

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



Twenty-second meeting of the Animals Committee
Lima (Peru), 7-13 July 2006

FOSSIL CORALS

Membership (as decided by the Committee)

- a) Observers from Parties: Belgium, Mexico, the United Kingdom (Chairman), the United States of America; and
- b) The observer from the non-governmental organization Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association.

Mandate

1. Conclude the implementation of Decision 13.96 by analysing the responses from the Parties presented in the Annex of document AC22 Doc. 19, reviewing Resolution Conf. 11.10 (Rev. CoP12) if necessary, and ensuring timely reporting to the Secretariat so that it can fulfil Decision 13.97.

Recommendations

1. Recommends that the Secretariat summarize the responses received to Notification 2005/O65 (from China, Mexico, Switzerland, the United States of America and the European Community) on their interpretation of the annotation exempting fossil corals from the provisions of the Convention (draft attached).
2. The Secretariat makes these responses available to the Parties and to those involved in the trade in corals through a Notification and through the CITES website so that they are aware of the approach taken by the various Parties. Any further contributions submitted by Parties should be added to this summary document.
3. No further action is considered necessary under Decisions 13.96-97 and, with the communication suggested above, these decisions are considered discharged. No recommendation is made to amend Resolution Conf. 11.10 (Rev. Cop12)

Rationale

No consensus on the interpretation of this annotation is likely and further attempts to achieve consensus are unlikely to be productive. Whilst some minor improvements could be made to Resolution Conf. 11.10 (Rev. CoP12), these would be largely cosmetic and risk re-opening debate on this topic. Accordingly, it is recommended that this Resolution is left unchanged.

Summary of approaches taken by Parties

China: *Fossil corals are remains of coral skeleton buried by natural process and subsequently permanently preserved, has or has not undergone changes in appearance and does not fall under the definition of coral fragments, coral rock or dead coral.*

European Community: *Fossils, namely all categories of coral rock, except live rock (meaning pieces of coral rock to which are attached live specimens of invertebrate species and coralline algae not included in the Appendices and which are transported moist, but not in water) are not subject to the provisions of the Convention.*

Mexico: no specific definition;

Switzerland: *Fossils are all petrified corals that are as a rule enclosed or part of geological rock formations (as e. g. in the chalk of the Jura mountain range in Switzerland).*

United States of America: *Fossil corals are part of limestone deposits with extinct species of corals and other marine invertebrates. These rock deposits are from several thousand to 500 million years old. Limestone can be cut and polished for jewelry and lapidary articles. Note:*

- 1. limestone (fossil coral) often lacks complete and recognizable coral skeletons and structures (i. e. corallites, septa) but consists of a matrix of lime cement and broken pieces of reef rock and mollusk shells;*
- 2. cavities in limestone and the spaces between coral and mollusk shell structures are filled with a lime cement and often are not porous.*