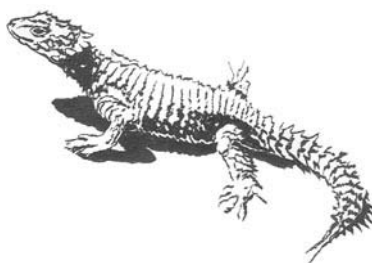


CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Twentieth meeting of the Animals Committee
Johannesburg (South Africa), 29 March-2 April 2004

Regional reports

OCEANIA

1. This document has been prepared by Dr Rod Hay in his capacity as regional representative for Oceania.

General information

2. Member: Dr Rod Hay (New Zealand); alternate: Dr Dick Watling (Fiji).
3. Number of Parties in the region: five (Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu). Note that France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America are other Parties with territories in the Oceanian region.
4. The following 11 countries in Oceania are not Parties to the Convention: Cook Islands, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau and Tuvalu. The Cook Islands and Niue are self-governing in free association with New Zealand, and Tokelau is a self-administering dependent territory of New Zealand. While New Zealand assumes responsibility for foreign affairs for these countries this does not render them party to CITES under New Zealand law. In contrast, the French overseas territories of New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna, and the dependent territories of Australia, the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the region do come under the CITES umbrella.

Communication with Parties in the region since the 19th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC19, Geneva, August 2003)

5. Following AC19, Dr Hay circulated the draft report of the meeting to the Parties in the region. Because of shortness of time, consultation in the preparation of this report was limited, but updates on specific issues will be provided at AC20.
6. As regional representative on the Standing Committee, Australia has also communicated on a range of matters relevant to the Animals Committee. There has also been correspondence with the regional representative on the Plants Committee on specific issues, particularly concerning the review of the listing criteria.

7. There has also been limited communication with other institutions and NGOs since AC19.
8. There has been specific correspondence and meetings with the IUCN Shark Specialist Group and with Parties in the Region on shark conservation issues; with the IUCN Invasive Species Specialist Group on CITES invasives issues; and with the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) on a range of issues concerning the implementation of CITES in the region.

Follow-up on agenda items since AC19

9. The regional representative, with the assistance of Management Authority staff, undertook an assessment of two penguin species, one abundant and one rare, as part of the assessment of the draft criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II.
10. The regional representative chaired the intersessional working group on sharks, establishing a work programme in conjunction with the working group and the IUCN Shark Specialist Group.

Relevant CITES implementation issues in the region

11. Oceania covers a vast area of mostly tropical regions dominated by the marine environment. Trade risks to wild fauna and flora must be seen in the context of the usual range of environmental threats, including habitat loss, invasive species, domestic over-exploitation and global climate change. For example, coral bleaching has had a dramatic effect on the reefs in some parts of the region (e.g. in Fiji). Marine resources form a key part of the local economy. Therefore trade issues concerning them are of critical and growing interest to the countries of the region. The relationship between trade and other pressures needs to be kept in mind, but CITES has an important potential role in sustainable use and protection of species in the marine environment of the region.
12. Natural disasters can have significant effects on wildlife resources in the region. For example, in January 2004, Cyclone Heta had severe effects on Niue. The mitigation of impact on biodiversity is one element of the relief being provided by New Zealand and other aid donors in the wake of that disaster.
13. Despite the small number of Parties in the region, regular regional meetings are unlikely to be held unless opportunities arise in conjunction with other regional gatherings. SPREP is an organization and forum through which regional implementation of the Convention may be able to be facilitated, but other models for regional collaboration may also need to be explored if CITES is to be fully effective in tropical Oceania.
14. A key difficulty, and a major reason for the small number of Parties in the region, is capacity. The population base for those countries which are not party to CITES is usually very small (e.g. the resident population of Niue is about 1,200). Consequently, those administering a convention such as CITES normally have many competing responsibilities. The resources required to accede to the Convention alone are high relative to the resources available for such purposes. Full implementation is an even larger burden.
15. Scientific expertise is often difficult to obtain when needed, hence the value of building regional networks of expertise which can fulfil some of the technical requirements of CITES, notably those of Scientific Authorities.
16. In general, awareness and activity in support of conservation and sustainable use of natural resources are advancing significantly in the region, with increasing locally- as well as externally-funded activities.

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

17. There have been no specific activities since AC19.

Capacity-building activities

18. The most significant initiative since the report for AC18 was the well-attended (by Parties and non-Party States) capacity-building workshop held in April 2002. Though a formal report of that meeting is not yet available, the regional representative on the Standing Committee, Anne-Marie Delahunt, has had discussions with the Secretariat which we hope will lead to concrete proposals for further capacity-building activities in the region. Decision 12.94 called for a follow-up capacity-building workshop. Meanwhile, work is needed on the development of a regional directory of technical experts, to complement that already developed by the Plants Committee.

Other topics related to CITES and animal species

19. Although there has not been an increase in Party membership, there is an increasing amount of activity in the region of relevance to CITES. Activities include the following initiatives:

- a) WWF is working in conjunction with the Marine Aquarium Council (MAC) on a certification programme to develop and help implement sustainable methods for the collection and transportation of live organisms from coral reef ecosystems;
- b) TRAFFIC Oceania is undertaking or planning the following activities at a regional level:
 - i) Investigating trade-related invasive-species issues concerning levels of biodiversity threat and will develop projects as appropriate;
 - ii) Building capacity to implement CITES and domestic frameworks for control of wildlife trade;
 - ii) Contributing to regional understanding of sustainability issues relating to traditional medicine systems;
 - iv) Developing an overview of the trade in live reef fish for food;
 - v) Developing an overview of the nature and extent of trade in sharks; and
 - vi) Assisting in the conservation and management of coral resources and trade;
- c) SPREP is coordinating the Regional Avifauna Conservation Programme, the Regional Invasive Species Programme and the Regional Marine Turtle Programme; and
- d) The South Pacific Commission has a region-wide strategy to help Pacific island countries manage the expanding trade in live reef fish, including technical assistance with the preparation of management plans, national regulations, awareness materials, etc.

Work to be done by the next meeting of the Animals Committee

20. More progress is required on the implementation of Decisions 10.54 and 10.76 on Trade in alien species.

21. A directory of experts needs to be prepared similar to that already prepared by the Plants Committee.