



CITES ANIMALS COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 14 DECEMBER 2000

On Thursday, delegates met in a morning Plenary to consider captive breeding, caviar labelling and freshwater turtles and tortoises. The Committee reconvened in the evening to discuss sharks, Black Sea bottlenose dolphin and trade in alien species. The afternoon was dedicated to working groups in which the following topics were discussed: captive breeding registration and monitoring, and the relationship between *ex-situ* breeding operations and *in-situ* conservation programmes; significant trade review; caviar labelling; freshwater turtles and tortoises; hard corals; time-sensitive research samples; and seahorses.

PLENARY

TRADE IN ALIEN SPECIES: Regarding trade in alien invasive species (AC.16.14.1/2), the Secretariat stressed the need to cooperate with the IUCN/SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG) and the CBD to minimize impacts on biodiversity from invasive species. Oceania, with Spain, North America, the EU and the US, supported developing a list of CITES invasives and efforts to maximize synergies with ISSG and the CBD. The Secretariat asked the ISSG Programme Officer to cross-check IUCN's list with CITES species, and said it would incorporate information from the Global Invasive Species Programme website. The Chair supported Chile's proposal to list monk parakeets on the list of invasives. The Dominican Republic said invasives are of great concern to his country, especially pet species, such as iguanas. Israel, with North America, suggested

collaborating with the Plants Committee on this issue. The Chair established an intersessional working group to communicate by email. The group will be chaired by Oceania.

CAPTIVE BREEDING: The Secretariat introduced Parties' responses to notification on the registration and monitoring of animal species bred in captivity (AC.16.9.1). The document notes that the registration process for Appendix I captive breeding programmes is required by the Secretariat for species which are critically endangered in the wild and/or difficult to keep or breed in captivity. All other species are to be registered by the Parties themselves. The Secretariat recommended concentrating on species that meet all three criteria and focusing registration on those species where there is a conservation impact as a result of breeding for commercial purposes.

Many delegates, including North America, China, Costa Rica, the US, Israel and others, noted a lack of clear criteria to define critically endangered in the wild and difficult to breed or keep in captivity. Germany stressed the need to further discuss criteria as a high priority and suggested setting up a working group on this issue. India noted that the effects of illegal trade should be taken into consideration when defining critically endangered. Mexico underlined the need for each State to evaluate their own species populations and, supported by the National University of Costa Rica and the IWC, said the Committee should not use IUCN's criteria for critical endangerment because it assesses species on a global and not national level. IUCN confirmed that its classification system lists species at the global level, and in some cases, also at the national level. The Humane Society-US called for using the precautionary approach in defining criteria. Chile, and others, emphasized that range States should not be the only Parties to

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submit species for the Secretariat's approval. A working group was formed. The Secretariat introduced a document on the relationship between *ex-situ* breeding operations and *in-situ* conservation programmes (AC.16.9.2), noting that this complicated interaction involves biology as well as rural development. The Secretariat supported conducting a global survey to obtain information on this issue. Oceania provided an overview of cooperative conservation programmes in Australia. North America supported concerns raised by the Secretariat, including the risk that captive breeding may decrease incentives for habitat conservation and increase illegal procurement of breeding stock. She also said the proposal to research socio-economic and price impacts of trade in specimens from various production systems were not relevant, but conservation impacts were. IUCN noted the importance of understanding economic consequences of captive breeding and highlighted a study underway by the African Resources Trust, WCMC and the IUCN Crocodile Specialist Group, to examine the economics of the crocodilian skin trade.

The EU said the Secretariat's mandate should be extended to plants and noted that the CBD has established a panel on access to genetic resources, suggesting that perhaps the Animals Committee should be represented.

UNIVERSAL LABELLING OF CAVIAR: TRAFFIC presented a document on the universal labelling system for the identification of caviar (AC.16.16). He noted the system for caviar export applies to caviar entering international trade from the country of origin, but does not apply to re-exports of caviar, including caviar that may have been re-packaged prior to re-export. Iran added the need to consider illegal caviar exports. A working group, chaired by Oceania, was established to further discuss this technical issue.

TRADE IN BLACK SEA BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN: The US introduced a document on trade in Black Sea bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus ponticus*) (AC.16.17). She noted that despite a COP-11 withdrawal of a proposal to downlist this sub-species from Appendix II to I, a working group had been established to evaluate the biological status of the species using data from range States. She added that the US was in communication with several treaty organizations, including the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea, and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) and the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, who indicated willingness to participate in discussions. The Secretariat welcomed the initiative and suggested maintaining a contact group to gather more information. Germany also

supported the initiative and suggested the group address compliance with operative requirements. Care for the Wild noted that significant information already exists on this species and deserves review. A contact group was established.

TRADE IN FRESHWATER TURTLES AND TORTOISES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: Chair Hoogmoed introduced a document on trade in freshwater turtles and tortoises (Inf.AC.16.13) and noted the need to convene a workshop on the issue. Africa said although the focus is on Asian trade, it would like to be involved in any future workshop. China requested that more informational surveys be conducted before any workshop takes place. North America, with Germany, highlighted trade in freshwater turtles and tortoises as high priority and both offered funding for a workshop. The US said it was prepared to seek additional funds for a workshop and for capacity building. The Chelonian Research Foundation also pledged additional financial support. Conservation International highlighted its current initiatives in turtle and tortoise conservation and said it looked forward to collaborating on this issue. A working group, chaired by Asia, was established.

STATUS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN SHARK SPECIES: Chair Hoogmoed introduced a COP-11 decision to monitor an international action plan on sharks. He said there was no obligation to report to the next Animals Committee on this issue, but would maintain contact with the FAO on the status of the voluntary plan. He noted that many countries had already undertaken initial assessment of shark stocks.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The Animals Committee again sent many of the agenda's contentious items for discussion in working groups. Many delegates remarked the groups were cloistered and participation was kept to a minimum for the first time, rendering the whole process less transparent. Nevertheless, many delegates said the working groups had been very productive. Off the agenda, many delegates wondered how the host country's new Administration would befriend endangered species.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The Animals Committee will meet for its final day at 9:00 am in the Entry Auditorium to hear the reports of the working groups.