

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



Twenty-third meeting of the Animals Committee
Geneva, (Switzerland), 19-24 April 2008

Regional reports

CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

1. This report has been submitted by Marcel Calvar and José Alberto Álvarez, regional representatives for Central and South America and the Caribbean.
2. General information
 - a) Number of Parties in the region: 31
 - b) Number of Parties responding to requests for information between September 2007 and January 2008: 4
3. The report was drawn up on the basis only of the formal communications sent by the CITES authorities of the Parties in the region.
4. It should be emphasized that, between 26 September 2007 and 20 January 2008, four requests for information were issued, in the majority of cases to more than one e-mail address per country.
5. Topics of particular importance on which information was provided:

Argentina

a) Management of foxes

Over approximately the past two years, exports of foxes from Argentina (*Lycalopex griseus*, *L. gymnocercus* and *L. culpaeus*), have been increasing in volume. As a consequence, the *Dirección de Fauna Silvestre* (one of the Scientific Authorities), in cooperation with local government authorities, is undertaking a project to manage and monitor these populations throughout the country. The project comprises field studies (baited locations and transect lines), in line with the characteristics of the area being worked in.

The preliminary results obtained indicate that the populations of these species are not shrinking. Moreover, it should be stressed that the area in which foxes are caught has extended to the central and northern region of the country, thereby more than doubling in size.

A publication is currently being prepared containing a genetic study carried out by the *Dirección de Fauna Silvestre* and researchers from Argentina's National Council for Scientific and Technical Research (CONICET), in which *L. griseus* and *L. gymnocercus* are both classified under the name

L. gymnocercus. This study will be submitted to the Animals Committee for consideration by the nomenclature specialists.

b) Management of caymans

Argentina has a number of different captive-breeding operations for caymans (*Caiman latirostris* and *C. yacare*), controlled by regulations based on the proposals approved by CITES. The products (skins) are identified by tags, both for domestic transit and for export. In addition, the country has recently begun exporting the meat of these species.

Owing to the increase in the export volumes from this operation, the *Dirección de Fauna Silvestre* includes a specialist whose exclusive responsibility is to monitor them.

c) Management of psittacids

Owing to the restrictions imposed by the major importer of Argentine psittacids, the European Community, on the entry of live birds into its territory, on the alleged grounds of cases of avian flu, the plans for sustainable management of these species, which had been showing success, have shrunk to almost nothing.

The principal consequences have been firstly, from the social point of view, a significant impact on the local indigenous and creole populations, for whom these projects had been generating significant income, and secondly, from the strictly environmental point of view, a major setback to the habitat preservation undertakings that had been under way.

Since Argentina is in fact free of avian flu, it would be highly desirable if the European Community could take a more situation-specific approach and authorize again the import of specimens these species.

d) Management of iguanas

On the basis of a number of invitations from the wildlife authorities of Bolivia, personnel from the *Dirección de Fauna Silvestre* took part in various meetings during 2006 and 2007, making presentations on wildlife management and advising directly on the management of iguanas (*Tupinambis* spp.).

e) Census of camelids

It was considered important to carry out a new survey of wild camelid populations, namely vicuñas (*Vicugna vicugna*) and guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*), in order to have up-to-date information on their abundance and distribution in Argentina, and to fulfil the commitments that the country undertook under the Vicuña Convention.

As a result, the Ministry for the Environment and Sustainable Development, together with various other bodies, undertook a census of vicuñas and guanacos, with a view to creating a useful management tool. The many beneficial effects arising out of the sampling methodology used in this survey have given useful indications as to how work could be pursued in the future, both in monitoring the camelid populations and in evaluating their habitat for control and conservation purposes, and in particular for plans covering utilization and management in the wild.

In this exercise, the *Dirección de Fauna Silvestre*, under the Ministry for the Environment and Sustainable Development (SAyDS), was responsible for the central coordination of the survey, which was carried out in conjunction with government bodies of the provinces of Mendoza, San Juan and La Rioja. Also participating were the National Agricultural Technology Institute (INTA); the National Parks Administration (APN); the National Gendarmerie; the National Animal Health Service (SENASA); and personnel from national universities. Acting as scientific advisors were researchers from IUCN – The World Conservation Union, CRICyT-IADIZA, CENPAT, UNLu, UNPAT, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and the MACS project (Sustainable economic

utilization of wild South American camelids). At the time of writing (November 2007), the analysis of the data was in the final stages, and the results will be presented in Geneva in April.

At the 22nd meeting of the Animals Committee (Lima, July 2006), Argentina formally presented the progress made with respect to the management of the guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*). That presentation comprised the management plan for the species, regulated by a national law. The presentation was made with a view to modifying the recommendation in place for this species with respect to Argentina, but the situation has remained unchanged.

f) Hunting trophies

Argentina has prepared and promulgated a stricter domestic law (Resolution 1828/07), to regulate the domestic transit and the removal from the country of hunting trophies in general, evidently also including CITES species.

This law basically stipulates that sport hunting establishments must report in advance a number of items of environmental information with respect to the land over which hunting will be carried out, in order to be authorized to operate at national level, and thus for the removal of trophies from the country to be permitted. The aim of this new law is to improve the regulation of this activity and to generate habitat conservation undertakings, on the basis of the information collected.

From the point of view of the CITES species whose hunting for sport is authorized, this will affect the puma (*Puma concolor*) and the collared peccary (*Tayassu tajacu*).

g) Coral smuggling: Seizure of conch and corals at the port of Buenos Aires

Between 16 and 19 of the current month, personnel of the *Dirección de Fauna Silvestre* of the Ministry for the Environment and Sustainable Development and the Customs Verification Sector of the Federal Revenue Administration/Directorate-General for Customs intercepted and examined a container that had arrived in Argentina from the Philippines accompanied by an import declaration for 7,500 kg of various species of conch.

The container was situated in the EXOLGAN S.A. harbour terminal, located in the South Dock area, Avellaneda Section, in the province of Buenos Aires.

Once the container was opened and inspection started, it could be ascertained that among the crates of conch there were other crates containing corals, which had not been declared to Argentina's *Dirección de Fauna Silvestre*.

After three days of work it was determined that the cargo as a whole included approximately two tons of corals and several thousand marine conch of a variety of species that did not have the necessary legal documentation for import into Argentina.

Currently the matter is in the hands of the Investigation and Prevention Division of the Legal Department for Customs Affairs of the Federal Revenue Administration/Directorate-General for Customs, which is determining whether the case should be handled as a Customs violation or brought before a criminal court as an attempt to smuggle protected animal species.

h) Review of the species *Rhea americana* and *Tupinambis merianae*

As part of the periodic review of species included in the CITES Appendices, Spain and Argentina together are carrying out an evaluation covering the species *Rhea americana* and *Tupinambis merianae*, as agreed at the 22nd meeting of the Animals Committee held in Lima.

Cuba

a) Queen conch

Pursuant to the recommendations related to the examination of significant trade in the queen conch (*Strombus gigas*), the Republic of Cuba has set up a voluntary catch and export quota for processed meat, as an additional measure for the management of this species.

For the year 2007, only a total of 42,300 kg was authorized, by way of fishery and environmental permits. This quantity corresponds to the maximum catch authorized for domestic consumption and possibly also export.

The CITES Management Authority, in cooperation with other control and management bodies, drew up and submitted a project to obtain assistance from the technical cooperation function at the Cuban office of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in the design of the project "Fishery management plan for the conservation and sustainable use of *Strombus gigas* in Cuba."

b) Management of sea turtles

During the period under review, monitoring continued of the nesting areas on the Doce Leguas archipelago, in Cayo Largo and in the Guanahacabibes Peninsula biosphere reserve. These monitoring exercises have enabled studies to be pursued into the identity and characteristics of the nesting populations of the different species, tagging and the recovery of tagged specimens, reproductive analyses and sampling for genetic studies.

In December 2007, processing was concluded of the stored scales or shells of *Eretmochelys imbricata* (hawksbill turtle) originating in traditional fishing, by means of the control system that is described in the proposals submitted by Cuba to amend the Appendix listing for this species. A database has been created, including digital photos of each one of the shells. Still to be processed are the stocks of shells or scales (approximately 1,000 kg) which are owned by other bodies, unrelated to fisheries.

The Republic of Cuba is preparing a report that it intends to submit to the CITES Secretariat in the course of 2008, together with a copy of the shell database, for recording and control.

c) Management of crocodiles

The year 2007 saw the launch of the ranching programme in the Delta del Cauto wildlife refuge, in line with the terms described in the proposal to transfer the Cuban population of *Crocodylus acutus* from CITES Appendix I to Appendix II, as approved at CoP13 (Bangkok, 2004). Collection of eggs and neonates was performed in line with the results of the monitoring of nests carried out in the areas of gregarious nesting located in the north-western sector (Monte Cabaniguán, corresponding to the portion of the wildlife refuge situated in the province of Las Tunas), with the result that collection did not impact more than 40 % of the nests, and preference was given to collecting from nests located at sites having conditions less favourable to natural incubation: low-lying sites, with compacted and badly-drained ground, and sites exposed to the action of swell and tides.

Collection covered 23 of a total of 183 nests detected. From the ranching nests, 713 eggs were collected, of which 570 hatched under controlled semi-natural incubation conditions. In addition, a further 14 abandoned nests yielded 303 neonates after hatching assistance, giving a total of 873 specimens. All were transported to the Jobabo farm, in the province of Las Tunas and close to the harvest area.

Studies continued during 2007 on population dynamics, composition of the animals' diet and aspects of the ethology of *C. acutus*, in the pilot project at the Delta del Cauto wildlife refuge. In addition, samples were taken of the flesh of 60 individuals of the local *C. acutus* population in order to carry out molecular genetic analysis using mitochondrial DNA techniques and simple sequence repeats. The preliminary results are currently in process of publication.

There was also monitoring of the reintroduced population of *C. acutus* in the Desembarco del Granma national park, with the existence, location and growth parameters of 22 specimens from the group of 50 originally reintroduced being documented. Also documented was the existence of various groups of neonates, demonstrating that the reintroduced population is reproducing successfully.

Monitoring continued of the reintroduced population of *Crocodylus rhombifer* and the endemic population in the Zapata swamp.

d) National legislation on the application of CITES

Resolution 40/2007 of the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment was adopted, approving and putting into force the National Environmental Strategy (2007-2010), which includes goals and actions for the conservation of biodiversity and the implementation of CITES in Cuba.

Under the direction of the CITES Management Authority and Scientific Authorities, a national workshop was held on the identification of species of special significance that require particular legal consideration. A draft resolution and the lists of such species were drawn up, and these are currently being reviewed prior to approval.

Jamaica

a) Queen conch

The Scientific Authority has held meetings with representatives of the queen conch industry in order to discuss management of the species.

b) National legislation on the implementation of CITES

Consideration is being given to amendment of the Schedules of the Endangered Species (Protection, Conservation and Regulation of Trade) Act, subject to the amendments to the Appendices approved at CoP14.

Uruguay

National legislation on the application of CITES

In October 2007, the Directorate-General for Renewable Natural Resources submitted a draft decree modifying the implementation of Act 14.205 of 4 June 1974 by which CITES had been adopted. The body of the draft legislation seeks to adjust the structure and operation of the authorities responsible for implementing the Convention and to regulate trade in and possession of endangered species, in order to achieve better implementation of the Convention. At the time of writing, this draft legislation had been signed by the ministry designated as the Management Authority, namely the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, and it now has to be cleared by the President of the Republic and four other ministries: those of Foreign Affairs, the Interior, National Defence and the Economy and Finance.