

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Nineteenth meeting of the Animals Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 18-21 August 2003

Regional reports

NORTH AMERICA

1. As this report was submitted after the deadline, it will be provided in its original language (English) only.
2. This report has been prepared by Rodrigo A. Medellín, the regional representative for North America, in consultation with Bertrand von Arx, Veronique Brondex, Hesiquio Benitez, Jorge Alvarez-Romero and Kurt Johnson, of the CITES Scientific Authorities of Canada, Mexico, and the United States of America respectively.

General information

3. Member: Dr Rodrigo A. Medellín (Mexico)

Alternate: Dr Kurt Johnson (United States of America)

Number of Parties in North America: three

Number of Parties responding to communications since AC18: three.

Follow-up on agenda items since the 18th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC18, San José, April 2002) and the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP12, Santiago, 2002).

4. The United States of America sent a five-person delegation to AC18. The interagency U.S. delegation included three representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and two from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Dr Johnson, from the USFWS, served as regional representative for North America until his term expired at CoP12. He continues as alternate regional representative during the inter-sessional period between CoP12 and CoP13.
5. With regard to the periodic review of animal species included in the Appendices, the population surveys for two Mexican species continues: *Ambystoma mexicanum* and *Dermatemys mawii*. It is expected that a final report will be submitted at AC20. Both studies have been coordinated and funded by CONABIO (Mexico's Scientific Authority).
6. Dr. Johnson chaired an AC working group on review of animal taxa in the Appendices. The group worked on the development of guidelines for conducting reviews (including determining priorities for selecting taxa for review), and monitored progress on individual taxon reviews being conducted by other Parties or organizations. The United States of America prepared a review – *Cnemidophorus*

hyperythrus, a species native to the United States – and concluded that the species warranted removal from Appendix II. The United States of America subsequently prepared an amendment proposal to remove the species from Appendix II, which was adopted at CoP12.

7. The United States of America continued to participate actively in the ongoing Review of Significant Trade. It provided funds, through the U.S. State Department's voluntary contribution to the CITES Trust Fund, for the review of five chelonian species as part of Phase IV of the review, and continued to facilitate the ongoing review of species in Phase IV, including: final categorization and recommendations for the paddlefish (*Polyodon spathula*), lake sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*), musk deer (*Moschus* spp.), and cobra (*Naja naja*); consideration of four remaining sturgeon taxa [Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus*); white sturgeon (*A. transmontanus*); Persian sturgeon (*A. persicus*); and shovelnose sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus platyrhynchus*)]; and consideration of the five chelonian species for which it provided funding [the South Asian box turtle (*Cuora amboinensis*); yellow-marginated box turtle (*C. flavomarginata*); Indochinese box turtle (*C. galbinofrons*); Indian flapshell turtle (*Lissemys punctata*); and flat-tailed spider tortoise (*Pyxis planicauda*)]. The United States of America responded with regard to the review of the queen conch (*Strombus gigas*) for Phase V which was initiated by the Parties. It also encouraged the AC to provide funding for the first country-based review of significant trade (Madagascar). Dr Johnson reviewed the terms of reference for the contract for that project.
8. The United States of America continued to participate in the working group on seahorses and other syngnathids. This working group was tasked with implementing Decisions 11.153 and 11.97, regarding the analysis of biological and trade data on these taxa. The United States of America provided financial support, through the U.S. State Department's voluntary contribution to the CITES Trust Fund and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), for the technical workshop on syngnathid trade held in the Philippines in May 2002. A representative of the USFWS participated in the workshop, and the United States reviewed the summary report and recommendations. This activity subsequently resulted in the United States of America's preparation and submission of a proposal to list seahorses of the genus *Hippocampus* in Appendix II of CITES. That proposal was adopted at CoP12. Since then the United States of America has been working to address a number of implementation issues associated with this listing.
9. Regarding the 'Guidelines for a procedure to register and monitor operations that breed Appendix-I animal species for commercial purposes', the United States of America continued to participate in the AC task of compiling a list of Appendix-I species that are critically endangered in the wild and/or known to be difficult to breed or keep in captivity, as directed in Decision 11.101. At AC18, the IUCN Crocodile Specialist Group (CSG) presented its report on the pilot project to compile three alternative lists of Appendix-I species that are considered difficult to keep or breed in captivity. The CSG found that these lists would not differ significantly from the list of all reptile species currently listed in Appendix I. At AC18, the United States of America participated in the working group established to discuss issues contained in the CSG report. The focus was on how to determine which Appendix-I species are "critically endangered in the wild and/or difficult to breed or keep in captivity". Due to lack of consensus among working group members, it was agreed that further work was needed at CoP12 on Resolution Conf. 11.14 and procedures pertaining to the registration of operations that breed Appendix-I animal species for commercial purposes.
10. The United States of America was an active participant in the AC *ad hoc* Coral Working Group, which was working on several issues concerning the stony coral trade, such as characterizing exempt fossil corals and identifying taxa that cannot be recognized easily at the species level. At AC18, the United States of America submitted a report on coral production systems that noted a lack of agreement on marking systems to distinguish cultured from wild corals. The working group at AC18 noted little or no agreement or understanding on the proper and consistent application of CITES source codes for cultured corals, and proposed a series of source codes. The group also considered techniques and marking systems to distinguish cultured from wild-taken corals, and called for an ecosystem approach to the management of corals harvested for export. It also addressed: the use of the appropriate CITES treaty articles in making non-detriment findings; recognition of coral at either the species or genus level; taxonomic reference to corals; identification guides; distinguishing fossilized from non-fossilized corals; and synergy with other initiatives and agreements.

11. Mexico's Scientific Authority, in conjunction with the Management Authority and with the aid of experts, is gathering all available information on the fisheries, population status, and commercial trade of sea cucumbers, particularly that of *Isostichopus fuscus*, to make a contribution on this issue at AC20.

Relevant CITES implementation issues in the region

12. The 'CITES Identification Guide - Hunting Trophies' was published by the Environment Canada, the Canadian Management Authority, in collaboration with the CITES Secretariat, CONABIO and Safari Club International. The guide continues with the same principle as the other easy-to-use guides, and is designed to help front-line staff to control effectively transborder movement of specimens.
13. Canada has continued to work on the improvement of the management of several marine and/or fish species including sturgeons. Meetings have been organized to bring together all responsible government agencies at provincial and national levels. Discussions are ongoing about levels of quotas and concrete measure for a better conservation of the species. Canada has sent to the Secretariat a letter inquiring about the criteria used to assess information provided by Canada about the management of the lake sturgeon in the Review of Significant Trade. Canada has also provided explanations about discrepancies in amounts exported of the Atlantic sturgeon. Canada is expecting an official reply soon from the Secretariat in order to get guidance on how to continue its work to improve the situation of those species.
14. In March 2003, an independent panel of bear experts in British Columbia (BC) released its report about the evaluation of the management of *Ursus arctos* in BC. The report recognizes the good work done by the Government of the Province. Weaknesses have nevertheless been highlighted and the BC Minister of Environment, Mr Murray, has announced that these will be addressed shortly. A major outcome of the report was the recognition that the estimates by the province of the number of specimens of *Ursus arctos* in BC are scientifically sound and accurate enough given the difficulties such as the size of the province or the elusiveness of the species. It also clearly stated that very low estimates provided by certain NGOs cannot be regarded as realistic. Following the report and the commitment of the Government of the Province to take action to implement the recommendations, the national Scientific Authority has confirmed the non-detriment findings regarding the export of hunting trophies of grizzlies from BC.
15. Regarding operations that breed Appendix-I animal species for commercial purposes, nine facilities have been registered in 2003 in Canada (breeding *Falco ruficolus* and *Falco peregrinus* and *Tragopan caboti*). New procedures have been established to improve the efficiency of the registration for the operators and the Scientific Authority.

Activities conducted in the framework of Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP12)

16. Change in staff (Canada): The head of the Scientific Authority (Bertrand von Arx) resigned from his position at the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) on 20 June 2003. Véronique Brondex, Scientific Adviser, will now coordinate animal issues at the Scientific Authority's Office at CWS in Gatineau-Hull, Ottawa (see the Annex to this document).

Capacity-building activities

17. Mexico's Scientific Authority has been conducting seminars for different audiences in various States of the country in order to improve the general understanding of CITES.
18. Mexico's Enforcement Authority (PROFEPA) and CONABIO are promoting an exhibition at Mexico City's international airport in August 2003, the purpose of which is to inform visitors and raise awareness regarding CITES and other related issues.
19. Technical Workshop on Trade in Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises: CITES Decision 11.150, adopted at CoP11, directed the Secretariat, subject to available funds, to convene a technical workshop in order to establish conservation priorities and actions to achieve sustainable trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles. The United States of America, along with the Governments of several other

countries and several NGOs, provided financial support to organize the workshop. It was held on 25-28 March 2002 in Kunming, China. Bruce Weissgold of the USFWS represented the United States of America at the workshop, while Dr. Johnson participated as the regional representative for North America.

20. The objectives of the workshop were to establish conservation priorities and actions to achieve sustainable use of tortoises and freshwater turtles subject to trade; consider specific actions to follow up on the implementation of recommendations elaborated at the Workshop on Trade in Terrestrial and Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises in Asia (Cambodia, December 1999); and formulate findings and recommendations for reporting to the AC prior to CoP12. During the workshop, general overviews on the trade in and conservation status of tortoises and freshwater turtles in Asia, national and regional reports, and contributions from NGOs were presented. Working groups were tasked with formulating recommendations on specific actions and conservation priorities concerning enforcement and trade controls, management and CITES implementation, and capacity-building needs and activities. As required under Decision 11.150, the Secretariat reported the findings and recommendations of the workshop at AC18. Recommendations resulting from the workshop were instrumental in prompting the preparation of 11 amendment proposals, covering 22 taxa, all of which were adopted at CoP12.
21. Major developments have been made on the Canadian CITES website (www.cites.ca). The description of the whole process of the preparation for CoP12 was posted, as well as positions and other useful documents for the preparation of CoP12. Soon new information will be provided about CoP13, such as the calendar and important deadlines. Also a database of the 'Control List' of all CITES-listed species is now available with more extensive lists, such as all Canadian-listed species with all taxa included and level of risk assessed by the Committee on the status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). Many other features are available about the implementation of CITES in Canada, such as permits and possible exemptions.

Other topics related to CITES and animal species

22. A population study for the lilac-crowned parrot (*Amazona finschi*) was concluded in Mexico. The final report provides information about the current distribution, habitat availability, and population status in Mexico, as well as data on trade. A report will be submitted by Mexico for consideration at AC20.
23. A second population survey to evaluate the status of wild populations of *Crocodylus moreletti* in Mexico will start this year. A report with the results of this study should be available at AC20.
24. These two projects have been supported and coordinated by CONABIO.

Work to be done by AC20

25. Canada will continue its work on non-detriment findings. A new system for targeting the priority species has been put in place. Non-detriment findings will now be made or updated for those species and later for all the remaining ones.
26. With regard to the review of the criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II, Canada has started a process in which it will review a small number of Canadian CITES-listed and non-listed species against the criteria, as described in Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP12). Special emphasis will be put on marine and/or fish species.

Canada CITES Directory 2003

The Management and Scientific Authorities at the *Canadian Wildlife Service* (Environment Canada) have the overall responsibility of the implementation of the Convention in Canada. However, there are also other Federal departments involved, such as:

- the *Department of Fisheries and Oceans* (DFO) for marine species and fish;
- the *Canadian Forest Service* (NRC-CFS) for trees / timber;
- the *Canadian Customs and Revenue Agency* (CCRA);
- the *Canadian Food Inspection Agency* (CFIA)
- the *Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade* (DFAIT).

Also 12 of the 13 Provinces or Territories have their own designated MAs and SAs. However, in any case, CWS should be contacted at the numbers and addresses below under *general information* and CWS will forward any message. When sending email, please use cites@ec.gc.ca

Management Authority

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Mexico CITES Directory 2003

Management Authority

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Scientific technical advisors

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Animals

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