

AMENDMENTS TO APPENDICES I AND II OF THE CONVENTION

A. PROPOSAL

Maintenance of the Mozambican population of Crocodylus niloticus in Appendix II, subject to an annual export quota.

B. PROPONENT

The People's Republic of Mozambique.

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1. Taxonomy

11. Class: Reptilia
12. Order: Crocodylia
13. Family: Crocodylidae
14. Species: Crocodylus niloticus
15. Common Names: English: Nile crocodile
French: crocodile du Nil
Spanish: Cocodrilo del Nilo
16. Code Numbers: A-306.002.001.006

2. Biological Data

21. Distribution: Crocodylus niloticus is widely distributed in all major inland waterbodies of Mozambique. Due to her geographical position and physical features, Mozambique has a very dense network of big rivers, a variety of small lakes and numerous swamps and dams, all of which are rich in crocodiles. Most of the crocodile habitat in named water bodies is very extensive to the point that it covers the whole country.

22. Population: Unfortunately there have been no monitoring studies on the population of crocodiles in this country. However the scarce information at hand indicates that crocodiles are abundant all over the country where suitable habitat occurs. The major difficulty in assessing crocodile population in this country comes from the fact that the healthiest population groups inhabit not easily accessible marshy and swampy areas like the Zambezi River Delta.

During the survey undertaken on the Bazaruto Island, it was revealed that a small lake of a circumference of 5km supports some 30 crocodiles. The results obtained from the reconnaissance of the Chicamba Dam were about 400 crocodiles, all counted by air. The River Pungue survey which took only 20 minutes, was undertaken under difficult conditions and hence gave poor results.

23. Habitat: Generally speaking, one can say that the inland aquatic habitat favourable for the Nile crocodile is at optimum condition. Agricultural activities near or along river valleys

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have greatly decreased due to the creation of communal villages located on arable areas. As a result of the villagization programme, wetlands are now getting free of degradation through uncontrolled human activities. Crocodiles are therefore having large areas to wander about.

3. Trade Data

Mozambique has exported only 2 (two) crocodile skins during the last two years.

Illegal trade is non-existent because there is no local industry dealing with crocodile products.

It is also worth noting that there is no sport hunting taking place in this country since 1984 to date.

4. Proposed Quota

Since farming and ranching operations are still at an embryonic stage, we do not foresee that their products can enter into trade before 1989. Mozambique is therefore interested to maintain her current export quota of 1,000 skins/specimens per annum for the years 1987, 1988 and 1989. ((

Mozambique will, however, prepare and present for consideration a formal proposal on ranched specimens once the farms/ranches are fully operational.

5. Other Remarks

51. Situation in 1985 and 1986: Two unforeseen conditions affected trade in crocodile specimens in this country. Since the introduction of export quotas, Mozambique has not been able to make use of her quota effectively due to the following reasons:

- a) A few skins which were held in stock by October 1985 had deteriorated in quality to the extent that they failed to attract external buyers.
- b) Retrieving of skins in remote areas where control work in defence of human life and property operates, could not be done efficiently due to a variety of reasons. ((
- c) Specimen marking tags for the year 1986 have not been received to date, hence it became impossible to export skins during 1986.
- d) Projects of two crocodile farms which were to capture and export live specimens, and to establish large scale crocodile ranching operations, have been delayed in commencing their activities.

52. Plans for the Future:

521. The Mozambican Government has already signed contracts with two private companies interested in crocodile ranching/farming. Besides the two private farms, the government is seeking funds to establish one state

farm in the Limpopo District aimed at controlling crocodile hazards which have been very common along the Limpopo River and its tributaries.

522. Production figures for each of the private crocodile ranches is planned to be 6,000 skins per year. The state farm will start with a very low production of about 500 skins per year, but this is supposed to increase until it reaches 5,000 skins within a period of 5 years.

53. Studies on Population Status: During the year 1986, two inventories were undertaken to determine the status of the Nile crocodile population in the Bazaruto Island and the Chicamba Dam River Pungue areas. The reason behind these studies is that some private investors have presented requests to establish crocodile ranches in these areas. During the surveys it was found that each of the two areas harbours a healthy population of Crocodylus niloticus. In each, the area surveyed was relatively small - a 5 km strip of Lake Legue in the Bazaruto Island; and a 30 minute aerial survey of the Chicamba Dam.

Despite the smallness of the areas covered, it is deemed that the results obtained reflect the reality of the crocodile populations in these areas.

It has not been possible to conduct surveys at the moment in some of our most important crocodile areas in the country, which include: the Gorongosa National Park, the Zambezi River with the Marromeu Swamps, the Pungue, Buzi, Save, Limpopo, Incomati, Maputo, Lugenda and Rovuma Rivers. All these water bodies constitute the largest crocodile reserves in Mozambique.

54. Conclusion: The deep concern we have for the survival and continuity of species of wild flora and fauna calls for adequate conservation measures. But it should not be forgotten that the fate of wildlife in many countries rests on its economic contribution as a productive form of land use. Taking into consideration that the population of the Nile crocodile in Mozambique is not vulnerable nor threatened with loss of habitat; its density is high, and its distribution is vast in the the whole country. The law governing rational use of wildlife resources in this country gives special protection to the crocodile. It is, therefore, only logical that Mozambique be allowed to earn some foreign revenue through the sale of crocodile products obtained through supervised management programmes.

We therefore urge all Parties to CITES to give Mozambique their support in this issue.