

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



Twentieth meeting of the Animals Committee
Johannesburg (South Africa), 29 March-2 April 2004

Regional reports

AFRICA

1. This report is provided in English only as it was submitted after the deadline for documents.
2. This report has been prepared by Michael Griffin, the regional representative for Africa.

Introduction

3. This report covers the period since AC19 (Geneva, August/September 2003).
4. Of the 52 countries in Africa (Western Sahara is not recognized by the UN), 50 are members of CITES; the most recent to join is Lesotho (December 2003). The only non-member country within the region is Angola. We have been informed that Angola is in the process of becoming a signatory, but no specific date has been projected.
5. The African Region contains about one third of total CITES membership.

Communication within the region continues to be problematic.

6. We attempted to contact all 50 parties using contact details given on the CITES website. We did not attempt to use postal communication because of the time factor and experience with poor past results (this immediately eliminated Sao Tome and Principe, and Somalia which do not have telephone, fax or e-mail). This survey yielded the following array of results:
7. One hundred-fifteen contact details (fax and e-mail) were available for all African Parties (most Parties have multiple addresses); 43% of these addresses did not result in successful contacts. Fifty-seven percent of addresses seemed to result in successful contacts.
8. Eighteen Parties were not contactable using either fax or e-mail addresses, i.e. telephone numbers seemed out of operation, e-mails were returned (with undeliverable notations) and/or fax messages were verified as undelivered.
9. Thirty-one countries were successfully contacted.
10. Zero responded.

11. The development of websites, presenting national CITES information is a welcome initiative taking place in a number of member states. However, thus far, only Kenya and South Africa are on-line.
12. In addition, and in separate mailings, all parties were requested to contribute to a directory of scientific authorities who are regularly or occasionally used in their national CITES scientific- making process. This was sent out in January and has not yet yielded any responses.
13. We also requested input from regional MIKE programmes and received no responses; requests from programme head offices (including TRAFFIC) however were both quick and helpful.
14. Past experience has shown that much of the input for the regional report is gathered during the AC, when members are able to meet and communicate verbally. This is why we have always given the African Regional report at the end of AC.
15. In this particular case, six parties are currently present. Drafts of this report have been distributed earlier in the week and no substantive comments received.
16. Due to this overall unsatisfactory response from Parties, this report cannot be viewed as comprehensive or representative.
17. In future, we recommend that Regional Representatives be pro-active and peruse Traffic records as well as Annual CITES Party reports submitted to the Secretariat.

Continuing civil unrest and military activities

18. A recent survey estimates approximately 30% of countries within the African Region are labouring under these conditions. Until national situations improve and socio-economic conditions, socio and political stability have been achieved, the adherence to regional and international agreements, such as CITES, will not be achieved.
19. Long term planning, on a national as well as regional level is continually hampered by political instability.

Bushmeat trade

20. Regional unrest (resulting in lax local controls, coupled with rampant opportunism and growing expat communities) has led to an increased West African (and currently a smaller (?) East African) bushmeat trade to the UK and Europe (primarily for ethnic expat consumption).
21. Many CITES listed species are included in this trade, as well as many non-listed; this needs to be monitored closely as unlisted species could be moving towards conservation-status categories, where CITES listing could be warranted.
22. Although local bushmeat is a traditional activity and integral in many local economies, there is clearly a growing need for additional data on the bushmeat trade (regionally and internationally) and its effects on populations of CITES-listed species and potential future CITES candidates.
23. Probably all the Region's member countries conduct a small and informal bushmeat trade with immediately-adjacent neighbours (porous borders), however, at this time, off-continent trade seems to involve relatively few African countries.
24. Although TRAFFIC has documented the East and Southern African trade, a similar study urgently needs to focus on the West African situation – which seems to be the major supplier for the UK and Europe.

Review of Significant Trade

25. The recent UNEP-WCMC review and analysis listed mammals, birds, reptiles and Tridacna clams for the African region. OVER 70% of listed taxa have African ranges.
26. Unsustainable harvest of species which might be candidates for CITES listing

27. Despite serious efforts by South African authorities to curb the illegal harvesting and export (to the Far East, primarily) of abalone, Halitosis midge, the trade is still active. South Africa is currently considering proposing the inclusion of local abalone in Appendix III. Perhaps related to this trade in the Southern African region is the unsustainable trade in Patagonian toothfish.

Conservation status of African fauna

28. Camp analyses of African amphibians have recently been completed with a high proportion of species of conservation concern; mostly due to habitat alteration, but some due to trade – particularly in Madagascar.

29. A CAMP analysis of African small mammals recently held in London, analyzed over 800 species of chiroptera, rodentia, and insectivores and identified few species of proven or suspected conservation-concern, and only a few were in trade. Few, if any would currently qualify for CITES attention.

Reptile and amphibian trade

30. There is increasing evidence that trade is expanding within the region. This includes but is not limited to Benin, Angola (non-member), the Comores, DRC, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, South Africa, Togo and Uganda. Many willing national participants in the legal trade have no expertise in quota setting and, as such, quotas are no more than bureaucratic decisions. Training in quota-setting procedures would place decision-makers in better positions to make wiser choices.

31. Several Pancake tortoise – breeding facilities have recently been established, some possibly outside their range of natural occurrence. The Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles Working Group is currently investigating that matter. Of particular interest is a DNA-based study to identify the origin of founder stock.

Madagascar is still a special case

32. This nation has been identified for a test case for the Country-Based Significant Trade Review Process. This decision (AC 17) was based on the perception that trade in listed reptiles, for the exotic pet trade, was out of control, and this perception has been supported by recent investigations.

33. The formal review process (which will cover all Appendix II plant and animal species) has been delayed, but significant progress has been made locally as well as on the organizational side

34. The final version of the Action Plan has now been approved and funding is being sought. The donor community has identified environmental governance and enforcement as the main issues that need to be addressed, with inadequate implementation of CITES noted as a key area of weakness.

MIKE

35. The programme is operational at differing levels of efficiency and commitment within the region; national implementation ranges from serious commitment to total non-compliance.

36. A previous comment by some parties was the lack of feedback. This situation is still problematic, and it is important to realize that cooperation from members will only take place in an atmosphere of give and take.

37. Southern African parties who received a quota at COP 12 are preparing for the 2004 sale.

38. The Southern African elephant population, at least, is expanding and elephant-man conflicts are increasing as well. Of Namibia's estimated 10,000 elephants, for instance, 80% occur on communal lands, where conflicts are common. Another concern with the subregion's expanding elephant population is the severe habitat-alteration/destruction which is often a direct result.

39. Stockpiles of legal ivory are continually increasing in all southern African countries.

40. Registered but non-marketable ivory is a common issue. Ethiopia mentioned that they are regularly asked about the future of the market by traders with registered stock. Presumably this is a common concern, as secure storage and stock management is a continuous financial burden.

ETIS (Elephant Trade and Information System)

41. ETIS, as an efficient system of monitoring trade in ivory and other elephant products, is still suffering from unsatisfactory reporting from most members; this involves the timeliness of reporting as well as the quality of data submitted. Although a few members are doing an admirable job, overall adherence to this commitment is poor. This can be attributed to a lack of national capacity, and in some cases, lack of will.

Rhino

42. Breeding programmes specifically directed at increasing populations of white and black rhino have been very successful, specifically in Namibia and South Africa. Meta-population management at SADC sub-regional level is an unqualified success, and benefits of ex situ breeding programmes are starting to be realized.

43. Consequently, stockpiles of legal rhino horn are increasing and members will be requesting quotas in the future

Trade suspensions

44. Currently, Benin (wild-captured reptiles only), Djibouti, Liberia, Mauritania, Rwanda and Somalia are under recommendations of trade suspensions.

The Katanci Spray toad

45. No African Regional Report would be complete without mention of the CITES-listed Tanzanian spray toad. Captive-breeding populations are doing poorly (possibly contaminated with fungi), and recent surveys of the few wild populations found unprecedented low population levels.

46. Additionally, similar habitats, which may also have harboured relict populations of this species are currently being strip-mined for gold,