

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



Sixty-sixth meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 11-15 January 2016

Regional matters

Reports of regional representatives

OCEANIA

1. This document has been submitted by Australia as the Regional Representative for Oceania.*

General information

2. Parties providing information for this Report: Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) also provided an update on activities in the region.
 - Regional Representative: Australia
 - Alternate Regional Representative: Fiji
 - Number of Parties in the Region: 8 (Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu)
 - Number of Parties providing information for this Report: 5
3. This report outlines the activities undertaken by the Parties of the Oceania region to implement and enforce CITES since the sixty-fifth meeting of the Standing Committee (July 2014) to November 2015.

Overview of major developments

AUSTRALIA

Australia continued as the Oceania regional representative to the Standing Committee, with Mr Paul Murphy, Assistant Secretary, Wildlife Trade and Biosecurity Division, Department of the Environment, representing the region.

Implementation

The Department of the Environment is the CITES Management Authority for Australia and the host for Australia's CITES Scientific Authority. Implementation and enforcement is undertaken by the Department of the Environment in collaboration with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.

Legislation

Australia is investigating options to streamline domestic requirements for the international movement of personal and household effects containing CITES listed specimens. As part of this work, Australia requested

* *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.*

comment from stakeholders and CITES Parties regarding the national application of CITES personal and household effects exemptions. A summary of information developed through this work will be provided to the CITES Secretariat and CITES Parties in 2016.

Enforcement

Australia has a strong commitment to the investigation and prosecution of illegal wildlife trade. Between July 2014 and June 2015, approximately 1 500 seizure and caution notices were issued by Australian enforcement authorities for CITES specimens suspected to have been imported or exported without appropriate documentation. Examples of seizures include:

- Four live snakes detected in November 2014 in a parcel from Indonesia.
- Four live snakes detected in February 2015 in parcels from Indonesia.
- One hundred and fifty two live Australian native lizards, snakes, amphibians and insects seized in February 2015 as an attempt was made to export them via post from Australia by two Czech nationals and two Russian nationals. The specimens were concealed within cigarette packets and hollowed out books. Destination addresses included Hungary, Russia and Vietnam. Specimens were also located in the luggage of two of the men as they attempted to exit the country. All four men were successfully prosecuted.
- One hundred and seventy five live fish (with an estimated value of over \$300 000) detected in February 2015 as they entered Australia from Singapore. Further investigation resulted in the execution of search warrants at two addresses and discovery of another unlawful live specimen.
- Twelve live Australian native lizards detected in August 2015 in packages posted from Australia to Korea.
- Eleven live reptiles (tortoises and monitors) detected in September 2015 in a package posted from Indonesia.
- Ten live Australian native reptiles detected in October 2015 in packages posted from Australia by four Slovakian nationals.

Education and awareness

Australia has implemented a range of CITES education, awareness-raising and training activities. Efforts have targeted border surveillance personnel, auction houses and cruise tourism. Activities included:

- Interactive training of officers from Australian Border Force and the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
- Installation of permanent displays of CITES listed specimens and educational material on cruise ships operating in the Oceania region.

Capacity building activities

In 2014, Australia provided USD\$40,000 to the CITES Secretariat to support workshops on implementation of CITES for Parties and non-Parties in the Oceania region (see Part 5).

In 2015, Australia and New Zealand developed a project to assist countries in the Oceania region to meet requirements for CITES listed sharks and manta rays (oceanic white tip shark, porbeagle shark and the smooth, scalloped and great hammerhead sharks, and the giant and reef manta rays). As the project coordinator, Professor Colin Simpfendorfer (Co-Chair of the IUCN Shark Specialist Group, and Director of the Centre for Sustainable Tropical Fisheries and Aquaculture at James Cook University) collated data on regional shark harvests and stocks in collaboration with Oceania CITES Parties and regional organisations. A workshop will be held in early 2016 to develop a framework for ongoing regional data collection and monitoring, and development of a regional shark and manta ray non-detriment finding. The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP) will assist James Cook University in coordinating and organising this workshop. Australia acknowledges the funding (US\$50 000) made available for this project by the CITES Secretariat through financial support from the European Union.

FIJI

CITES implementation and enforcement

The Fiji Island CITES Management Authority (FICMA) has been actively involved in the enforcement of CITES through the national Endangered and Protected Species Act 2002 (EPS Act) and subsequent regulation of 2003. This has involved inspection of companies registering to trade domestically and internationally in species listed under CITES and the EPS Act, including aquarium companies, pawn shops, handicraft centres, timber companies and sawmilling companies. FICMA issued permits for the export of CITES listed species and received reports on cases of illegal movement of CITES listed species at the borders.

Review of the national Endangered and Protected Species Act 2002 and Regulation 2003

Fiji is in the final stage in reviewing the national Endangered and Protected Species Act 2002. The review is focusing on the listing of species and the fees charged for trade in species listed under CITES and the EPS Act.

Education and awareness

FICMA conducted CITES enforcement training between 2010 and 2014 throughout the three main divisions in Fiji (Central, Western and Northern Divisions). This training was targeted at public officers, police officers and customs and border control officers. The training manual used for CITES enforcement training is proposed to be reviewed.

In response to the inclusion of new sharks and manta rays species on Appendix II of CITES, the Fiji Department of Environment developed educational posters and held awareness-raising workshops for the fishing industry and other relevant stakeholders.

Other CITES issues were addressed in provincial and villages workshops. As the Secretariat for CITES in Fiji, the Department of Environment has promoted the relevancy of CITES to community development.

Issues faced

Reporting is the major obstacle to Fiji's implementation of CITES. A Clearing House Mechanism is required to validate permits and prepare reports on the activities of different authorities responsible for implementing CITES nationally, in particular border control officers. A reporting mechanism for field officers, including community personnel, would also be valuable.

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand continued as the Oceania regional representative on the Animals Committee with Dr. Hugh Robertson, Principal Science Advisor, Department of Conservation, representing the region.

Legislation

A Conservation (Infringement System) Bill was drafted that will introduce an infringement and offences regime into conservation legislation including the Trade in Endangered Species Act.

The Wildlife (Increased Powers) Amendment Bill (the Increased Powers Bill) was drafted that will enable more efficient investigation, effective enforcement and prosecution of wildlife offences.

Implementation

The Department of Conservation is the CITES Management Authority and host for the Scientific Authority. Implementation and enforcement of CITES requirements are undertaken by the Department of Conservation in collaboration with the Ministry of Primary Industries and the New Zealand Customs Service.

Enforcement

New Zealand green geckos (*Naultinus*) were seized by authorities in Germany and Spain in December 2013 and January 2014 and the survivors have been repatriated to New Zealand. This case illustrates an important challenge regarding trade in Appendix II listed reptiles, some of which have never been legally exported from New Zealand but are appearing in growing numbers on the reptile market in Europe and elsewhere. The

reptiles are being traded as “captive-bred” and, in some cases, fraudulently advertised as from “New Zealand approved breeding facilities”.

Education and awareness

Department of Conservation CITES Officers trained new border official recruits to the Ministry of Primary Industries, with 88 recruits completing a CITES specific module (May 2014 to November 2015). Material produced by the Department of Conservation, including a revised CITES permit checklist, have been distributed to border officials to support decision making at the border and provide guidance to new recruits and existing staff.

World Wildlife Day events were staged by CITES Officers in Wellington, Auckland and Christchurch with assistance from the New Zealand Customs Service and Ministry for Primary Industries. The events consisted of displays of CITES items, distribution of CITES material (pamphlets, pens, luggage tags) and engagement with travellers at airport terminals and visitor centres.

Capacity building

In 2014, New Zealand provided funding to the Samoan Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment to run a public awareness programme on CITES. This involved TV and radio stories, factsheets, banners and advertising at the international airport.

In July 2015, New Zealand participated in the Second Pacific Island Species Forum in Suva, Fiji, where two sessions on CITES:

- promoted the theme of CITES as a tool for balancing conservation,
- promoted sustainable use and livelihoods,
- helped with the implementation of CITES in the Pacific Islands region,
- identified areas where New Zealand could most usefully support Pacific partners in their efforts to enhance CITES implementation, e.g. in the development of advice on making non-detriment findings, and producing awareness raising materials,
- together with the Australian Government and CITES Secretariat focused on ways to improve CITES implementation in the Pacific and ensure Oceania voices are strongly reflected in international forums (e.g. in the global CITES needs assessment), and advocating for a pre-COP workshop in the Pacific region,
- provided encouragement and advice to non-parties (e.g. Tonga and Kiribati) in the implementation of trade requirements and becoming party to CITES, and
- supported liaison with non-government organisations on proposals to nominate species for inclusion on the CITES Appendices, e.g. a proposal by the Manta Trust to list manta rays.

Following the conclusion of the New Zealand Pacific CITES programme, New Zealand is identifying cost-effective opportunities to help address implementation challenges and support compliance with CITES requirements by Oceania Parties.

Issues faced

The number of seizures of hard coral and clam shell continued to rise, making up a large proportion of all New Zealand seizures. Seized corals and clams were sourced across the South Pacific, with most originating from Fiji and Cook Islands. *Saussurea costus* is the most common CITES listed ingredient in Traditional and Alternative Medicines (TAMs) seized, primarily in the form of Po Chai pills. For raw TAMs, seizures of *Panax quinquefolius* and *Dendrobium* spp. remain consistent, although seizures of specimens from Hong Kong have increased due to New Zealand’s stricter domestic legislation regarding personal and household effects exemptions.

Seizures from household effects importations have increased and can be attributed in part to New Zealand’s enforcement of stricter domestic legislation. However, inadequate knowledge of CITES documentation requirements by exporters and a lack of advice provided by removal companies have also contributed. Seizure

of specimens across all entry points into New Zealand have also occurred due to non-validation of CITES permits.

The growing trade in endemic New Zealand geckos which have never been legally exported from New Zealand points to serious issues regarding the provenance and legality of captive bred specimens of reptiles in trade.

PALAU

No input provided.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

No input provided.

SAMOA

No input provided.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Legislation

The Wildlife Protection and Management Act is being drafted and further consultation is required before it is taken to Parliament.

Enforcement

Legislation is not fully enforced and implemented due to insufficient staff. New wildlife trade staff members will be recruited.

Education and awareness

There is poor awareness of CITES requirements amongst those who harvest CITES listed animals and plants, and at the provincial level.

Other issues

Annual reporting is an issue due to poor information sharing, and an absence of cooperation and collaboration between relevant stakeholders dealing with wildlife trade.

Non-detriment findings are required to support trade in certain animals and plants as a basis for developing annual quotas.

VANUATU

Legislation

There have been delays in making necessary amendments to the legislation, the International Trade (Flora and Fauna) Act no.56 of 1989. When State Law Office lawyers are available, the amendments will be made in collaboration with the Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation.

Implementation

Vanuatu's implementation of CITES has been effective. The Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation is the CITES Management Authority of Vanuatu, and the Department of Fisheries is the CITES Scientific Management Authority. The Customs Department and the Bio-Security Vanuatu provide excellent controls at border areas, including wharves and airports.

Enforcement

An MOU has not been signed yet by relevant government agencies. Amendments to the International Trade (Flora and Fauna) Act no.56 of 1989 must be made before the MOU is signed. Despite the delay in signing the

MOU, there is a common understanding and good cooperation among border control agencies. These agencies will continue to provide effective controls at border areas until this cooperation is formalised with the signing of the MOU.

Education and awareness

Education and awareness-raising activities are ongoing.

Capacity Building

On 26 November 2015, Vanuatu held a one-day shark identification training workshop for more than 20 participants with Dr Demian Chapman and his wife from Stonybrook University, USA. The workshop provided useful training in shark identification and promoted understanding of the importance of protecting shark species.

Issues faced

Vanuatu continues to face the same issues as reported in 2014, mainly in relation to financial and human resource constraints. Despite these constraints, Vanuatu is trying its best to implement CITES effectively with its limited resources.

Activities of the Regional Representative

Since the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee, Australia, as the regional representative, has strengthened contact with and promoted communication between Parties in the Oceania region through activities such as:

- Communication of CITES Notifications to regional Parties including suggested follow-up actions
- Revision of a regional directory of CITES contacts
- Attendance as an observer at the 28th Meeting of the Animals Committee
- Attendance by Dr Greg Leach as Oceania representative at the 28th Meeting of the Plants Committee
- Provision of USD\$40 000 to the CITES Secretariat to support a workshop on implementation of CITES in the Oceania region, and attendance at the workshop
- Encouraging responses to the CITES needs assessment questionnaire (80% of Oceania Parties responded).

Regional cooperation

CITES Parties liaised and collaborated during 2014-15 to support improved implementation of CITES in the Oceania region. In particular, multilateral capacity-building workshops were held in conjunction with the Second IUCN Pacific Islands Species Forum in Suva, Fiji.

Regional workshops to support implementation of CITES in the Oceania region

With the assistance of the CITES Secretariat, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP) organised a half-day session on CITES at the Second IUCN Pacific Islands Species Forum in Suva, Fiji on 7 July 2015, followed by a dedicated one-day workshop on 9 July 2015. The Australian Government provided USD\$40 000 to support the workshops. SPREP is especially grateful for the assistance provided by the CITES Secretariat and Australia and New Zealand, and for the support provided by Fiji.

Workshop attendees included representatives from Oceania Parties (Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands), non-Parties (Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Tonga, Republic of the Marshall Islands), and scientists and conservation organisation representatives.

The first half-day session, titled "Threats to species: trade and sustainable use", focused on CITES and other tools for achieving a balance between conservation, sustainable use and livelihoods. The full day workshop focused on the identification of the challenges faced by Pacific Island countries in the implementation of CITES.

Workshop participants identified a number of needs and opportunities. A critical need identified by a number of countries is a tailored, standardised data management system to support permit applications, issuance and reporting. This need may be addressed through the CITES Secretariat cooperation with UNECE, UNCEFACT and other related to e-permitting. A number of countries also identified an absence of research expertise and capacity as significant constraint in developing sustainable wildlife trade opportunities.

A copy of the workshop report is available from Mike Donoghue at SPREP (michaeld@sprep.org). As identified by SPREP, the main findings of the workshop were:

- The need to address the difficulties facing Pacific Island Parties in meeting obligations due to lack of capacity and training,
- The potential for more Pacific Island Countries to become CITES Parties to promote sustainable trade in wildlife and to recover administrative costs of wildlife regulation,
- The need for the Secretariat for the Pacific Community and SPREP to better coordinate efforts to support both Parties and non-Parties in effectively administering CITES,
- The potential benefit of a dedicated CITES Pacific Islands Officer based at SPREP (or the Secretariat for the Pacific Community) to provide regional support.

Meetings and workshops

See section 5

Problems faced by the Regional Representative

There are a number of constraints to communication and collaboration between CITES Parties in the Oceania region. Many countries have limited access to reliable internet and telephone connections and government officers must share use of computers and limited office space. The contact details for many Oceania Parties change rapidly as phone numbers are disconnected and email servers fail. New contact details are often difficult to obtain.

Amongst many CITES Parties in the Oceania region, government officers responsible for implementing CITES also hold responsibility for implementing several other Multilateral Environment Agreements. While national priorities for conservation and environmental management have been identified by a number of Pacific Island countries, less attention has been given to identifying national and regional opportunities for developing wildlife trade or measures to address illegal wildlife trade in the Oceania region. Many Pacific Island countries often have little capacity to undertake research or secure available international funding to support sustainable, well-managed wildlife trade.

Oceania Parties would greatly benefit from funded, ongoing technical and training assistance in CITES processes and systems. This includes the establishment of simple, effective databases and data management frameworks to support permit application, assessment, issuance and reporting. Other primary needs in the region include scientific assessments to underpin sustainable trade in CITES listed species, and the establishment of quotas and other management arrangements to support new opportunities to develop trade in CITES listed species. The need for training of officers responsible for implementing CITES requirements at national borders has also been identified by many Oceania Parties.