

Preparing for the 19th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES

What is CITES?

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) entered into force in 1975, and is the only treaty aimed at ensuring that international trade in plants and animals does not threaten their survival in the wild. CITES is an international agreement to which countries and regional economic integration organizations adhere voluntarily. A country that has agreed to implement CITES is called a Party to CITES. The United States was the first country to become a Party to CITES. Currently there are 184 Parties – 183 countries, including the United States, and the European Union, a regional economic integration organization.

CITES is supported by a Secretariat, which is administered through the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The Secretariat is located in Geneva, Switzerland, and its responsibilities include:

1. Playing a coordinating, advisory, and servicing role in the working of CITES
2. Assisting with communication and monitoring CITES implementation
3. Distributing information relevant to several or all Parties
4. Contracting scientific and technical studies into issues affecting the implementation of CITES
5. Informing governments and the public about developments related to CITES
6. Investigating possible CITES violations and trade threats to wildlife
7. Organizing meetings of the Conference of the Parties and of the permanent Committees and servicing them

How are species protected by CITES?

Species protected by CITES are included in one of three appendices.

Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction and provides the greatest level of protection, including restrictions



The elephant-shaped CITES logo was first used at CoP3 in 1981. The original version, a simple black and white design, has since evolved to include species protected by CITES

on commercial trade. Examples of species listed in Appendix I include gorilla, African grey parrots, all sea turtle species, and most lady slipper orchids.

Appendix II includes species that, although not necessarily threatened with extinction, may become so without trade controls. Most CITES species are included in this appendix, including African lion, paddlefish, American ginseng, and stony corals.

Appendix III includes species protected by at least one country, which has asked the assistance of other Parties to regulate trade. Examples of species listed in Appendix III include walrus, king vulture, map turtles, and Cape stag beetles.

Amendments to Appendices I and II must be proposed at a meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP) and agreed to by a two-thirds majority of the Parties present and voting at the CoP. Amendments to Appendix III may be requested by a party at any time.

What is the purpose of a CoP?

The Parties meet every two to three years at a CoP. During the 2-week meeting, they review and vote on:

1. Proposed resolutions and decisions to improve the effectiveness of CITES
2. Amendments to Appendices I and II

They also work to resolve policy and implementation issues. Participants at a CoP include delegations from the Parties, approved non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations (NGOs and IGOs), industry representatives and technical experts, who attend as observers. Observers may participate in the discussions but may not vote.

How is the United States preparing for CoP19?

The 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP19) will be held November 14-25, 2022, in Panama City, Panama. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), as the lead for CITES implementation in the United States, began its preparations for CoP19 more than a year ago, initiating a robust public engagement process that involves a series of Federal Register notices, website postings, at least one public meeting, and consultations with other U.S. government agencies, foreign government agencies, experts, industry stakeholders, non-governmental organizations, and others.

The Service examines international trade and biological data to identify species that may warrant protection under CITES or a change in their protection status under CITES. Through its public engagement process, the Service solicits recommendations on potential species proposals to amend the CITES Appendices and proposed resolutions, decisions, and agenda items the United States will consider submitting for consideration to the CoP. The Service then prepares formal documents and negotiating positions for consideration of the Conference of the Parties and will submit all documents 150 days before the start of CoP19 (i.e., June 17, 2022).

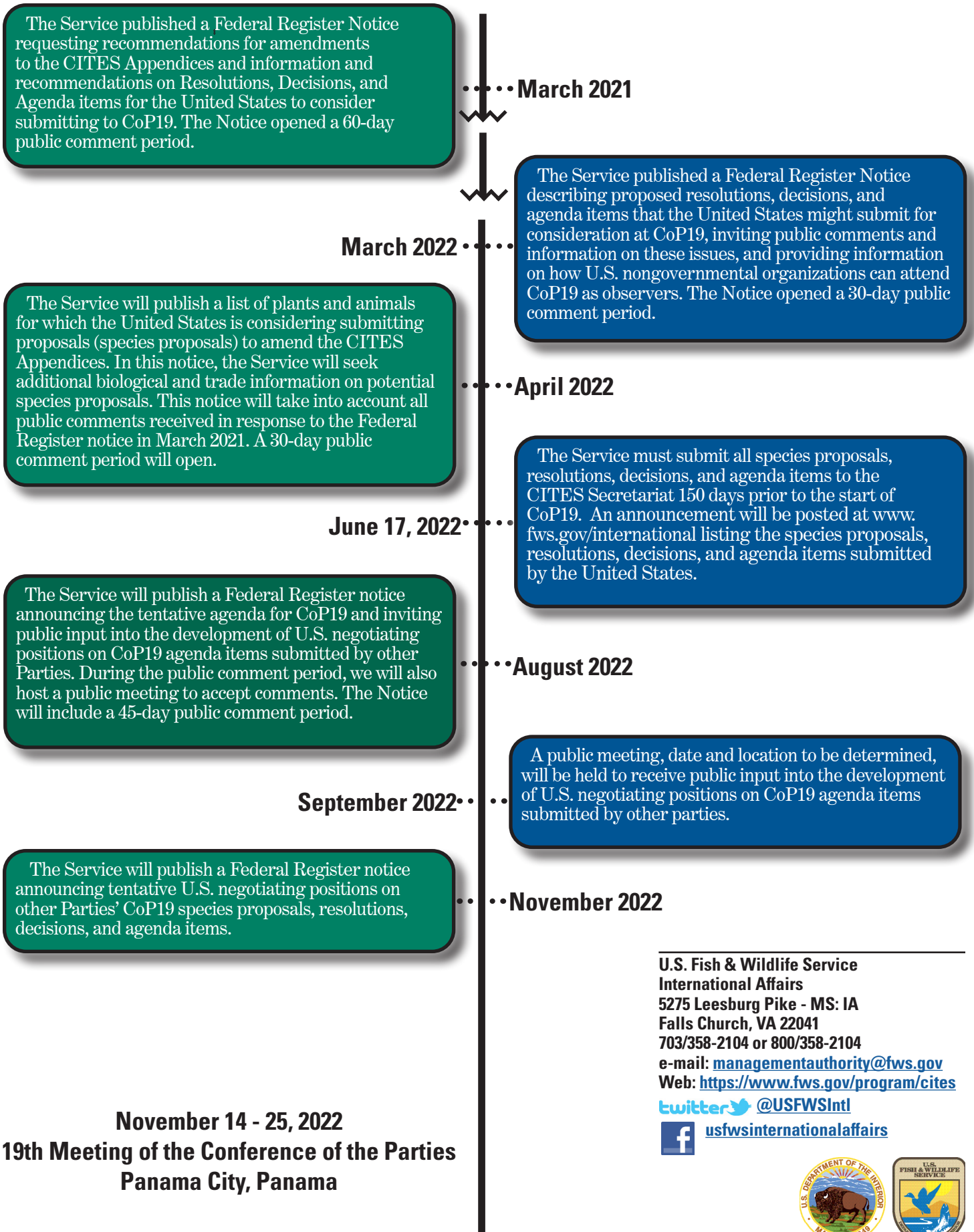


Yulia Kapetankos/USFWS

Delegations from the Parties meet at CoP18

How does the public provide input for the United States to consider in drafting its submissions and negotiating positions for CoP19?

The Service solicits public input through a series of announcements, including Federal Register notices, website postings, and public meetings. Details on how to submit public comments are contained in each Federal Register notice. A tentative timeline for CoP19 preparations is:



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