriate, consider any findings and recommendations submitted by the Animals Committee and the Secretariat in accordance with Decisions 19.214 and 19.215, and make recommendations as necessary.*

**19.217 Directed to saiga antelope range States, Parties, multilateral environmental agreements, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders**

*Saiga antelope range States, Parties, multilateral environmental agreements, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders are encouraged to collaborate in the conservation and restoration of the saiga antelope (Saiga spp.), and to support the implementation of MTIWP (2021-2025) as well as the technical coordination of the Saiga MOU.*