



EXPERTS' REVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL TO LIST HUMPHHEAD WRASSE (*Cheilinus undulatus*) IN APPENDIX II

This document has been submitted by Fiji, Ireland on behalf of the 25 member states of the European Union, and the United States as proponents of COP13 Proposal 33.

In July 2004, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) convened an ad hoc Expert Advisory Panel of fisheries scientists and other experts to review COP13 proposals to list various marine species in the CITES Appendices. This was done in accordance with Article XV of the Convention, which for marine species, directs the Secretariat to “consult inter-governmental bodies having a function in relation to those species especially with a view to obtaining scientific data these bodies may be able to provide”.

The FAO ad hoc Expert Advisory Panel concluded that the available evidence supports the inclusion of humphead wrasse on CITES Appendix II based on criterion 2a (B) and possibly on 2a (A) of Res. Conf. 9.24.

This conclusion is based on the following facts, copied directly from the FAO report (CoP13 Inf. 36):

- *Its high vulnerability, low productivity and evidence of widespread and serious impacts of exploitation throughout most of the range of the species.*
- *Humphead wrasse is a low productivity species with fragmented distribution that, owing to its large size and sedentary nature, is highly vulnerable to the method of fishing used to capture individuals of the species. Consequently, populations can be easily depleted at even medium fishing intensities.*
- *It is among the most vulnerable species, if not the most vulnerable in the reef fish assemblage of which it is a part. There is convincing evidence that there have been substantial declines in local abundance at numerous points within its range leading to the inferred conclusion that depletion is a widespread phenomenon.*
- *There is also convincing evidence of trade-driven exploitation that has expanded over the past three decades to cover most of the species range.*
- *Owing to the high value of the species in the live reef food fish markets, trade is considered to be a significant factor in the depletion of this species. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that humphead wrasse are also exploited for local consumption in most range countries.*
- *The Panel concluded that regulation of trade as a result of CITES listing could make a significant contribution to the conservation of this species. A CITES listing alone would not provide a complete solution to the conservation problems for this species. Therefore strengthening of regional and national management of the live reef food fish trade and domestic fisheries is also necessary to ensure protection of the humphead wrasse.*

For more detail on this analysis, please see the full FAO report in COP13 Inf. 36.