

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



Sixteenth meeting of the Animals Committee
Shepherdstown (United States of America), 11-15 December 2000

REPORT OF THE AFRICAN REGION

Membership as determined at COP11, Nairobi:

Members: Dr. Kim M. Howell, Mike Griffin
Alternates: Dr. Richard Bagine, Mr. Edson Chidziya

A. General:

A1. Communications within the region, although improved in some areas by electronic mail, still remain problematical in others.

A.2 It is of concern that a majority of the parties in the region have failed to respond to communications from the Secretariat; while this may give the impression that they agree with documents as presented, in fact, it is probably more indicative of the need to strengthen the capabilities of the Management Authorities and to ensure that CITES matters are given a higher priority by governments.

B. Issues of the Africa Region relevant to AC

B1. Issues relating to the conducting of and reporting of trade

In some countries in the region, parties exceed quotas they themselves have established for species in trade;

Overly complex systems which allows dealers to buy and sell quotas means that the monitoring of individual specimens and numbers traded is almost impossible, or is at best extremely time-consuming, and there is a need to simplify and make transparent the issuing and transferring of quotas.

B2. Expansion of trade without adequate studies of populations and non-detriment findings

At least one country in the East African region is expanding its trade in birds and reptiles with little apparent understanding of market forces, or biological data on the populations of the species involved.

C. Ivory Monitoring

C1. MICE programme is on schedule in southern Africa

C2. Elsewhere, pilot programmes in place are expected to expand and develop further (Central, West and East Africa).

D. Purported irregularities in trade

D1. Claims of illegal ivory trade made by the Humane Society of the United States and passed to a UK-based journalist required detailed investigation and were found to be unsubstantiated. A TRAFFIC audit revealed no irregularities, nor evidence to support claimed trade and movement of ivory between countries in the African and Asian regions. This resulted in notification to the parties 2000/60, which concluded that these allegations must be considered unfounded based on the lack of evidence.

D2. Claims by another ngo that Baboons captured and exported from Tanzania were sent in non-standard cages also were not substantiated; evidence suggests that IATA approved cages were used.

These two cases of unfounded claims were most regrettable and required considerable time, effort and expenditure to investigate. Such claims even if refuted question the very essence of CITES, and it is unfortunate that the ngos who raised them did not approach the Secretariat or the African Region representatives first before raising them in wider public arenas.

E. Confiscations of live specimens

Despite suggested guidelines, it would appear that these are not always followed, and confiscated animals have been released in the wild in areas or situations which may not be appropriate.

The welfare of confiscated animals retained in "holding grounds" while legal action is being taken is open to question, with few such facilities available in the region.

F. Non-detriment findings

The provision of non-detriment findings continues to be problematical.

G. Periodic review of animal taxa (Sig Trade Review)

Information is still required for several of the taxa under review from the Africa Region.

H. Enforcement

There is a general need to physically inspect specimens being exported.

I. Bushmeat

In many parts of Africa, the use of bushmeat of both CITES and non-CITES species is common and may be basically a food security issue. Because primates are often involved, this is of concern, but birds and reptiles may also be affected. TRAFFIC has a study in progress on this; it remains to be determined how the bushmeat trade affects CITES species.

In some parts of W. Africa, gravid female sea turtles are harvested for meat before being able to lay their eggs.

J. Marine Issues

Corals: as far as is known, the trade in corals is not a major issue in Africa.

Sea Turtles: Although little formal trade is recorded, in Angola, Green Turtle *Chelonia mydas* carapaces are sold to Namibia and Zambia.

Cape Fur Seals: The harvest in South African and Namibia is well regulated with strict quotas.

K. Positive News concerning CITES species

K1. One of the most exciting finds from Africa was the discovery of an Appendix I species, a coelacanth *Latimeria* sp. In the waters of St Lucia Park, eastern South Africa.

K2. As a direct result of queries related to the identification of *Cordylus* spp exported from Tanzania as *Cordylus "trepidosternum"*, a species new to science will be described.

K3. A recently described viviparous toad in the genus *Nectophrynoides* (Appendix I), *N. asperginis*, endemic to Tanzania, is threatened with extinction by the construction of the World Bank funded Lower Kihansi Hydropower Project. This toad is apparently known only from the spray wetlands of the Kihansi River Falls of the Kihansi Gorge, and 98% of its habitat has already dried. While *in situ* conservation is always preferable, captive breeding may in special cases play an important role in a conservation strategy. Tanzania and its partner in the captive breeding effort the Wildlife Conservation Society have been proactive in taking 500 specimens into captive breeding at the Bronx and Detroit Zoos, and are to be congratulated for what (as far as is known) is the first effort on the African continent to include any amphibian in a captive breeding programme.

K.M.Howell

M. Griffin

Africa Region Representatives

11 Dec 2000