

Review of Appendices - crocodile ranching operations

Proposal and scope of work for a contract between the CITES Secretariat
and the Crocodile Specialist Group

DRAFT (JULY 2003) FOR CONSIDERATION AND DISCUSSION
AT THE 19TH MEETING OF THE ANIMALS COMMITTEE

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Background and need

At the 17th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC17, Hanoi, July-August 2001), the AC agreed that the Secretariat be requested to contact the IUCN/SSC Crocodile Specialist Group (CSG) regarding the possibility of compiling a list of crocodile ranching operations authorized under Resolution Conf. 11.16, and to incorporate these operations in its periodic review of animal taxa in the Appendices (see Resolution Conf. 11.1). The summary records of AC18, where the issue was further discussed, recorded the following:

"Review of crocodile ranching operations:

The consultant from the IUCN/SSC CSG provided a verbal report on progress in reviewing crocodile ranching operations authorized under Resolution Conf. 11.16 in the framework of the review of Appendices. The finalization of the review would require funding. There was support for the Secretariat's proposal to consider, at a future meeting of the AC, the potential to increase the scope of Resolution Conf. 11.16 to include taxa other than crocodylians."

Additional issues including the pertinence of certain provisions of Resolution Conf. 11.16 and the possibility or need to increase its scope; issues relating to the control of captive-breeding, ranching and wild harvest production systems for Appendix-II species; and the relationship between ex-situ production and in-situ conservation that are also of interest to the AC could be identified during the research project and brought to our attention. If appropriate, they could be packaged into a follow-up study to focus more broadly on ranching and regulatory aspects, and on the relationship between ranching and conservation of wild populations of the species concerned.

Qualifications of the CSG

The CSG is a global network of 360 volunteer experts and specialists involved in every aspect of crocodylian research, conservation and commerce. Among its members the CSG includes representatives of CITES Management and Scientific Authorities, academics and researchers and commercial farmers, tanners and traders. This network has functioned to produce far-reaching recommendations for management and sustainable use of crocodylians, many of which have been adopted by CITES. The CSG provides an informal but well respected and objective forum in which rapid exchange of information and a very specialized knowledge can be brought to bear on crocodylian issues. The CSG has aided CITES and the AC many times with both paid consultant and voluntary information and reports. Recent activities include an assessment of effects of captive-breeding resolutions on reptiles, a global assessment of the economics of the crocodylian skin trade and evaluation of proposals to the Conference of the Parties.

The CSG has undertaken a preliminary review of this topic and queried its network for the feasibility of conducting this work. Responses indicate that the network will support this project.

Tasks

Within each CSG Region;

1. Compile a list of all species and populations that were downlisted pursuant to all proposals that included ranching under any RC. (*Data already exist in CITES database*)
2. Compile the history of operations subsequent to downlisting and the current status of all ranching operations. (*Requires CITES annual reports for each country and year since ranching approved & current data on existing ranches and stock*)
3. Review the management subsequent to downlisting. (*Requires national management plans, CITES annual reports and original proposal text and national data & reports*)
4. Review the status of species and populations in terms of criteria of RC 9.24 (Rev CoP12) and the current scope and provisions in Resolution Conf. 11.16.
5. Review and discuss draft at CSG 17th Working Meeting 23-28 May 2004.
6. Identify and note issues relevant to the pertinence and scope of RC 11.16 and the control of ranching and/or harvesting and the benefits to *in situ* conservation stemming from ranching operations - for submission to CITES Secretariat.
7. Compile document summarising successes and failures for submission to AC 20.

Timeline

- May-July 2003: Development of project scope.
- August 2003: Presentation of draft task 1 and proposal at AC19.
- October-December 2003: Secure funding and initiate contacts and work framework.
- January-June 2004: Collect data and produce draft report.
- May 2004: Discuss preliminary findings at the CSG 17th working meeting, Darwin, Australia for CSG wide input and review.
- July 2004: Submission of final report for review by the CITES Secretariat and eventual submission to AC.

Personnel

The project will be coordinated by Dr James Perran Ross, executive officer of the CSG. Primary identification of ranching projects and issues will utilize the CSG Steering Committee and Vice-Chairmen, each with specialist regional expertise. Elements of specific national programmes may be subcontracted out to appropriate CSG members. The Executive Officer (JPR) will be responsible for project timetable and reports.

Budget

The cost to undertake the research project is USD 20,000. This includes personnel (the coordinator and subcontractors); communications; some limited travel; report preparation and distribution; and administration costs.