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



Twenty-seventh meeting of the Animals Committee
Veracruz (Mexico), 28 April – 3 May 2014

Interpretation and application of the Convention

INFORMATION ON FRESHWATER RAYS IN COLOMBIA

This document has been submitted by Colombia*, in relation to item 23 of the agenda.

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INFORMATION ON FRESHWATER RAYS IN COLOMBIA TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE 27TH MEETING OF THE CITES ANIMALS COMMITTEE

Response to notification 056-2013, paragraph 1 b)

In response to notification 056 of 2013 issued by the Convention On International Trade In Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Secretariat and which requests information to be submitted to the 27th meeting of the Animals Committee; in response to paragraph 1 b), of Decisions 16.130 to 16.135, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS), the Alexander von Humboldt Institute of Biological Resources Research and the National Authority of Aquaculture and Fisheries (AUNAP) presents the following information pertaining to freshwater rays.

- 16.133 *Range States of freshwater stingrays are encouraged to provide information to the Working Group, the Animals committee and the Secretariat, as requested under Decision 16.130.*
- 16.134 *Range States are encouraged to cooperate in the development and implementation of research and monitoring programmes for the purpose of supporting evaluations of the conservation status and threats affecting populations of freshwater stingrays in their natural range.*
- 16.135 *Subject to external funding, the Parties, the CITES Secretariat and other interested organizations shall organize activities, including regional workshops, in order to facilitate the exchange of trade, conservation and management data on freshwater stingray species.*

Progress since COP16

In response to the decisions approved at the last CITES COP16 and at the request of the Secretariat on freshwater ray species (Potamotrygonidae Family), the Humboldt Institute collaborated with experts from the range states on the development of document IX Freshwater rays (Potamotrygonidae) of South America. Part I. Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Perú, Brazil, Guyana, Suriname and French Guyana: diversity, bioecology, use and conservation (in press).

This effort to integrate knowledge included participation of the Federal University of Paraiba in Brazil, the Humboldt Institute and the SINCHI Amazon Institute for Scientific Research of Colombia, along with 20 organizations (universities, NGOs, fishing authorities, among others) from five countries and collaboration and co-authorship of 39 experts who provided information for the document.

The document includes 9 chapters with taxonomy, systematics, cytogenetics, biology, aquatic ecology, fisheries biology, regulation, trade and public health information on the diversity, bioecology, use and conservation of freshwater stingrays (Potamotrygonidae) in South America.

Due to the importance of the topic, once the document is published, Colombia will send copies of the publication to the CITES

Secretariat and will continue to add to this study with all the remaining range states for this family in South America.

In addition, Colombia's National Authority of Aquaculture and Fisheries – AUNAP held a workshop on April 24-26, 2013, to review the activities for and revise the National Plan of Action for Sharks, Rays and Chimeras in Colombia–PAN, and approve necessary strategies and agreements. During the workshop, the participating institutions gave presentations on ongoing projects and/or those that have been completed. They divided into breakout groups to create a plan of action for 2013-2016, with macro-projects. One of the groups focused on inland waters and established that based on the ongoing and completed projects presented at the workshop there is a need to conduct research focused on taxonomic, ecological, demographic, socioeconomic and fisheries for freshwater stingray species with distribution in Colombia. With this in mind, this macro-project aims to provide adequate fisheries and population information on the resource with a focus on the following species: *Paratrygon aiereba*, *Potamotrygon motor*, *P. magdalenae* y *P. schoederi*, which will facilitate management and conservation measures for freshwater rays.

Also, on October 22, 2013, the *Socialization workshop was held on the progress of information on the trade, conservation and management of freshwater ray species in Colombia*, led by MADS.

At that workshop, research projects developed so far for freshwater stingrays (Potamotrygonidae Family) in Colombia were shared by different institutions. That workshop showed that despite the efforts made so far, more information is needed on the population, biological and ecological status of the rays found in Colombia. One of the most studied species in the country is *Potamotrygon magdalenae*.

Challenges

The aforementioned scenarios indicated the necessity of developing a technical package for reproduction of freshwater stingrays in captivity, an activity that would reduce the pressure on wild species and thus contribute to their conservation.

Moreover, there should also be an emphasis on socio-economic studies on the use, trade and sale of freshwater stingrays that include, among other things, a description of the chain of custody. That way, strategies can be developed to raise awareness and provide education on the on the stingray resource.

Finally, there is a need to create an inter-institutional committee led by MADS and AUNAP to consolidate information on the progress of research on the freshwater stingrays in Colombia, led by MADS.

In regards to this, Colombia in response to decision 16.135 plans to develop in 2014 research proposals to evaluate different ecological and population aspects on a national scope and to guide regional discussions to recover these species and to apply for external sources of funding.

In addition, MADS has financial resources to support a research study to evaluate the conservation status and threats to freshwater stingrays on the national level during 2014.