

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



Sixty-first meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 15-19 August 2011

Regional matters

Reports of regional representatives

OCEANIA

This report has been submitted by Australia.*

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| • Australia | • Papua New Guinea |
| • Fiji | • Samoa |
| • New Zealand | • Solomon Islands |
| • Palau | • Vanuatu |

This regional report has been prepared by the CITES Management Authority of Australia, as Oceania regional representative to the CITES Standing Committee. The report covers the inter-sessional period from SC59 to date. All CITES Parties in the region were consulted and, where possible, have provided input on the activities of their CITES Management and Scientific Authorities. Please direct all comments or enquiries to:

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1. Introduction

This report outlines the activities undertaken by the Parties of the Oceania region to implement and enforce CITES during the period between the Fifty-ninth Meeting of the Standing Committee (Doha, Qatar, 12 March 2010) to date.

Australia, as the CITES regional representative for Oceania to the Standing Committee, has prepared this report on behalf of the Parties of the Oceania region – Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

2. Fiji

CITES Implementation and Enforcement

The Fiji Island CITES Management Authority (FICMA) has undertaken continuous inspection

* *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.*

of handicraft centres throughout the country. Of five visits, seven confiscations of CITES items have been made.

FICMA has also made visits to aquarium companies to ensure their compliance with CITES requirements.

Fiji has also actively issued permits for CITES specimens and closely monitored trade data for hard corals and live rock (as outlined below).

1st Quarter

- Revenue Collected: **\$3,960**
- Permits Issued and Updated: **131**, **1** Re-export permit and **1** Import permit
- Analysis of CITES trade data:
 1. **Hard Corals:** 22,943pcs
 2. **Live Rock:** 236,074kg

2nd Quarter

- Revenue Collected : **\$3,330**
- Permits Issued and Updated: **110**, **2** Re-export permit
- Analysis of CITES trade data:
 1. **Hard Corals:** 14,707 pcs
 2. **Live Rock:** 298,447 kg

3rd Quarter

- Revenue collected: \$3,360
- Permits Issued and Updated: 112
- Analysis of CITES trade data:
 1. **Hard Corals:** **22,561**pcs
 2. **Live Rock:** **217,130**kg

4th Quarter

- Revenue collected so far: **\$3,270**
- Permits Issued: **109**
- Analysis of CITES trade data:
 1. **Hard Corals:** 16,091pcs
 2. **Live Rock:** 139,321kg

Total Revenue collected as at 31st December, 2010 - **\$13,920**

Total permits updated so far: **462**, **3** Re-export permit and **1** Import permit

Education and Awareness

Fiji has produced various awareness and educational materials including the publication of new posters for Humphead Wrasse (Varivoce), Turtle, Davui (Triton Shell) and for live rock and coral.

The Australian and New Zealand CITES Management Authorities also provided funding and technical assistance to Fiji to produce an education brochure in Fijian "Ke sega ni macala—taroga!" (If in doubt – check it out).

3. New Zealand

Education and awareness activities

The New Zealand Wildlife Enforcement Group secured funding for a series of workshops on Prevention of Illegal Wildlife Trade in the Pacific region. In August 2009, a workshop was held in Auckland, New Zealand, that had participants from seven Pacific Island countries. This was followed up by two in-country workshops in 2010 - one in Apia, Samoa and the other in Honiara, Solomon Islands. There was a third in-country workshop in May 2011 in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. The approach of the workshops has been to ensure multi-agency participation, in order to promote collaboration and communication among all government departments that work on CITES, wildlife and border issues.

The New Zealand CITES Management Authority has obtained funding to provide in-country CITES implementation assistance to Samoa and the Solomon Islands. This project is intended to follow-up the workshops held by the New Zealand Wildlife Enforcement Group in 2010-2011, and will provide support as identified by the Samoan and Solomon Islands governments during those workshops. Work is expected to start later in 2011.

The New Zealand CITES Management Authority and the Australian CITES Management Authority have collaborated to create and distribute a series of CITES brochures in English and seven Pacific languages (see <http://www.doc.govt.nz/publications/about-doc/role/international/does-your-luggage-break-wildlife-laws-brochure/> - Vanuatu Bislama brochure in process). The collaborative approach was taken to promote a consistent trans-Tasman and Oceanic message regarding CITES regulations and the import/export of CITES-listed species. The brochures have been distributed throughout the region.

The New Zealand CITES Management Authority has published a Chinese language brochure on traditional medicines. The brochure outlines CITES documentation requirements for medicines containing CITES-listed species.

Participation in CITES activities and projects

New Zealand continues to actively participate in various CITES Working Groups, including the Review of Resolutions and the Introduction from the Sea Working Groups.

Enforcement

The New Zealand Wildlife Enforcement Group secured funding to design, publish and distribute species identification and border control manuals that are specific to the Oceania region. Thus far, over 30 ID sheets have been published for various species and higher taxa (birds, reptiles) and related issues such as traditional medicines, smuggling techniques, and permit verification. These have been distributed to border agency representatives in 25 countries. More sheets are planned to cover various marine and invertebrate species.

4. Palau

The change of government in Palau has limited CITES activity since SC57. Once the new government has been established and CITES staffing roles have been allocated, work will resume on developing CITES policies.

New CITES structure:

Management Authority: Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment & Tourism

Scientific Authorities: Bureau of Marine Resources & Bureau of Agriculture

Progress report:

- Palau has created the world's first "shark sanctuary" on September 25, 2009. Palau forbids all commercial shark fishing within its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) waters. The sanctuary protects about 600,000 square kilometres (230,000 sq mi) of ocean. President Johnson Toribiong made the announcement at a meeting of the United Nations. President Toribiong also requested a worldwide ban on shark fishing. Palau is home to 135 endangered or vulnerable shark and ray species.
- March 14, 2011 - President Johnson Toribiong and Minister of Natural sources, Environment & Tourism Harry Fritz has launch a campaign to boost the conservation of the mermaid-like sea cow and its seagrass habitats. Palau hosts the smallest, most remote and critically endangered dugong population in the region. The initiative to protect the dugong will target local coastal and fishing communities and water craft users in Palau.
- November 18, 10 – A house Bill No. 8-115-13S has been introduced in congress to expand Palau's protection of dugong to all marine mammal species, establishing Palau as a marine mammal sanctuary.

5. PNG

Workshops and meetings

Prevention of illegal Wildlife Trade Training – Oceania under the auspices of the Oceania Customs Organisation Secretariat and supported by the Pacific Security Fund was held at the Gateway Hotel in Port Moresby on 9th to 12th of May 2011. Officers from Papua New Guinea Customs, Department of Environment and Conservation and Police Officers attended. The trainers were from the International Fund for Animal Welfare, USA and South Asia; the Department of Conservation New Zealand and the Wildlife Enforcement Group New Zealand.

CITES reports

Annual CITES reports for 2009 and 2010 are in progress and will be sent before October 2011.

Sapos yu no save –sekim gut Pamphlets

The New Zealand and Australian CITES Management Authorities have provided technical assistance by way of printing '*If in doubt – check it out*' pamphlets for Papua New Guinea in Tok Pisin and dispatched the first batch. PNG is currently working on the Motu version, the second National Language. All pamphlets were distributed to some of the Customs Officers during Prevention of illegal Wildlife Trade Training who are based out in the Provinces.

The PNG Management Authority acknowledges the New Zealand Management Authority for the continued technical assistance.

Surveys/species inventory

Every year, in order to meet its CITES obligations for Crocodile skin trade, the PNG CITES Management Authority conducts two aerial nest count surveys of its two endemic Crocodile species. The constant rise in helicopter hire cost has prompted PNG CITES Management Authority to consider reducing two surveys to one per year, conducted biennially, rather than annually. For 2011 only one Aerial Nest Count Survey will be conducted -it will be for the fresh water species in October (the breeding and nesting season).

Eaglewood Management plan

The Papua New Guinea Scientific Authority (Plants) and Forest Research Institute (FRI) completed a Management Plan for Natural Eaglewood (Agarwood) Resources in Papua New Guinea in March 2011. This was approved by the Forestry Board. The Papua New Guinea Forest Authority is in the process of putting the Management Plan into an operational phase and harmonising the two permit administrations before an export can be affected.

6. Samoa

No input provided.

7. Solomon Islands

CITES Enforcement and Implementation

- CITES enforcement under the Wildlife Protection and Management Act 1998 is further strengthened through training and cooperation among stakeholders. Coordination with Solomon Islands Customs, Solomon Islands Quarantine and Royal Solomon Islands Police had improved recently through the establishment of understanding, communication contacts; defined roles and the intention for establishment of the taskforce.
- There is ongoing awareness through media to the public on wildlife protection and management. Awareness brochure was developed with the assistance of the New Zealand Wildlife Enforcement Group (NZWEG) and Australian CITES Management Authority and translated to Solomon Islands pidgin for the public.

Approved Management Plan Implementation

- At last all current wildlife traders have submitted their management plans and were approved as required under the Wildlife Act regulation. An ongoing monitoring programme was proposed for all sites to ensure compliance. All exporters with approved management plans are registered as approved person to do exporting.

Species Survey and Reporting

- There is a national dolphin survey in progress with the final sampling to be undertaken in July this year. The report will provide quota for future export and decision making.
- There is also currently a consultation with the Ministry of Police, Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources and other supporting organization for crocodile survey in the country.
- A regional meeting was held in Honiara in 2010 organized by SPC which assist the Solomon Islands with Non Detrimental Finding survey and quota setting proposed for certain heavily traded species.

Training Workshop on Prevention of Illegal Wildlife Trade

A wildlife law enforcement workshop, jointly organized by the New Zealand Wildlife Enforcement Group (NZWEG) and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) under the auspices of the Oceania Customs Organization (OCO) Secretariat was organized for Solomon Islands. The training provided:

- Advice on permitting protocols and establishment of procedures and best practices.
- Provide seizure template to the Management Authority.
- Comprehensive discussion of current legislation and ability to implement at the border.
- Recognition and new understanding of agency jurisdictions.
- Interagency cooperation and understanding.
- Participant were provide with WEG's Species Identification Sheets, Prevention of Wildlife Crime training manual, Interpol Concealment Method Handbook and Interpol Techniques for Interviewing Wildlife Criminals,
- Fact-finding industry visits undertaken to assess situation regarding wildlife exporters.
- Highlight the need for Public awareness.

8. Vanuatu

Education and awareness activities

Vanuatu has continued to actively undertake activities to increase the awareness of CITES-related issues around the nation. In spite of the limited technical assistance and human resources at its disposal, the CITES Management Authority, the Vanuatu Environment Unit, has been proactive in its approach to the education and awareness of the residents and communities of Vanuatu with regards to CITES-related issues.

Vanuatu has been active in its promotion of CITES-listed species around the country, particularly in the nation's capital, Port Vila. The Department of Environment continues to contract Radio Vanuatu to broadcast Environmental issues and updates on a weekly basis. This opportunity is used to disseminate information on CITES to the public. Vanuatu has also undertaken awareness activities for local market vendors and shops who sell endangered species.

Vanuatu has also conducted fortnightly meetings with Customs and Quarantine officers in order to disseminate information, provide training and increase their awareness of particular CITES species and issues.

Legislation and policy

Vanuatu is currently in the process of amending the national legislation with assistance from an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development (AYAD). The AYAD, who has a legal background, is undertaking revision of the legislative text, which will be submitted to the Parliament for approval.

While Vanuatu is doing all that it can to ensure that its obligations under CITES are being fulfilled and that the interests of the environment are of primary importance, funding and technical assistance will be very much appreciated to ensure that this can continue and indeed improve.

Constraints

- The department of Environment has limited funds to cater for CITES implementation in Vanuatu. In addition, donors do not take CITES as a priority for providing funds.
- Due to staffing issues, the Department of Environment does not have a dedicated CITES officer. The responsibilities of CITES Officer are undertaken by the Biodiversity Officer.
- No MoU exists between the VEU and CITES enforcement officers such as the Customs Officers, Quarantine and Police, to help control and monitor trade in CITES listed species at the borders. This is something that we would like to do in the near future.
- There is great need for specific training on the work of CITES amongst the CITES enforcement officers at the borders such as the Customs, Quarantine and Police.
- Lack of expertise in the identification of CITES listed species in the country is also an issue. Vanuatu requires assistance from CITES experts to conduct training on the identification of CITES species ASAP. This training will be particularly important for Customs, Quarantine and Police officers who are first to intercept CITES specimens at the border.

9. Australia

Participation in CITES activities and projects

Australia continued as the Oceania regional representative on the Standing Committee (SC) with Ms Deb Callister, Acting Assistant Secretary, Wildlife Branch, representing the region. Australia participates in several CITES working groups. Australia attended the 19th Plants Committee meeting and the Introduction to the Sea meeting in May 2011.

In May 2010, Australia hosted the CITES Secretary-General. The Management Authority arranged a series of meetings for Mr Scanlon during his visit including with senior Australian Government Officials, Management Authority staff and NGOs.

Education and awareness activities

Australia has continued its targeted education, awareness and compliance activities throughout Australia in relation to CITES fauna and flora obligations. In particular, activities have focused on specific stakeholders including complementary medicine practitioners and traders, Australian Customs agencies and Border Protection Service officers and the general public (including travellers).

Initiatives include:

- Delivery of CITES training to Customs officers
- Review of the wildlife-trade related pages on the Management Authority's internet site
- Promotion of CITES obligations at various fora: travel expos (Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane); Floriade festival; the Australian Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine Association's (AACMA) Annual Conference; and through the media.
- Promotion and education of the Australian Endangered Species Certification Scheme for complementary medicine practitioners (a joint scheme between DSEWPaC and AACMA where practitioners certify that they do not use endangered species in their medicines), and
- Development, publication, and distribution (in conjunction with New Zealand) of a promotional CITES brochure in seven Pacific languages (Samoan, Tongan, Fijian, Tok Pisin (Papua New Guinea), Palauan and Pijin (Solomon Islands), and Bislama (Vanuatu)).

Implementation issues

Australian Crocodile Skin tags

Australia is proposing to cease including the year of production or harvest on all its crocodile skin tags. All other codes (ISO two-letter country code, the standard species code and a unique identification number) will still appear on the Australian tags. The removal of year of production or harvest will greatly simplify tag production and management within Australia. Australia has consulted with the CITES Secretariat and other Parties on this matter – the limited feedback received so far suggests that other Parties have no issue with this. For further information, please contact the Director, Wildlife Trade Regulation at wildlifetrade@environment.gov.au

Corals

Australia has experienced significant problems with coral exporters using nomenclature that does not comply with the nomenclature used in the CITES database. This has resulted in Australian export permits being questioned by some Parties and seizure of some specimens. Consequently, as an aid to exporters, Australia has produced an alphabetical list of acceptable names for CITES-listed corals that occur in Australian waters, including synonyms that are not acceptable for use on permits. This list was compiled by the Australian Biological Resources Study, derived from data supplied by the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre. For further information or a copy of the list, please contact the Director, Wildlife Trade Regulation at wildlifetrade@environment.gov.au

Enforcement

Australia has established a national Environmental Crimes Operations Group under the Australasian Environmental Law Enforcement and Regulators Network (AELERT). This comprises Federal, State and Territory officials, and New Zealand agencies working together to facilitate collaboration and consistency in approaches to manage compliance issues relating to environmental crime, including wildlife trade.

Under the AELERT banner Australia has completed numerous enforcement activities to support CITES priorities including participation in the Interpol Environmental Crime Operation RAMP. This operation was a targeted compliance, enforcement and intelligence action focussed on the illegal trade in reptiles and amphibians.

Australia has also completed several successful Court prosecutions in relation to the illegal possession of CITES specimens.

Australia is participating in the Interpol Environment Crime review of trade relating to Rhino

Horn. Australia submitted an intelligence report on the trade in Rhino Horn within Australia to the Nairobi Rhino Task force meeting in May 2011.

Review of National Legislation

In May 2010, the Governor-General of Australia made amendments to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000* (the Regulations). The amendments increase clarity of, and outline Australia's legislative requirements for: the import or export of personal and household effects; approved captive breeding programs; artificial propagation programs; and approved aquaculture programs. The amendments also enhance the streamlining of Australia's national legislation with CITES requirements.

The Australian Government is currently considering the recommendations of the Independent review of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) (Australia's CITES-implementing legislation). The government is undertaking broad consultation in developing its response to the review and has committed to introducing new legislation to implement reforms as required.

Reporting

Australia's 2009 Annual Report was submitted to the Secretariat in May 2011. The 2010 Annual Report is in progress and will be submitted to the Secretariat prior to 31 October 2011.