

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



Twenty-eighth meeting of the Animals Committee
Tel Aviv (Israel), 30 August-3 September 2015

Regional matters

Regional reports

CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

1. This report has been drafted by José Alberto Álvarez and Marcel Calvar, regional members for Central and South America and the Caribbean.
2. General information
 - a) Countries in the region: 31
 - b) Countries that responded to the request for information between May 2015 and June 2015: 5

Only formal communications from the CITES authorities for each of the Parties in the region were taken into account in the preparation of this report.

It should be pointed out that during the aforementioned period two requests for information were made: on 1 May 2015 and 1 June 2015. The CITES Secretariat and President of the Animals Committee were copied in. The communication was sent to one or more email addresses per country, adjusted in accordance with the national contacts directory collected during regional meetings held within the framework of the sixteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention (Bangkok, 2013) and with the list of authorities published on the CITES website.

Both calls were sent to more than sixty recipients in the 31 Parties. However, the level of response obtained was extremely low and only 16 % of countries responded to our request, compared with the last three meetings of the Animals Committee (AC25, AC26 and AC27), for which 11, 11 and 6 Parties responded, respectively.

3. Most relevant issues reported:

BRAZIL

The Ministry of the Environment of Brazil, the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), the Amazon Regional Programme (BMZ/DGIS/GIZ) and the CITES Secretariat held from 8 to 12 June 2015 the workshop entitled "Workshop on the handling and analysis of wildlife information by CITES Authorities" at the Biodiversity Academy (ICMBio/MMA-Brasil).

The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.

Thirty-two participants from the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as well staff from the CITES Secretariat and the UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre. The workshop promoted the integration of region's scientific and management authorities and made it possible to increase the knowledge of the authorities regarding CITES principles, foundations and tools. The objective of the workshop focused on strengthening the capacities of CITES National Authorities to identify, analyse and assess reliable information on species and trade that support decision-making processes.

COLOMBIA

a) CITES Activities

- I. Shark workshop: Between 25 and 27 November 2014, the CITES International Shark Workshop: Discussion of experiences and strategies for the implementation of the inclusion of species in Appendix II was held in Santa Marta, Colombia. Representatives of 25 countries, 6 organizations, the CITES Secretariat and 17 representatives of Colombia attended the workshop. The objectives of the workshop were: 1) Evaluate the follow-up and control mechanisms required to guarantee the traceability of international trade in subproducts (fins and meat) of shark species included in Appendix II of CITES and 2) Define strategies for the development of non-detriment findings for recently listed species. Among the results of the workshop, several country needs with regard to the implementation process were identified:
 - Strengthen alert systems for import and export procedures, which will enable the identification and monitoring of trade in CITES species.
 - Strengthen traceability aspects through the identification of species on unloading through different tools, such as the entity forms of the fishing sector.
 - Work with different Regional Fisheries Management Organizations in order to facilitate the monitoring of species information through on-board observers reports (for example, in the case of transshipments).
 - Standardize tariff lines at the regional level, facilitating and contributing to CITES species traceability.
 - Identify the level of domestic consumption in different countries in order to strengthen monitoring and follow-up elements for species of concern.
 - Study the possibility of a permit system for the removal of CITES species through the establishment of quotas, that will facilitate control and monitoring of species of concern.
 - Strengthen the coordination processes between customs, CITES authorities and other relevant governmental institutions for the verification of the conditions laid out in the CITES permit.
 - Seek support from international entities such as INTERPOL and other relevant international bodies such as UNEP, World Customs Organization, World Trade Organization, NOAA, on trade, surveillance and control matters.
 - Training on species and fin recognition: this will enable better quality and more precise trade data and traceability mechanisms.
 - Inter-institutional coordination – flow of information for the drafting of non-detriment findings.
 - Procedural manual on traceability would be useful for all actors involved in the chain of commerce for the species.
 - Tariff codes: the creation of exact codes for shark species and products is required.
 - Definition of quotas: Coordination between CITES and FAO (and perhaps other conventions) for the creation of projects and assessment of stocks and biological aspects of CITES shark species.

- The issuing of conditional non-detriment findings is a window of opportunity for obtaining information.
 - Specific workshops on the use of the non-detriment findings guide are needed for application.
 - Training in the management of CITES Trade Database for countries that have the capacity to understand and manage these data.
- II. Workshop of Experts on Freshwater Rays (Potamotrygonidae family): Held in Bogotá, Colombia, on 28 and 29 October 2014 and supported by NGOs and GIZ-PRA from ACTO. Representatives from 10 of the 12 range States, ichthyologists and CITES scientific and administrative authorities. Below is a summary of the main results, which will be expanded upon in the specific agenda item on freshwater rays.

As a result of the exchange of information and the discussions at the workshop, an updated view of the situation of species from the Potamotrygonidae family from regional experts was developed. As a result of this and in light of considerations related to the Convention, it was suggested that the following species in the referenced river basins should be prioritized: Amazon River (*Paratrygon aiereba*, *Potamotrygon leopoldi*, *P. motoro* y *P. schroederi*), Orinoco *Paratrygon aiereba*, *Potamotrygon motoro* y *P. schroederi*) and other river basins (*Potamotrygon brachyura* y *P. motoro*). With regard to species prioritization, the experts also highlighted the need to strengthen information on population trends, exploring alternatives in analysis models, such as mathematical models, taking as a basis exercises carried out on marine species.

Moreover, and as an input to the Animals Committee regarding the relevance of trade in species in the international sphere, the experts suggested the following options: 1) Maintain the original proposal, incorporating more information, supported on this occasion by the countries participating in the workshop; 2) Submit a new proposal to include the entire Potamotrygon genus; or 3) Submit a new proposal to include the entire Potamotrygonidae family (these two last proposals were suggested taking into account the taxonomic issue and the similarity of the species, which makes control of trade difficult). Lastly, as a complementary proposal, in addition to the position taken and in accordance with the recommendation contained in Resolution Conf 12.6 (Rev. COP16), consideration should be given to including endemic species in restricted areas in Appendix III of CITES.

- III. Queen Conch Workshop: On 12 and 13 March in San Andrés, Colombia, the “International regional cooperation workshop for the management and trade of queen conch” was held. Representatives of Bahamas, Belize, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Nicaragua and United States of America, representatives of Colombia, as the host country, and from the CITES Secretariat, FAO and the Caribbean Fishery Management Council attended. The main goal of the workshop was to assess and define a regional work plan that incorporates relevant strategies to sufficiently put into practice the recommendations, with an emphasis on the non-detriment findings and conversion factors referred to in the Panama Declaration, the COP16 decision and the results of the second meeting of the CFMC/WECAFC/CITES/OSPESCA/CRFM Working Group, held in Panama in November 2014. In three roundtable discussions, the following matters were discussed: Proposal for an agreement on conversion factors for queen conch, non-detriment findings on queen conch and regional management plan for queen conch.

b) Cooperation and regional priorities

- I. Amazon Regional Programme (BMZ/DGIS/GIZ) – The Amazon Regional Programme of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization – ACTO, Humane Society International, Defenders of Wildlife
- II. CITES International Shark Workshop: Discussion of experiences and strategies in the implementation of the inclusion of the species in Appendix II. Humane Society International, Defenders of Wildlife, Conservation International, NOAA Fisheries, United States Department of the Interior (International Technical Assistance Program), CITES, ASOCAR, Government of Colombia, The PEW Charitable Trusts, Colombian Presidential Agency for International Cooperation.

- III. International regional cooperation workshop for the management and trade of queen conch: NOAA Fisheries, FAO, CITES, CFMC, WECAFC, OSPESCA, CRFM, Government of Colombia, Government of San Andrés and Providencia.
- IV. Workshops to develop a proposal to divide tariff codes associated with the marine and coastal resources of Colombia, with an emphasis on species included in CITES Appendices I and II: NOAA Fisheries, BioRed, USAID, Conservation International, Colombian Ocean Commission, Colombian Presidential Agency for International Cooperation.

Thanks to the cooperation with agencies, NGOs, multilateral organizations (Amazon Regional Programme of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization – BMZ/DGIS/GIZ, Defenders of Wildlife, Humane Society International), Colombia and the region, it has been possible to strengthen the capacities through coordination and participation in activities such as: exchange of information between experts, management and analysis of wildlife information for CITES authorities and the Regional training workshop on non-detriment findings.

c) Meetings and workshops

In addition to the abovementioned workshops, the following were held:

- III. Workshop entitled “Evaluation and mitigation of the impact of the inclusion in CITES appendices on livelihoods” held in Bahía de Cispatá, Colombia. As part of the activities of the CITES and Livelihoods Working Group, Colombia hosted the workshop on 11 and 12 February 2015. This workshop was attended by members of the CITES and Livelihoods Working Group, and representatives of the Scientific and Administrative Authorities of Colombia and local communities. The aim was to hold a dialogue on the application of CITES decision 16.25 in order to improve the quick guide, with tools and guidelines drafted by the Secretary General of the Organization of American States and CITES, using as one of the case studies the experience of *Crododylus acutus* in Cispatá Bay.
- IV. The first phase of recognition and identification campaigns of the fins of sharks included in CITES Appendix II directed at monitoring and control bodies (National Fisheries and Agriculture Authority, customs, Colombian Agricultural Institute, Regional Autonomous Corporations) in the main cities for trade and movement of goods. Development of an initial training and identification guide.
- V. Two workshops to develop a proposal for the division of tariff codes related to coastal and marine resources in Colombia, with an emphasis on species included in Appendices I and II of CITES. Participation of the fishery, environmental and customs authorities of Colombia.
- VI. Training workshop on the use of the iSharkFin tool, developed by FAO for the identification of sharks by their fins.

d) Promotion of CITES

- I. Thanks to the cooperation between agencies, NGOs and multilateral organizations (Amazon Regional Programme of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization – BMZ/DGIS/GIZ, Defenders of Wildlife, Humane Society International) Colombia and the region, it has been possible to strengthen the capacities through coordination and participation in activities such as: exchange of information between experts, management and analysis of wildlife information for CITES authorities and the Regional training workshop on non-detriment findings. (Activities carried out by Brazil and Peru but with the assistance of representatives of Colombia).
- II. Through the “*Lets keep legal*” campaign for 2014-2015 (spearheaded by the Government of the archipelago department of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina), a series of publicity materials were designed referring to not capturing and/or consuming sharks, queen conch and other threatened species in the archipelago. The materials were delivered to, among others, hotels, restaurants, fisherman (industrial and artisanal), residents, tourists, schools.
- IV. Through the National Strategy for the Prevention and Control of the Illegal Trafficking of Wild Species (2002), actions to reduce the illegal trafficking of wild species and to generate sustainable alternative products to replace the illegal products are identified, prioritized, guided,

coordinated, developed and implemented. This is done through effective links between different institutions and other actors that are directly or indirectly responsible for environmental management.

Within this framework, the national laboratory for the genetic typing of wild species was developed and remodelled, which will improve criminalistics and forensic activities related to the illegal trafficking of species at the national and international level. The laboratory will operate at the headquarters of the INTERPOL-Central Directorate of the Judicial Police and Intelligence of the Colombian National Police.

An agreement was signed with the National Police, the objective of which was “to bring together the technical, administrative and financial efforts of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and the National Police of Colombia through the Criminal Investigation Directorate, INTERPOL and the Department of Protection of Special Environmental Services (DIPRO), to implement prevention and control activities on illegal national and international trafficking of wild species of fauna and flora.”

In the development of the intersectoral agenda, the Ministry of National Defense held eight regional training workshops for the army, armed forces, air force and national police of Colombia on identification techniques for species that are subject to illegal trafficking and on the applicable environmental law in terms of penalties.

e) The region’s scientific community and CITES

- I. Colombian Meeting on Chondrichthyes (biannual event, organized by the Squalus Foundation), the objectives of which are as follows: Contribute to scientific and technical knowledge about fish species, with an emphasis on sharks and rays, through the development of research projects and institutional strengthening projects, in order to provide the necessary basis for the conservation of these resources, including the performance and evaluation of projects for the research, conservation and use of marine resources.
- II. Creation of the Colombian Network of Chondrichthyes Researchers (headed by the Squalus Foundation), the objective of which is to become a space for socialization regarding all issues related to research on cartilaginous fish (researchers, projects, publications, etc.) and to make available to all users the information generated in the country, serving as a starting point for anyone that wishes to undertake research on the issue in Colombia (see: <http://www.squalus.org/redcondictios/>).
- III. Through the National Fisheries and Agriculture Authority (AUNAP), increased efforts were made to improve the collection of specific statistical information on sharks, through the creation of an information protocol, an application, the Fisheries Statistical Service (SEPEC) and the Colombia Fisheries Observation Programme (POPC), thereby strengthening the numerical databases that can be used to generate scientific information to assess shark populations.
- IV. Through AUNAP, in 2015 the second phase of the project to identify and prioritize potential habitats was developed, which is essential for sharks and rays in the San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina archipelago.
- V. From 2003 to today, stock assessments for the queen conch have been carried out in the San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina archipelago, with the help of international specialists from the Caribbean region.

f) Cooperation and surveillance

- I. Agreement 002 of 2014: Collaboration agreement between the Ministry of National Defense, the Department of National Parks of Colombia, Conservation International Colombia and the Malpelo Foundation, with the objective of pooling interinstitutional efforts against illegal fishing and other environmental crimes, protecting human lives at sea, controlling shipping, maintaining constitutional and legal order, and suppressing any form of crime in the interests of preserving the environment and interests of the Nation in the Malpelo Flora and Fauna Sanctuary and the Exclusive Economic Zone of Colombia.

- II. Resolution 438 of 13 November 2014: through which are established global fishing quotas for 2015 for the different species being exploited. In the resolution, the values for queen conch and freshwater rays (Potamotrygonidae family) for ornamental use are listed.

g) Other

- Taking into account the processes of use of wild species and the need to have consistent regulatory frameworks, an analysis was carried out of information about the Colombian regulatory framework regarding the direct removal of wildlife. This was used to produce a document in which the information was organized and analysed in terms of regulatory management gaps, needs and proposals, in order to contribute to national processes for the sustainable use of species and raise conservation values and increase the sustainability of the current use model for the *Caiman crocodilus*. In 2014, Colombia developed and began implementation of a species management programme, which over a period of five years will stabilize its use through a mixed model of ranching and captive breeding.

The management programme is based on four strategies that are listed below with their corresponding objectives: I) GOVERNANCE STRATEGY – Specific objective: Improve the efficacy of the State in terms of the control and monitoring that it should carry out on use models of *C. crocodilus*; II) ECOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL RESEARCH STRATEGY – Specific objective: Complete the scientific basis on the status of cultural, social, economic and ecological knowledge of *C. crocodilus*, for the conservation of its habitat and natural populations; III) SPECIES MANAGEMENT STRATEGY USING A MIXED MODEL – Specific objective: Establish a mixed cycle production system for the sustainable use of *C. crocodilus*, creating agreements between rural communities and captive breeding farms; IV) STRATEGY FOR THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF ILLEGAL TRAFFICKING – Specific objective: Avoid the illegal exploitation of specimens of *C. crocodilus* in Colombia.

- Agreement 2015. Ministry of Environment (Administrative Authority) – Institute of Natural Sciences (Scientific Authority) for the assessment of natural populations of the *Caiman crocodilus fuscus*, in the Luruaco and Guajaro Lagoon Complexes, to support decision-making.

GUATEMALA

a) CITES Activities

- I Conservation and Management of Sharks, Resolution Conf. 12.6 (Rev. CoP16).

The Guatemalan fisheries authorities – Regulatory Office for Fisheries and Aquaculture (DIPESCA) – have established, through Article 8 on the ban on the fishing of rays and sharks of Ministerial Agreement 154/2015 of 3 March 2015, a ban on the fishing of the following families of Elasmobranchii: Carcharinidae, Sphyrnidae, Triakidae, Ginglymostomatidae and Batoidea, in all forms, for a period of two months from 1 August to 31 September 2015.

- II. Conservation and Management of the Queen Conch - *Strombus gigas*

For this species, the Guatemalan fishery authorities (DIPESCA) have established, through Article 4 on the ban on the fishing of queen conch, of Ministerial Agreement 154/2015 of 3 March 2015, a ban on the fishing of all types of this species from 01 July to 30 September 2015.

- III. Drafting of a Proposal for *Abronia*.

A proposal was drafted to amend Appendices I and II in order to include in Appendix II the species of the *Abronia* genus that are native to Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. It is hoped to present this proposal in the name of the three countries involved at the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

- IV. Wildlife Day was celebrated throughout March 2015, with activities held both in the capital and in Departments in which there are Regional Offices of the National Council on Protected Areas (CONAP).

- V. Conservation and Management of Sea Turtles

Resolution 01/21/2012, establishes the prohibition of the collection of the eggs or exploitation of the following species: *Dermochelys coriacea*, *Eretmochelys imbricata*, *Chelonia mydas*, *Chelonia agassizii* and *Caretta caretta*. This same document also authorizes the collection of the eggs of the *Lepidochelys olivacea* turtle, for internal trade in the country, provided that 20 % of eggs collected are allocated to conservation quotas. This Resolution is valid for five years from 15 October 2012.

b) Regional cooperation and priorities

- Sharks: The Central America Fisheries and Aquaculture Organization (OSPESCA) has taken charge of the work on sharks and manta rays, which has made it possible to standardize the tools used for the control of commercial exploitation of these species. Compliance with these activities is monitored by the Organization's representatives in each country.
- Belize Crocodile or Morelet's Crocodile - *Crocodylus moreletii*

Continuity in the activities of the Trinational Strategy between Mexico, Guatemala and Belize for the management and conservation of this species has been ensured. Among the principal activities, consideration has been given to national monitoring of priority areas.

c) Meetings and workshops

- Scarlet macaw – *Ara macao*:

A workshop was held, entitled "Dialogue on conservation perspectives of the scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*) in Guatemala". The main objective of the workshop was to formulate a national ex situ and in situ conservation strategy. As a result of this activity, a technical roundtable was established, which is responsible for formulating the strategy.

- Central American River Turtle - *Dermatemys mawii*:

As a result of the domestic levels of trade in the species, in December 2014 a workshop was held to formulate a strategy for the species' management and conservation. During the workshop, a proposal was developed, which is pending revision and approval by the CITES national authorities.

- Morelet's Crocodile - *Crocodylus moreletii*:

Training workshops on monitoring protocols held in previous years had made it possible to establish a baseline for the monitoring of the species; with this first experience, a proposal was drafted for the development of a permanent monitoring programme in some already identified priority areas.

- Sharks:

Participation in the CITES International Shark Workshop: Discussion of experiences and strategies for the implementation of the inclusion of the species in Appendix II, Santa Marta, Colombia, from 24 to 28 November 2014. In this activity, a national progress report on implementation of Appendix II was presented.

Participation in the joint workshop on the standardization of procedural protocols for the issuing of non-detriment findings for shark species in CITES Appendix II, guided by the Fishery Authorities and CITES Authorities, held in Guatemala City on 19 and 20 January 2015. The main goal of this meeting was to work on proposed procedures to enable relevant authorities to draft non-detriment findings for the sharks and manta rays included in Appendix II.

- Central American and Dominican Republic Wildlife Enforcement Network Workshop:

The Secretariat of the Central American and Dominican Republic Wildlife Enforcement Network (ROAVIS) and the Public Prosecutor's Office of Guatemala organized from 21 to 22 January 2015 in Guatemala City the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Network. The event was attended by environmental prosecutors and lawyers, Network focal points, and representatives of

environmental authorities, police, border protection forces, and judicial investigation offices from the member countries. Invited guests included experts from the United States Justice Department, Department of the Interior and State Department.

d) Capacity-building and awareness-raising campaigns

- Workshop for Customs:

On 28 and 29 May 2015, in Guatemala City, the National Workshop for Wildlife and Customs Inspectors on CITES Regulations was held. The workshop was aimed at staff from the Customs Office of Guatemala. It was held with the support of national and foreign instructors and funding from the United States Department of the Interior.

- Workshop for the Ministry of the Interior:

During the week of 25 to 29 May in Guatemala City, the Environmental Awareness-Raising Week was held for officials from the National Civil Police (PNC) the Department for the Protection of Nature (DIPRONA) and the Market Police (POLIMERC). The main objective of this workshop was to raise the awareness of the officers from the different departments of the National Civil Police regarding issues that are addressed by CONAP, the Scientific and Administrative Authority of Guatemala. Among the main topics covered was that of wildlife smuggling and the Convention and its application in Guatemala.

- Campaign to prevent the trafficking of fauna in the country's airport and ports:

This campaign was organized in collaboration with the NGO, Zootropic, which developed materials to place in the main ports and airports of the country, with the aim of reducing the trafficking of specimens, parts and derivatives from species of fauna. This campaign has the support of telephone companies that, when a certain number is dialled, provide information about CITES species.

e) The region's scientific community and CITES

The Scientific Collections of the School of Biology of the University of San Carlos de Guatemala is working with the national CITES Administrative Authority so that they are included as a CITES scientific institution.

f) Cooperation and surveillance

Guatemala has agreements with the NGOs, Zootropic, FUNDAECO, ARCAS and Antigua Exotic, for different activities, including: animal rescue, campaigns to discourage illegal trafficking, promotion of conservation of at risk species and the follow up of national strategies and conservation plans for CITES priority species.

Customs: In line with the agreement signed between CONAP and the Superintendency of Tax Administration (SAT) of the Customs Authority, the agreed activities are being undertaken, including the coordination in boarding procedures, the review of documents and the training of staff from both institutions. Within this framework, the relevant tariff codes were also reviewed and identified for the country's most imported and exported CITES species.

PARAGUAY

a) CITES Activities

Export is continuing of the remaining stocks of hides or skins of *Tupinambis* spp., *Caiman yacare* and *Eunectes notaeus*, which were obtained between 2001 and 2003. Once the legal stocks of each species have been exported, the CITES Authorities of Paraguay will be able to implement management plans developed for *Tupinambis* spp. and *Caiman yacare*.

URUGUAY

a) CITES Activities

- I. Sturgeon *Acipenser* sp.: The main specimens subject to commercial transactions continue to be sturgeon products: eggs and fillets of meat from the Siberian sturgeon *Acipenser baerii* and the Russian sturgeon *A. gueldenstaedtii*. This significant production comes from two endeavours by captive breeding operations and caviar production and packaging plants, registered with the CITES Secretariat as UY-001 and UY-002.
- II. Common parakeet *Myiopsitta monachus*: The legal exploitation of fauna and international trade in parakeets has been occurring for more than 40 years in Uruguay and provides income to tens of families in rural areas, as hunters and collectors, as well as to the people that work in the establishments where the birds are quarantined, raised and prepared for shipment, and for the family firms that make up the three businesses.

Since the start of 2014, the export of parakeets has become noticeably reduced. This had reached its highest figures in recent years, with 60,000 to 70,000 live specimens mainly destined for Mexico for the pet market. According to the UNEP/WCMC/CITES database, Uruguay is one of the main sources of export of wild birds, with a very high average, which reached a maximum peak of 75,000 in 2008. Within this context, Mexico occupies first place in the import of wild birds, with a maximum of 250,000 specimens per year.

Parakeets are the number one species in international trade in wild birds. Of the birds exported from Uruguay, 93 % come from the wild and 7 % are raised in captivity or ranched.

For the other countries in the region that are range States for parakeets, where the species is also abundant, exploitation of this natural resource is not considered to be substantial. Argentina stopped exporting them in 2007 and restarted with very few imports: 8,800 specimens in 2012 and 2,200 in 2013. However, instead, a wide variety of parrots are exported. Brazil has prohibited the capture and trade of all wild birds, even in Rio Grande do Sul, where *M. monachus* is more abundant. Paraguay does not trade in this species, since there are other species of parrot available that have greater commercial value.

In March 2014, the Mexican health authority, the General Directorate of Animal Health, National Service for Agriculture and Food Health, Harmlessness and Quality (SENASICA), notified the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) of the appearance of a new strain of highly pathogenic avian influenza of subtype H7N3, according to laboratory tests carried out on animal(s) that arrived on 13 February 2014, in a shipment of live specimens of *Myiopsitta monachus*. Although it is a type of avian influenza that does not affect human beings, it is a mandatory reported disease. The communication to OIE did not specify the export country, instead referring to the origin as South America; nevertheless, Uruguay was, at this time, the only country that exported this species to Mexico.

The communication was presented as a manifestation of a subclinical infection, without clarifying the mortality rate. However, the prophylaxis measures used to fight the case led to the complete culling of 1987 birds. In addition, this alarming fact was communicated by the Mexican health authorities to the Animal Health Division of the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries of Uruguay. In this respect, the Uruguayan authorities reported that the exported birds were subject to official health monitoring and that to date no event had been diagnosed that indicated the health issues reported. As such, the results of the national monitoring and sampling programme for avian influenza for the last few years and the results of the negative tests of the birds that had been exported were provided in a timely manner.

The Animal Health Division of Uruguay carried out the corresponding epidemiological investigation using samples from the establishment in which the parakeets were kept after capture from the wild and where they also raise and ranch birds destined for other markets. In addition, samples were taken from bird farms within a radius of 3 km without finding any clinical signs. The samples obtained by (swabs and serology) and from the animal cull were submitted to the official veterinary laboratory DILAVE ("Miguel C. Rubino", Department of Veterinary Laboratories, Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries). After the performance of specific

immunodiffusion tests using agar gel and ELISA, no positive antibody results were found for the mentioned avian influenza virus.

It should also be highlighted that this virus is endemic in many countries in Asia and particularly in countries in North America, but has never been diagnosed in Uruguay or in domestic poultry in the region (Argentina and Brazil). Mexico is where the largest number of cases in the region is found, since the start of outbreaks in 2012 and there is a control and eradication programme for this subtype and vaccination is carried out using inactivated H7N3 virus.

After relevant health monitoring by the national authorities and given that up to the date of this report no case of avian influenza has been detected in Uruguay, we can consider that it was a diagnostic error in the destination country; nevertheless, exports of this species to this destination have not resumed.

b) Meetings and workshops

- Regional workshop for experts in South American freshwater rays (*Potamotrygonia* spp.), in Bogotá in October 2014, which was attended by technical experts linked to the CITES Scientific Authority and experts in this taxon.
- CITES International Shark Workshop: Discussion of experiences and strategies for the implementation of the inclusion of species in Appendix II, Santa Marta, Colombia, October 2014.

c) Cooperation and surveillance

The National Directorate of Customs (DNA) participated in the joint customs operation named FLYAWAY, together with its counterparts from South America, Mexico and the United States of America. The operation focused on the smuggling of wildlife products, with particular attention on species listed in CITES and species at risk of extinction protected by law, originating from South America and Mexico. The operations had three phases: pre-operative, operative and post-operative.

The organization and coordination of the operation was carried out by the Regional Intelligence Liaison Offices (RILO) of South America, in close cooperation with the United States of America and with support and technical assistance from Peru and the Secretariat of the World Customs Organisation.

All of the participating customs Regional Intelligence Liaison Offices should put into practice risk assessment techniques, using information profiles to identify and focus on birds and high-risk shipments.