

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



Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
The Hague (Netherlands), 3-15 June 2007

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation issues

Sturgeons and paddlefish

Amendment of Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP13)

PROPOSAL OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

1. This document has been submitted by the Russian Federation.
2. The suggested amendments to Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP13) were discussed by a working group established at the request of the Russian Federation during the 54th meeting of the Standing CITES Committee (Geneva, October 2006, see document SC54 Com. 2) and by a working group established during the 26th meeting of the Commission on Aquatic Bioresources of the Caspian Sea.
3. Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP13) recommends that catch and export quotas be agreed by all relevant range States of shared stocks [paragraph a) iv), under the second RECOMMENDS]. This decision is correct. However it may happen that all States find it impossible to reach an agreement. In such a case, the disagreement of one State can lead to the unfair suspension of catch and export quotas for the whole basin (for major sturgeon basins, such as the Caspian Sea). Zero quotas on legal sturgeon exports lead to increased level of poaching, illegal catch, reduce work opportunities, decrease in the financing of artificial reproduction and eventually decrease of sturgeon stocks.

Recommendation: It is suggested to include in Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP13) the possibility to make a decision on catch and export quota volumes by the majority of States (not less than two-thirds) if it is impossible to reach a consensus. Since this decision-making process exists in the Convention [see Article XV, paragraph 2) j)], it is reasonable to extend it to Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP13).

4. During the 26th meeting of the Commission on Aquatic Bioresources of the Caspian Sea, Caspian States that are party to CITES (namely Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation) agreed that paragraph a) iv) of Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP13) gives a mandate to the Secretariat regarding the approval of catch and export quotas that is not entrusted to it by the Convention (see Article XII).

Recommendation: To include the following amendment to paragraph a) iv) under the second RECOMMENDS of Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP13): "The Secretariat has informed the Parties...".

5. Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP13) has shortened the period during which exports may be made. Paragraph g) under the first RECOMMENDS states that, from 2006 onward, "all caviar must be exported before the end of the quota year in which it was harvested and processed". However this paragraph does not take account of the new technologies used by Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation for sturgeon reproduction.

Recommendation to amend paragraph g): It is necessary to consider the opportunity to prolong the period of document submission till 31 January, providing the information on sturgeon export quota remains, and to prolong the export period of sturgeon products till 31 December of the year following the year of catch.

6. Annex 2 to Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP13) contains identification codes of sturgeons, species hybrids and mixtures. However this list does not contain a category for 'breed'. At the same time the development of aquaculture stimulates the breed-forming in sturgeon-breeding and it is clear that it is necessary to add such a category. We suggest to include sturgeons breeds in this category which were bred in the Russian Federation and which have corresponding protection documents (patents of the Russian Federation), including their scientific name *Acipenser nikolukinj*. It is worth mentioning that the Russian Federation can identify these breeds genetically. Protective documents (patents of the Russian Federation) of these breeds were submitted to the members of the SC54 working group (see document SC54 Com. 2).

Recommendation: It is suggested to add the category 'breed'.

COMMENTS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

- A. Concerning the suggestion in paragraph 2 of this document, the Secretariat understands the concern expressed by the Russian Federation, but believes that it is equally true that careful management of a shared stock by two-thirds of the managing States is rendered of little value if the other third of the States remove unsustainable quantities of specimens. The Secretariat suggests that importing Parties be recommended not to accept exports from minority States that do not agree to sustainable quotas proposed by a two-thirds majority.
- B. Concerning the recommendation in paragraph 3 of the present document, the Secretariat is not charged with approving catch and export quotas, but merely with confirming to the Parties that the quotas have been agreed by all relevant range States on the basis of information on the status of stocks of the species concerned. In this respect replacing the word 'confirmed' with 'informed' will make no difference to the action that is requested of the Secretariat.
- C. Concerning the suggestion in paragraph 4, the Secretariat agrees with extending the deadline in paragraph a) i) of the second RECOMMENDS of Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP13) to 31 January in the quota year. The Secretariat is however unable to support the proposal to amend paragraph g) of the first RECOMMENDS to the effect that caviar may be exported until 31 December of the year following its harvest and processing. The working group that discussed this issue at CoP13 believed that requiring caviar to be exported in its year of production was an important basis for combating illicit trade.
- D. Finally, concerning the suggestion that other 'breeds' such as those with the scientific name *Acipenser nikolukinj* be included in Annex 2 of Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP13), the Secretariat believes that more information about the genetic background of such 'breeds' is required before they may be recognized by CITES.
- E. The Secretariat believes that some of the suggestions from this document could be incorporated into the text proposed in document CoP14 Doc. 60.2.1.