

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



Sixteenth Meeting of the CITES Animals Committee
Shepherdstown (United States of America), 11-15 December 2000

Working Group on Trade in Hard Corals

This document has been prepared by the Chair of the working group on Trade in Hard Corals.

Background

1. At the 15th meeting of the Animals Committee, a working group was established to consider aspects of the trade in hard coral. This led to a report to the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties and to the subsequent adoption of Resolution Conf. 11.10. This Resolution gave the Animals Committee the mandate of pursuing a number of further tasks to resolve ongoing difficulties with respect to trade in these taxa. A working group has been re-formed with revised terms of reference (see Annex) and the United Kingdom was asked to chair the group. It should be noted that the terms of reference contain mandatory tasks required by the Resolution but also contain some discretionary tasks which were felt by the working group at Nairobi to be worthy of further attention.
2. The working group has begun its work programme and will be meeting at Shepherdstown.

Action

3. The Animals Committee is asked to comment on and endorse the terms of reference for the group.

Comments from the Secretariat

4. With reference to Paragraph 1., Resolution Conf. 11.10 (provided as Annex 2) does not refer directly to the Animals Committee, but Decisions 11.98 and 11.99 were developed out of document Com.11.9 adopted at CoP11 (see Annex 3).
5. Regarding the composition of the working group, the Secretariat recommends that at least one member of the Animals Committee be included.

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

Tasks

This working group of the Animals Committee is charged with the following mandatory tasks:

- to consider, in collaboration with exporting countries, the application of Article IV.3 as an alternative to Article IV.2.a in making non-detriment findings for corals in trade;
- to advise the Secretariat, for dissemination to the Parties, on which genera of corals it is practical to recognize to species level and which genera may be acceptably identified to genus level for the purposes of implementing Resolution Conf 9.4 and Conf. 10.2 (early resolution of this task is desirable to enable Secretariat to issue interim and final guidance to Parties).

Additional discretionary tasks the group may also want to consider, to address various difficulties and priorities identified by the working group in Nairobi (but for which there is no formal mandate from the Conference of Parties), include the following:

- following on from bullet point 2 above, for those taxa that can only be identified to genus, to consider whether their retention on the CITES appendices can be justified;
- to determine whether it is possible to advise the Nomenclature Committee of a standard taxonomic reference to corals which could be adopted by the Parties (linked to second task above);
- to consider whether there are any practical means by which fossilised corals (which are exempt from the provisions of the Convention), can be distinguished in trade from non-fossilised corals (especially regarding coral rock);
- to explore the scope for improved synergy with other initiatives and agreements regarding coral reefs and their exploitation;
- recognising existing efforts at producing identification guides by Spain, Australia, CITES Secretariat and the USA, to consider whether these guides can be integrated or improved upon and to encourage the wide dissemination of such guides.

The Working Group will provide a final report to the Chair of the Animals Committee in time for submission to the 12th Conference of the Parties.

Composition

The group will aim to have a balanced range of interests and expertise derived from Parties and observers, and exporting and consuming nations. Priority will be given to participants involved in discussions at CoP11 and in the previous Animals Committee working group but the aim will be to keep the group as small as possible. A suggested structure of the group is as follows:

- Chair – UK
- Exporting countries – 2 or 3 representatives from Parties
- Importing countries – 2 or 3 representatives from the major consuming Parties
- Other range states using corals for internal trade only if at all – 1 Party
- Traders – representative of industry / trade organisations, one each from exporting and consuming blocks.
- IGO / NGO involvement – UNEP-WCMC and TRAFFIC representative.

Outline of time scale and means of working

The group will work predominantly by email. On confirmation of group participants, the Chair will circulate to all members a list of other participants and their email addresses. The Animals Committee meeting in December 2000 in Virginia, USA offers an opportunity to have a round table discussion (for those able to travel to the AC meeting). Views will be sought in advance from those unlikely to be able to make the meeting.

16th Animals Committee - December 2000 (work by email in advance to confirm / discuss in Virginia)

- agree composition of group and terms of reference for endorsement by 16th Animals Committee;
- preliminary determination of genera to be identified to species or genus level only;
- determining working group approach to addressing application of Article IV.3 to coral trade in general;
- reference for standard nomenclature, consider possible options;
- submit a progress report to 16th Animals Committee.

Prior to 17th Animals Committee

- conclude data gathering / preliminary assessment of effectiveness of application of Article IV.4;
- final determination of genera to be identified to species or genus level;
- final assessment of fossilised coral issue;
- report to 17th Animals Committee.

Prior to CoP12

- Agree and submit final report to Chairman Animals Committee.

Proposed membership of Animals Committee coral working group

- Scientific Authority of UK: Vin Fleming (Chair) (vin.fleming@jncc.gov.uk)
- Scientific Authority of Fiji: Manasa Sovaki (biodiversity@suva.is.com.fj)
- Scientific Authority of Indonesia: Suharsono (shar@indo.net.id)
- Scientific Authority of Philippines: to be confirmed
- Scientific Authority of USA: John Field (John_Field@fws.gov)
- Scientific Authority of Australia: Tom Kaveney (tom.kaveney@ea.gov.au)
- Scientific Authority of Japan: to be confirmed.
- Representative of European Community – to be confirmed.
- UNEP-WCMC: Ed Green (ed.green@unep-WCMC.org)
- TRAFFIC N America: Craig Hoover (craig.hoover@wwfus.org)
- Indonesian Coral, Shell & Ornamental Fish Association: Yuni Yarman (akkii@cbn.net.id)
- Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association (OATA) Ltd: Keith Davenport (Keith@Oata.demon.co.uk)

Resolution Conf. 11.10

Trade in hard corals

AWARE that hard corals are in international trade as intact specimens for aquaria and as curios;

RECOGNIZING also that coral rock, fragments, sand and other coral products are also traded;

NOTING the unique nature of corals, namely that their skeletons are persistent, that they may of rock may have a detrimental impact on reef ecosystems;

AWARE, however, that coral rock cannot be readily identified other than to the order Scleractinia and that accordingly non-detriment findings under Article IV, paragraph 2 (a), of the Convention cannot be readily applied;

NOTING that Article IV, paragraph 3, of the Convention requires the monitoring of exports of specimens of each species in Appendix II, in order to assess whether the species is being maintained at a level consistent with its role in the ecosystem;

ACCEPTING that coral fragments and coral sand cannot be readily recognized;

RECOGNIZING also that it is frequently difficult to identify live or dead corals to the species level owing to the lack of a standard nomenclature and the lack of comprehensive and accessible identification guides for the non-specialist;

RECOGNIZING that corals that are fossilized are not subject to the provisions of the Convention;

become mineralized in time and that they are the foundation of reefs, and that, following erosion, fragments of coral may form part of mineral and sedimentary deposits;

NOTING also that coral rock may act as an important substrate for the attachment of live corals and that the removal

NOTING that it has been difficult to apply and enforce the provisions of the Convention to trade in corals;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

RESOLVES to adopt the working definitions of coral sand, coral fragments, coral rock, live coral and dead coral provided in the Annex to this Resolution; and

URGES:

- a) interested Parties and other bodies from range and consumer States to collaborate and provide support, coordinated by the Secretariat, to produce as a priority accessible and practical guides to recognizing corals and coral rock in trade and to make these widely available to Parties through appropriate media; and
- b) Parties to seek synergy with other multilateral environmental agreements and initiatives to work for the conservation and sustainable use of coral reef ecosystems.

Annex

Definitions

Coral sand – material consisting entirely or in part of finely crushed fragments of dead coral no larger than 2 mm in diameter and which may also contain, amongst other things, the remains of Foraminifera, mollusc and crustacean shell, and coralline algae. Not identifiable to genus.

Coral fragments (including gravel and rubble) – unconsolidated fragments of broken finger-like dead coral and other material between 2 and

30 mm in diameter, which is not identifiable to genus.

*Coral rock*¹ (*also live rock and substrate*) – hard consolidated material, >3 cm in diameter, formed of fragments of dead coral and which may also contain cemented sand, coralline algae and other sedimentary rocks. ‘*Live rock*’ is the term given to pieces of coral rock to which are attached live specimens of invertebrate species and coralline algae not included in the CITES Appendices and

which are transported moist, but not in water, in crates. *'Substrate'* is the term given to pieces of coral rock to which are attached invertebrates (of species not included in the CITES Appendices) and which are transported in water like live corals. Coral rock is not identifiable to genus but is recognizable to Order. The definition excludes specimens defined as dead coral.

Dead coral – pieces of coral that are dead when exported, but that may have been alive when collected, and in which the structure of corallites (the skeleton of the individual polyp) is still intact; specimens are therefore identifiable to species or genus.

Live coral – pieces of live coral transported in water and that are identifiable to species or genus.

Decisions 11.98 and 11.99

Regarding trade in hard corals

- 11.98 The Animals Committee shall, as part of its consideration of corals in accordance with Resolution Conf. 8.9 (Rev.), consider the application of Article IV, paragraph 3, of the Convention, as an alternative to Article IV, paragraph 2 (a), when making non-detriment findings for corals in trade and shall make recommendations for consideration at the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
- 11.99 The Animals Committee shall provide advice to the Secretariat, for dissemination to the Parties, on the genera of corals for which it is practical to recognize specimens in trade to the level of species and the genera for which specimens in trade may be acceptably identified to the level of genus only for the purposes of implementing Resolutions Conf. 11.17 and Conf. 10.2 (Rev.).