

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

Regional reports

OCEANIA

1. This document has been prepared by Rod Hay, the regional representative for Oceania.

General information

2. AC Membership: at CoP13 (Bangkok, 2004) Rod Hay (New Zealand) was elected to commence a further full term as member representing the region. At the same meeting, John Aruga (Papua New Guinea) was elected as alternate representative.
3. Number of Parties in the region: There are now seven Parties in the region: Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Vanuatu. Note that France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America are other Parties with territories in the Oceanian region. Where appropriate, there is communication on Oceanian issues with their Management and Scientific Authorities.
4. The following 9 countries in Oceania are not Parties to the Convention: the Cook Islands, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, the Solomon Islands, Tokelau and Tuvalu. The Cook Islands and Niue are self-governing in free association with New Zealand, and Tokelau is a self-administering dependency of New Zealand. While New Zealand assumes responsibility for foreign affairs for these countries this does not render them party to CITES under New Zealand law. In contrast, the French overseas territories of New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna, and the Australian, United States and United Kingdom Territories in the region do come under the CITES umbrella through the membership of their metropolitan States.

Communication with Parties in the region since the 21st meeting of the Animals Committee (AC21, Geneva, May 2005)

5. Following AC21, Mr Hay circulated the draft report of the meeting to the Parties in the region.
6. Mr Hay circulated the agenda of the 22nd meeting of the Animals Committee (AC22, Lima, July 2006) to all Management and Scientific Authorities across the region and received comprehensive briefings on key issues from Australia and New Zealand. Feedback was also sought from participants at the Oceanian CITES Capacity Building Workshop and Regional Meeting, 8-11 May 2006. This report was submitted prior to those meetings and further feedback will be given at the present meeting.

7. As regional representative on the Standing Committee, Australia has also communicated on a range of matters relevant to the Animals Committee. The regional representative has provided advice on technical matters to the Oceanian representative (New Zealand on behalf of Australia) at the Strategic Plan Working Group meeting in Ottawa, 24-28 April 2006.
8. There has also been limited communication with other institutions and NGOs since AC21.
9. The regional representative has had significant engagement in chairing the intersessional working group on sharks. The group met in Slimbridge, United Kingdom, 4-6 April 2006 and prepared five reports for consideration at the present meeting. The meeting was organized by the IUCN Shark Specialist Group and was funded by the United States of America and WWF-International. The meeting was attended by a range of fishery and shark conservation experts, along with representatives of the Secretariats of FAO, the Convention on Migratory Species and CITES.
10. There has been advice given to the IUCN Invasive Species Specialist Group on CITES assisting them in responding to a Secretariat request for ongoing collaboration on invasives issues. Mr Hay also provided a written briefing on Invasive Alien Species under CITES for a Convention on Biological Diversity *Ad-Hoc* Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) meeting on Gaps and Inconsistencies in the International Regulatory Framework for Invasive Alien Species held in Auckland from 16 to 20 May 2005.
11. Mr Hay also participated in the adoption of a Programme of Work on Islands by the CBD CoP8 in Curitiba, Brazil, in March 2006. For this programme, Mr Hay drafted a series of actions encouraging island countries to join and participate in CITES.
12. Supported by the Australian and New Zealand Management Authorities and by the Secretariat, the Third Regional Capacity Building Workshop was held in Brisbane from 8 to 11 May 2006. The Agenda included:
 - a) Steps to becoming Parties to CITES
 - b) Outline of obligations (e.g. exemptions, reporting, confiscated specimens), CoP procedures
 - c) CITES operating in small island states
 - d) Progress in Fiji – update on where they are at since the 2004 workshop
 - e) Significant trade reviews and implications
 - f) Regional scientific cooperation
 - g) Non-Detriment Findings (NDFs) – process and the role of quotas
 - h) Identification of needs of Pacific countries
 - i) Non-detriment findings – including crocodiles, agarwood, giant clams and the effects on non-Parties
 - j) New management arrangements for the coral fishery in Queensland
 - k) Reef fishery survey and management work (in particular, the humphead wrasse)
 - l) Implementing the Appendix-II listing of the Great White Shark
 - m) Public education/local awareness of CITES, using Fiji as an example
 - n) Cook Islands and the permit system
 - o) Tonga and the situation with clam meat and shells
 - p) Training for Australian Customs officers
 - q) Introduction to the Australian compliance and enforcement approach
13. This workshop was followed by a regional meeting covering the following agenda items:
 - a) Recap of last regional meeting
 - b) CITES strategic plan working group
 - c) Compliance guidelines working group
 - d) Export quota working group
 - e) Personal/household effects working group
 - f) Review of Scientific Committee working group
 - g) How to prepare for taking on important roles, such as Oceania's regional representative
 - h) Animal and Plant Committees representation
 - i) Need for formal agreements between Management Authorities and other agencies involved (e.g. Customs)

- j) CoP14 - Possible amendments/decisions and reservations
- k) Whole-of-government coordination
- l) Payment of CITES fees
- m) Compliance and enforcement issues

Follow-up on agenda items since AC21 (Geneva, May 2005)

14. The regional representative chaired the intersessional working group on sharks.

Relevant CITES implementation issues in the region

15. Oceania covers a vast area of mostly tropical regions dominated by the marine environment. Trade risks to wild fauna and flora must be seen in the context of the usual range of environmental threats, including habitat loss, invasive species, domestic over-exploitation and global climate change. For example, coral bleaching has had a dramatic effect on the reefs in some parts of the region (e.g. in Fiji). Marine resources form a key part of the local economy. Therefore trade issues concerning the marine of critical and growing interest to the countries of the region. The relationship between trade and other pressures needs to be kept in mind, but CITES has an important potential role in sustainable use and protection of species in the marine environment of the region.
16. A key difficulty, and a major reason for the small number of Parties in the region, is capacity. The population base for those countries which are not party to CITES is usually very small (e.g. the resident population of Niue is about 1,200). Consequently, those administering a Convention such as CITES normally have many competing responsibilities. The resources required to accede to the Convention alone are high relative to the resources available for such purposes. Full implementation is an even larger burden.
17. Scientific expertise is often difficult to obtain when needed, hence the value of building regional networks of expertise which can fulfil some of the technical requirements of CITES, notably those of Scientific Authorities.
18. In general, awareness and activity in support of conservation and sustainable use of natural resources are advancing significantly in the region, with increasing locally - as well as externally-funded activities.

Activities conducted in the framework of Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP13)

19. No specific activities to report since AC21 but New Zealand now funds the expenses of the regional representative to the Committee.

Capacity-building activities

20. As noted above, the capacity-building workshop held in Brisbane is an important initiative for the region and built on the achievements of the two previous workshops, which led to an increase in Parties in the region.
21. Work is still needed on the development of a regional directory of technical experts, to complement that already developed by the Plants Committee.

Agenda items of particular relevance to the Oceanian region

22. The following items are of particular interest to the seven Parties of Oceania:

- a) Regional communication
- b) Review of Significant Trade – giant clams
- c) Trade in alien invasive species
- d) Sea cucumbers
- e) Sharks
- f) Fossil corals

Work to be done by the next meeting of the Animals Committee

23. Prepare a directory of experts as prepared for the Plants Committee.