

## **OCEANIA REGIONAL REPORT**

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### ***General Information***

Parties in the Oceania region:

- Vanuatu
- Papua New Guinea
- New Zealand
- Fiji
- Australia (regional representative)

### ***Communication between Parties in the region***

#### ***Introduction***

Australia, the regional representative for Oceania, has prepared this report. It covers the period between the 46<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee Meeting held in Geneva in March 2002, and the 49<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee to be held in Geneva from 22-25 April 2003.

All parties from the region have provided information for this report: Australia, New Zealand, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and Fiji. Information on Papua New Guinea's CITES activities has been prepared by the Australian Management Authority on the basis of telephone discussions.

#### ***Oceania Capacity Building Workshop***

CITES Parties and Non-Parties in the Oceania region attended a Regional Workshop for Small Island Developing States in Fiji from 29 April to 1 May 2002.

TRAFFIC Oceania organised the logistics of the workshop and the Secretariat conducted the workshop. The workshop provided a valuable forum for identifying regional needs and problems.

Parties gave presentations concerning their experience with CITES. The presentations highlighted existing positive and negative experiences. Participants agreed that there is a need to give particular attention to improving communication on management, scientific and enforcement matters.

In the workshop, all countries identified some priority species in international trade. It was agreed that all countries would complete a brief outline of their current interactions with CITES that would include a checklist of species currently in trade, so that training and funding information could be developed. The regional representatives for the Plants and Animals Committees, with Australia's support, offered to develop the checklist, and Australia collated the region's input.

It was also agreed that a proposal for future capacity building in the region be developed for presentation to CoP12. The Secretariat offered to co-ordinate the drafting of this proposal. Two decisions taken at CoP12 are directly relevant to progressing the objectives of the workshop: 12.94 *Capacity building in the Oceania region* and 12.95 *Capacity building in Small Island Developing States*. The region looks forward to the development of capacity building activities that will address the specific needs and issues identified at the workshop.

## ***Individual party initiatives***

### **New Zealand**

#### ***New Zealand Gecko Appendix III listing***

New Zealand submitted a proposal to CoP12 to list all species of New Zealand Gecko in the genera *Hoplodactylus* and *Naultinus* on Appendix II. Although these species are already a prohibited export from New Zealand, increasing illegal trade has been detected and some wild populations are declining. The proposal to list these species on Appendix II was unsuccessful at CoP12, with the majority of Parties believing that the export prohibition was sufficient protection for the species and a listing on Appendix II was not necessary. Subsequent to CoP12, the Secretariat has accepted a New Zealand request for the species *Hoplodactylus* spp. and *Naultinus* spp. to be included on Appendix III. This will take effect from 28 May 2003.

#### ***New Zealand participation in CoP12***

New Zealand participated in CoP12 in Santiago with a delegation of five persons representing the Department of Conservation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Ministry of Fisheries.

#### ***Animals Committee***

Following CoP12, New Zealand will continue representing Oceania on the Animals Committee.

#### ***New Zealand National Meeting***

Following the successful meeting in 2001, a meeting of people representing all the agencies involved in the implementation of CITES in New Zealand was held in August 2002. The objectives of the meeting were to ensure the consistency of CITES operational work throughout the country and to create a greater awareness of CITES and its contribution towards the preservation of biological diversity in New Zealand and beyond. The outcome of the meeting was a focus on improved coordination between the various agencies, an awareness that problems could increase as increasing numbers of people travel, estimated to increase by 82% over the next 10 years, and a need for more dissemination of information on CITES.

#### ***Wildlife Enforcement Group***

The Wildlife Enforcement Group occupies the seat of the Oceania representative to the Interpol Working Group on wildlife crime. New Zealand is looking to host a future meeting of this group which will be a significant event for Oceania as it would be the first conference of this group to be held in Oceania and would enable representatives from Pacific Island nations to attend, something they have not previously been able to do. Two successful prosecutions have been brought during the period, one of two individuals for their part in organising an international bird smuggling syndicate and another for an individual smuggling chameleon into New Zealand.

#### ***CITES Chinese Community project***

After analysing trade statistics for CITES seizures over the past 5 years, it became apparent that the largest number of seizures during that period, and also the highest increase in seizures, was traditional Chinese medicines. The Auckland CITES team, in conjunction with the community relations staff, launched a public awareness program aimed at educating this sector of the community on CITES, the trade restrictions surrounding the import of many such products, as well as other local conservation issues.

The public awareness program was seen as vital in Auckland. The region's population is expected to double in the next 50 years and will be strongly multicultural.

As a direct result of the public awareness program, the CCET (Chinese Community Education Trust) has been set up. In partnership with the Department of Conservation, the Trust regularly holds conservation activities, such as:

- educational trips to conservation sites
- tree planting trips
- participation in Beach Clean-up's and other environmental activities
- open days at the MAF quarantine centre to promote biosecurity
- marine talks
- public talks about CITES and its relevance to traditional Chinese medicine and other topical conservation subjects

Over the past 12 months, the Auckland CITES unit and the Community Relations staff have participated in numerous discussions with the Auckland Chinese community, had stands at various events, spoken to schools, community groups, representatives of the traditional medicine business community, published a brochure in Chinese on traditional medicines, set up a multi-lingual hotline to assist non-English speakers to obtaining information on seizures and trade restrictions, published articles in local Chinese media – print and radio.

The CCET is extending its work to provide this information to Chinese communities on a national level. It is also setting up a website which will contain this relevant information. The impacts of this work have been of huge value to the Auckland CITES staff.

#### ***CITES Pacific Island community project***

Another area of concern was the number of imports of coral, clam, turtle shells and tambua that were in breach of the CITES regulations in New Zealand. A similar campaign was run within the Pacific community with a view to dramatically increase voluntary compliance in this area.

In conjunction with the community relations team, another public awareness programme – “Saving Paradise – A Pacific Nations Conservation Initiative”, was launched. This initiative is a hands-on partnership between the Tapa Charitable Trust and the Department of Conservation to develop an urban conservation awareness programme that will benefit both Pacific people and the environment.

There are several levels to the initiative:

- Creating an understanding of conservation and why it is important to New Zealanders
- Developing conservation projects of value starting with Auckland region and extending to other Pacific communities outside of Auckland over time.
- Changing behaviour patterns, over time, that have a negative impact on conservation values as well as community perceptions

The CITES awareness campaign provides information on CITES. The main areas of infringement have been published in brochure and poster form and translated into the most common Pacific languages. These have been distributed throughout the Pacific and a sustained Auckland awareness programme is underway. The CITES unit has noted a dramatic decrease in the number of issues arising from seizures from the Pacific. The impacts of providing the brochures and posters free of charge to our Pacific counterparts have been fantastic.

A large focus of the CITES aspects of the public awareness programme has been voluntary compliance. The majority of our work in this area has been to address through education issues that bring Pacific peoples into conflict with the authorities.

One of the reasons why Auckland's Chinese and Pacific conservation initiatives are so successful is because they are developed and led by the Chinese and Pacific Islands communities. The

community relations team has found that it has been an integral part of the success of the programmes to learn about and accommodate other perspectives and link our conservation programmes to what is important in their cultures.

## **Fiji**

### ***National Legislation***

The *Endangered and Protected Species Act, 2002* was enacted by Fiji Parliament in December 2002. The Department of Environment reviewed provisions relating to Regulation, consulted various existing legislation in Fiji and got in touch with Environment Australia regarding their CITES related legislation and regulation. Instructions to forward to Fiji Solicitor General's Office had to be viewed by Ministry's Head and send to S/Generals office.

### ***Annual Reports (CITES)***

2000/2001/2002.

Management Authority (MA) of Fiji is working closely with our partner organization in government regarding certain information especially in regards to export of CITES listed products, especially coral products.

### ***Coral Export Quota for 2003.***

Relevant information was sent in February 2003. The information received from CITES Secretariat needs to be discussed thoroughly with the Fiji Government Team before they bring it to attention of the Traders. Fiji will also be consulting others (e.g. Rob Parry Jones of Traffic Oceania and Ed Lovell (Marine Biologist) on this issue. CITES Secretariat has been informed of this (Ref Tom De Meulenaer – Scientific Coordination Unit) and copied to Stephen Nash and Marceil Yeater.

### ***Training/Capacity Building***

Offer from CITES (dated 20th Feb, 2003) will be considered once Fiji are sure staff in some government departments responsible for issuing permits are identified since 1 or 2 of the officers responsible have been sifted elsewhere during the re-structuring of these organizations e.g. Fisheries Department in Suva/Lautoka shifted at end of 2002 and beginning of 2003.

Fiji are also looking at other sources to help them in case offer from CITES is removed due to time-line on work on regulation and internal restructuring of organizations such as Fishery/Forestry as noted above, e.g. issue raised in Fiji's Bilateral discussion between Fiji and Australia on 7/3/2003.

Fiji hosted the CITES Capacity Building Workshop for Regional Pacific Countries Workshop from 29 April to 1 May 2002.

### ***Species Conservation /Study***

Cabinet has approved in their meeting on 11/3/2003 the declaration of Fiji's EEZ as a Whale Sanctuary. Government of Fiji had worked closely with NGO, Institutions, SPREP, Forum Secretariat and the Government of NZ and Australia on this issue together with our other Pacific Island Countries.

Government Officials are also preparing another Cabinet Paper to extend moratorium on the banning, killing and selling of sea turtle products for another 10 years. Fiji together with other Pacific Island Countries (PIC) will embark on regional studies to know more of those regional resources and how best to utilise them (Ref: SPREP Regional Meeting in Apia Feb/March - 2003).

### ***Coral Study***

International Marinelifelife Alliance (IMA) has updated Fiji Govt in February regarding present study in relation to coral extraction in Fiji.

### ***Forest products***

The Wildlife Conservation Society are already working in Fiji and certification is an issue they will be looking at. Fiji govt officials had discussed with them regarding training of Forestry Officers especially in-light of Mahogany Export. (Note-despite Fiji Mahogany being a plantation one - US Market still require CITES permit).

### ***Birds***

Birdlife International are already established in Fiji and the government is grateful that four (4) field survey reports have been received.

### **Papua New Guinea**

#### ***Workshops/Training***

Papua New Guinea have developed two workshops to assist with enforcement and species identification. A workshop dealing with enforcement issues was developed collaboratively with the Papua New Guinea Customs and the Public Prosecutors Office, with staff completing the workshop earlier this year.

The second workshop, dealing with species identification of insects was developed with qualified entomologists and experts from the Papua New Guinea Department of Agriculture. These species experts were able to share their knowledge with staff and used specimens from the research collection to assist staff with the physical identification of certain CITES species. The workshop was completed by staff earlier this year.

#### ***Legislation (Papua New Guinea)***

A legislative review of Papua New Guinea's national legislation was completed recently and amendments have been prepared for introduction into parliament.

#### ***Gaharu wood or Agarwood trade***

Trade in Gaharu wood has emerged as a relatively recent problem in Papua New Guinea and the 'minor forest product sector' is not organised to deal with this type of trade. The bulk of this trade is illegal movement across the border with Indonesia. A particular enforcement difficulty is lack of scientific information for identification purposes.

Visits by Gaharu wood traders from neighbouring Malaysia and Indonesia into Papua New Guinea are having an impact on the trade, creating concerns about the sustainability of this resource and negative effects on the lives of some rural village communities.

The Papua New Guinea CITES Management Authority has raised concerns about the sustainability of this trade, with the Papua New Guinea Forest Service and has had consultation with the Papua New Guinea Forest Service, the Internal Revenue Commission and other government agencies to look at control measures for this trade. At a recent meeting, an interim interdepartmental committee decided to place a temporary ban on this trade until it has been established whether the species in use in Papua New Guinea is the CITES-listed *Aquilaria malaccensis*.

In conjunction with WWF South Pacific Programme, TRAFFIC Oceania have published a report "*Towards sustainable management of Papua New Guinea's Agarwood resource*" with recommendations for further action. Further to the publication of this report PNG Wildlife Officials

are working with WWF and TRAFFIC to gather information and to plan the best approach to the recommendations.

### ***Swallow nest trade***

Significant numbers of swallow nest traders are visiting Papua New Guinea's border areas and conducting illegal trade across the border. The Management Authority is looking at possible options for establishing this trade legally in Papua New Guinea to control illegal activities across the border. Papua New Guinea will require technical data on the distribution of the species to develop an effective plan of action and are progressing well with establishing a contact in within the country to provide this data.

### ***Crocodiles***

A population survey as required in the Management Plan for PNG crocodiles was conducted earlier this year.

### **Vanuatu**

Vanuatu became a Party to CITES in October 1989. Even though it has been not been easy, considering the obligations and commitments that Vanuatu would have under CITES, the Government of Vanuatu recognised the importance of a global partnership between and among the state Parties to save the threatened and endangered species of wild fauna and flora of the world, so decided to become a party to the global convention.

As a Small Island Developing and a Least Developed Country, Vanuatu has very limited financial and technical resources available to implement the Convention. Such limitations are clearly shown in the non-compliance of the Convention, particularly with annual reporting and financial contributions.

While recognising the limitations that Vanuatu has in implementing the Convention, efforts at the national levels have been made with the very limited and available resources to effectively implement the Convention. The following activities have taken place since Vanuatu last attended the Eleventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Nairobi, Kenya:

### ***Workshops***

Representatives from the government, one each from the Departments of Fisheries and Environment and Conservation attended the *First CITES Regional Workshop for Small Island Developing States in Oceania*, held in Nadi, Fiji from April 29 to May 1, 2002. The workshop was organised by Environment Australia.

At the national level, a CITES workshop specifically, looking at coral trade was held from 15 to 17 October 2002. The workshop was organised by the Environment Unit, which is the CITES Management Authority for Vanuatu in collaboration with the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and financial assistance from Canada.

As a result of the First Regional workshop for SIDS in Oceania in Nadi and thanks to Environment Australia and AusAID, the Vanuatu Management Authority was provided with a computer which is being used to assist with this report preparation.

The national workshop was attended by government representatives from the Departments of Customs, Trade, Fisheries, Agriculture, Quarantine, Police and Forestry and from the non-governmental organizations, the airlines and the private coral trade operators.

The purpose of the workshop was to train the different agencies in the identification of CITES listed coral species. Specimens of corals were brought in from Fiji for hands on coral identification. Each

participant was given a copy of a *Guide to Indo-Pacific Corals in International Wildlife Trade* which will be very useful to the agencies and participants concerned. CITES was also discussed for the interest of the agencies who for the first time have been involved in such training.

From 3rd to 7th March, another workshop was organised by a national non-governmental organisation, the "Wan Smol Bag Theater" in collaboration with the CITES Management Authority for Vanuatu for the Vanuatu Turtle Monitors to discuss environment related issues including marine turtles and CITES related issues. The workshop was attended by people from throughout Vanuatu who work as volunteers in their respective islands and communities to protect marine turtles. The responsibilities of those turtle monitors has as increased to cover other environmental issues, thus, the change of the volunteer name from "Turtle Monitors" to "Vanua-Tai Monitors".

### ***Activities related to particular species***

A policy decision was made by the Department of Fisheries and the CITES Management Authority (Environment Unit) to ban harvesting and exports of *Tridacna crocea*. Companies that have an interest to export *T. crocea* have been informed of the decision and close checks and monitorings are being carried out by the enforcement officers of the Departments of Fisheries, Quarantine and the Environment Unit to ensure that there are no exports of *T. crocea* from Vanuatu.

### ***Legislation***

The "*International Trade (Fauna & Flora) Act*" of Vanuatu is the major piece of national legislation that has provisions for regulating and controlling the export, re-exports, imports and re-imports of CITES listed species.

On issuing of CITES Permits, the Vanuatu CITES Management Authority charge specific fees for the permits. This is provided for under the "*International Trade (Fauna & Flora) Act*": The current fees are being reviewed by the Management Authority for further changes.

Apart from the *International Trade (Fauna & Flora) Act*, in November 2002, the Vanuatu national parliament passed another bill for the environment, known as the "*Environmental Management and Conservation Legislation*". This piece of legislation was officially published in the Government Gazzett No.6 on 10th March 2003. Though not directly responsible for the CITES related issues, the Act provides some strength to the management of threatened and or endangered species of wild fauna and flora. The Act also enacted amendments to the "*Wild Bird (Protection) Act 1962*" by making changes to the word "agriculture" substituting the word "environment". Until the publication of the Environment Management and Conservation Act on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2003, the "*Wild Bird (Protection) Act 1962*" was under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture.

### ***Annual Reports***

During the 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES in Santiago, in November 2002, the meeting decided to suspend eight parties including Vanuatu for non compliance of Article VII and Resolution Conf.11.17. This has been a difficult choice for Vanuatu as the Management Authority, with the support of the Oceania representative on the Standing Committee (SC) made efforts to justify to the SC the reasons for failure to submit reports annually.

However, since the decision was carried at the 12th CoP's Meeting, the CITES Management Authority, with the limited human resources made every effort to address the issue immediately. The outstanding raw data for the period from 1996 to 2002 were compiled and submitted to the UNEP-WCMC to be checked to ensure that exports have been in compliance with the Convention. The raw data have been received and UNEP-WCMC is putting the data into access and checking it.

The raw data for that period was quickly collected from the data bank for the Biodiversity Strategy hosted within the Environment Unit. This is a project looking at biodiversity including marine and terrestrial wildlife. This date bank is computerized and each time a research is conducted in Vanuatu

on wildlife, the information is computerised with all information including CITES if the a wildlife species is being exported.

This experience of computerizing raw bio-diversity data is recommended particularly for the Oceania SIDS. This will assist in annual report preparations for Vanuatu from now on.

### ***Capacity building activities***

CITES Management Authority with the assistance of SPREP provided training to government and non-government representatives to strengthen their capacity in dealing with CITES related issues at the workshop that was held in October 2002. Follow up capacity training is being planned for the future.

### **Australia**

#### ***Standing Committee***

Ms Anne-Marie Delahunt in her capacity as the representative for Australia and Oceania on the CITES Standing Committee attended the 46<sup>th</sup> and 47<sup>th</sup> meetings of the Standing Committee. For both of these meetings, Australia has prepared and circulated a summary report for the region.

#### ***CoP12***

***Australia actively participated in CoP12.*** Prior to CoP12 stakeholders were consulted widely on all proposals for listing of marine species and Australia's position was formulated accordingly. The Head of the Australian delegation, Ms Anne-Marie Delahunt, chaired Committee 2, and members of the Australian delegation contributed to working groups on criteria review, marine issues, personal effects, permitting and the budget.

#### ***Oceania Capacity Building Workshop***

Australia attended a Regional Workshop for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in Fiji from 29 April to 1 May 2002.

Following the workshop, and to improve communication around the region, Australia has been providing periodic summaries of Notifications and other relevant news and information to focal/regional contacts and has been circulating reports from CITES Committee meetings to regional contacts.

Australia provided workshop representatives with CD-ROMs containing useful CITES information, and also arranged for the distribution of 12 computers for use by CITES Management Authorities and competent authorities in the region.

Australia looks forward to working with regional Parties and Non-Parties, the Secretariat, NGOs and other importing countries to build the capacity of the region through other similar activities, in accordance with Decisions 12.94 and 12.95.

#### ***Species Management Workshop - Indonesia***

Australia funded and facilitated a Species Management workshop in Bogor, Indonesia from 15 to 17 April 2002.

The purpose of the workshop was to provide Indonesian government officials with expert advice on species population assessment, population assessment methods and the preparation of species management programs to meet CITES requirements.

The Indonesian CITES Management & Scientific Authorities agreed to adopt the IUCN developed non-detriment finding model, modified to take into account Indonesian context.



The workshop was well attended by representatives from the Indonesian CITES authorities, scientific researchers, local environmental NGOs and the timber industry. The forum provided an opportunity for the CITES authorities of Indonesia and Australia to establish a friendly and cooperative relationship that should be maintained and built upon.

#### ***Administrative Streamlining***

Australia has been consulting with other Parties and exploring streamlining options for issuing permits in accordance with Resolution Conf. 12.3. Australia is also further enhancing and developing the functionality of the Wildlife Trade Management Database.

#### ***Legislation Implementation***

Australia has updated the List of CITES Species recognised under Australia's implementing legislation, giving effect to CoP12 amendments to the Appendices.

#### ***Enforcement – Case Management Software***

The enforcement unit has purchased a Case Management System to record and report on the number and types of incidents and investigations undertaken by the team. The system is designed to manage large amounts of information about breaches of the legislation which then enables identification of trends in wildlife crime and areas of vulnerability. The system complements the already established Secure Intelligence Database which is used to record information about the alleged activities of international and domestic wildlife criminals.

#### ***Enforcement***

Australia has had seven successful prosecutions for illegal wildlife trade since March 2002.

Australia has developed an inspector's training manual for use by Customs and other inspectors appointed under the legislation.

Subject to the available of resources availability, Australia may run another Regional Wildlife Law Enforcement Officers Conference sometime in 2003.

#### ***Customs Memorandum of Understanding***

Environment Australia updated and amended the Memorandum of Understanding with the Australian Customs Service and continues to have a full time Customs Officer attached to the enforcement team. The team is scoping the possibilities that could be realised from having an Australian Quarantine Officer also attached to the team. During this last twelve month period approximately 460 Customs Officer were provided with CITES training.

#### ***Greenparrot Software***

Environment Australia has entered an agreement with the Australian Customs Service to purchase an interactive CITES identification software tool called 'Greenparrot', developed in the UK and which continues to be updated by participating users. The software has been distributed throughout Australia and is being used to accurately identify listed specimens; thereby reducing the number of incorrectly seized specimens, particularly shells.

#### ***Review of Significant Trade in Cycads***

Australia has provided input to the CITES review of trade in cycads. The input covers Australian management of cycad harvesting and regulation of imports and exports of cycads.

### ***Sharks***

Australia is concerned at the lack of action for the conservation and management of sharks worldwide and submitted a discussion paper to CoP12 on this topic. Following close consultation with Ecuador who also submitted a discussion paper, Resolution 12.6 was adopted.

Within Australia, two species now have recovery plans in place (the Grey Nurse and the White Shark), and work is progressing on the adoption of a *National Plan of Action – Sharks* (to comply with the FAO International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks).

All of these actions have been preceded by extensive consultation with stakeholders domestically and/or internationally as appropriate.

### ***Dissostichus eleginoides* (Patagonian Toothfish)**

Following wide consultation, Australia submitted a proposal to CoP12 to list Patagonian Toothfish on Appendix II. Decision 12.57 agreed at CoP12 requires parties to report on the use of the *Dissostichus* Catch Documentation Scheme used by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) and their verification requirements for such Catch Documents. Australia wrote to the CITES Secretariat on 13 February 2003 asking that they consult with CCAMLR regarding a reporting template for this.

### ***Neoceratodus forsteri* (Lungfish)**

For the first time Australia has approved a captive breeding operation in Queensland for *Neoceratodus forsteri*.