

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

Eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties

Kyoto (Japan), 2 to 13 March 1992

Interpretation and Implementation of the Convention

Trade in Crocodilian Products

UNIVERSAL TAGGING SYSTEM FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF
CROCODILIAN SKINS IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE

The document has s submitted by the Commonwealth of Australia, the United States of America, the Federal Republic of Germany and the Italian Republic

Preamble

All members of the order Crocodylia were included in the appendices of the Convention at the 1973 Plenipotentiary Conference in Washington, D.C. (18 taxa in Appendix I and 9 taxa in Appendix II) because of the presence of most in international commerce and the difficulty in readily distinguishing between different taxa and concern at the time for the conservation status of many species. Since the Washington Conference there have been numerous amendments to the composition of crocodilian taxa in the appendices to the Convention. However, all taxa remain included in either Appendix I or Appendix II.

International trade in crocodilian continues to present a significant problem for Parties to the Convention and several resolutions have been adopted by previous Conferences of the Parties that establish management regimes to benefit conservation of particular taxa or populations thereof. Conference resolutions relating to captive-breeding operations, ranching and annual export quotas have been adopted by the Conference of the Parties to more effectively regulate international trade in specimens of particular taxa. These resolutions require the use of unique alpha-numerically coded tags which can not be reused.

The evolution of controls for crocodilian in international trade to present has resulted in certain taxa being subject to particular marking requirements in order to facilitate regulation by Parties. Taxa which are currently included in Appendix II without any qualification may be traded internationally without requirement for their secure identification. Considerable expertise is required to identify accurately all species of live crocodilian. Problems associated with the accurate identification of skins and manufactured products are compounded significantly because of the similarity of appearance of crocodilian.

Effective regulation of international trade in crocodilian in a manner that minimizes the potential for substitution of illegal skins would be enhanced by the adoption by Parties to the Convention of a system which requires **all** crocodilian skins to be identified by a unique, species-specific, non-reusable tag. Such a system would provide a practical initial mechanism for implementing the provisions of Article IV, paragraph.3, of the Convention by all range States.

The need to tag all crocodilian skins in international trade has been considered in some detail by the IUCN/SSC Crocodile Specialist Group at its 1990 meeting in Gainesville, Florida and the CITES Animals Committee at its fourth and fifth meetings. The draft resolution (Annex) represents the developed views of these two fora.

DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Universal Tagging System for the Identification of Crocodilian Skins

AWARE that all living species of crocodilians are listed in Appendix I or II of CITES;

NOTING that many species of crocodilians are subject to international trade;

CONCERNED that some species are subject to substantial levels of illegal trade;

RECOGNIZING that illegal trade threatens the survival of certain populations of crocodilians and seriously undermines efforts of producer countries to manage their crocodilian resources on a sustainable basis;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the regulation of international trade is enhanced significantly by suitable identification systems, and RECOGNIZING that in order to be successful and achieve the desired level of control any such system must be standardized and uniform in its application;

CONSIDERING that the tagging of all crocodilian skins in trade is a fundamental step towards the effective regulation of international trade in crocodilians;

RECOGNIZING that a mechanism for the accurate identification of crocodilian specimens and its extension to other groups of morphologically similar taxa is central to the problem of confining world trade in such taxa to levels which are sustainable by the wild resource;

NOTING that strategies for secure marking systems for classes of biologically similar species should consider those animals currently subject to trade, and the type of operations utilized to produce the animals or their products;

NOTING further the support given to this matter by the IUCN/SSC Crocodile Specialist Group;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

RECOMMENDS

- a) the introduction of a universal tagging system for identification of all raw and processed crocodilian skins, including flanks, bellies, tails and other parts by the general application of non-reusable tags to identify all crocodilian skins entering international trade;
- b) that such non-reusable tags include as a minimum the International Organization for Standardization code for the country of origin, a unique serial identification number, species code and the year of production and further that such non-reusable tags have as a minimum the following characteristics: a self-locking system, heat resistance, inertia to chemical and mechanical processing, information to be applied by permanent stamping;
- c) the same information as is on the tags should be given on the export permit, re-export certificate or other Convention document, or on a separate sheet which shall be considered an integral part of the permit, certificate or document and which should be validated by the same issuing authority;
- d) that each Party in which tags are applied maintain records accounting for tags issued and maintain records that relate each Convention document number to the tag(s) of the crocodilian specimens traded thereunder and vice versa, and include this information in the annual report;
- e) that Parties establish where legally possible a system of registration or licensing, or both, for importers, exporters, wholesalers, processors and manufacturers of crocodilian skins, and parts and derivatives thereof;
- f) that Parties make provision in the Secretariat's budget, to which additional voluntary contributions may be made, for the production and dissemination of skin tags in quantities that are requested by any Party, as well as the cost of implementing and administering the system;

- g) that Parties accept one year after the adoption of this Resolution export permits, re-export certificates or other Convention documents for trade in raw or processed crocodilian skins only if they contain the information referred to in paragraph a) and the related skins are properly tagged; and
- h) that Parties prohibit the import of all skins or flanks, whether raw or processed, and all unfinished products from non-Party States, including those countries that are treated as non-Parties by virtue of their maintenance of a reservation against the listing of a crocodilian species in Appendix I or II; and

DIRECTS

- a) the Secretariat, in consultation with the Animals Committee, to develop a practical tracking system for monitoring tags used in trade; and
- b) the Animals Committee, in consultation with the Secretariat, to study the possibilities of a practical uniform marking system for parts and derivatives of crocodilian skins in commercial trade and report its findings and recommendations to the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties.