

Consideration of Proposals for Amendment of Appendices I and II
 PROPOSALS SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO RESOLUTION ON RANCHING

Proposals submitted

1. In accordance with the provisions of paragraph d) of Resolution Conf. 3.15, proposals have been submitted for consideration at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties by Argentina, Madagascar and Uganda.
2. In accordance with Resolution Conf. 3.15, recommendation d), the Secretariat communicated the proposals to IUCN, which, in co-operation with TRAFFIC and WCMC, has agreed to undertake a thorough review of

3. It is worthwhile to note that the populations of *Crocodylus niloticus* of Madagascar and Uganda have been listed in Appendix II for several years subject to annual export quotas.
4. No comments were received from the Parties. The comments and recommendations from the Secretariat are included in the Annex to this document.

Doc. 10.86 Annex

Comments and Recommendations from the Secretariat

Prop. 10.1: Transfer of the Argentine population of *Caiman latirostris* to Appendix II

This proposal, developed in accordance with Resolution Conf. 3.15 on ranching, demonstrates the efforts by the Province of Santa Fé with regard to the conservation of this species. Established populations have recovered, new populations have been discovered and very important information on the biology of the species has been generated. The Secretariat visited the province in 1996 and can confirm that qualified scientific and technical staff is working on the project. The project is politically supported at the provincial and federal levels. Furthermore, the public was informed about the project from its inception and this has helped to reverse the generally negative opinion that the public has regarding these animals.

The proposal, which was developed in close co-operation with the IUCN/SSC Crocodile Specialist Group, provides comprehensive information on the number of eggs/nests that could be harvested in relation to the population size, as determined by the ongoing monitoring programme. It is also important to note the participation of landowners in the ranching programme, so that private land is also available for the sustainable use of the species.

However, one aspect, the need for controls at the national level, receives little attention in the proposal. *Caiman crocodilus yacare* (Appendix II) also occurs in Argentina, where exploitation of and trade in this subspecies are forbidden by stricter domestic measures. Since *C. latirostris* is included in Appendix I, legal commercial trade in this species is prohibited as well. Consequently, if the proposal is accepted, Argentina should implement strict control of the trade in *C. latirostris* (both national and international) to try to prevent the development of an illegal trade in *Caiman crocodilus yacare*.

Although the proposal seeks to transfer the entire Argentine population of the species to Appendix II, only the population of the Province of Santa Fé will be subject to ranching. The "Precautionary measures" described in paragraph 7.10 of the proposal provide adequate procedures to ensure that other populations are not ranching until it has been proven that the management programmes are correctly implemented. In addition, the Parties will always have the possibility to intervene through the implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.24 Annex 4, paragraphs C.1. and C.2.

Secretariat's recommendation: **Accept.****Prop. 10.2:** Maintenance of the Malagasy population of *Crocodylus niloticus* in Appendix II

In 1992 and 1994 Madagascar submitted proposals for the maintenance of its population of the Nile crocodile in Appendix II for ranching. However, these proposals were not adopted by the Conference of the Parties because of weaknesses in the proposals and the supporting data. Instead, the population was retained in Appendix II with specified annual export quotas.

In 1996 the Government of Madagascar requested the assistance of the Secretariat to revise and improve the proposal it intended to submit to the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and also to extend and amend CITES project S-102 on *Sustainable management and exploitation of the Nile crocodile population of Madagascar*. Under this project, a CITES consultant conducted work in Madagascar in October 1996 and the present proposal is consequently considerably better than previous ones.

Biological data presented in the proposal indicate that Madagascar has a viable population of this species. Aerial surveys that are planned to be carried out in July 1997 under project S-102 will confirm this further. This project will also address other concerns: conflicts between crocodiles and humans, implementation of the export quota granted for problem animals, restocking strategies, and the monitoring of crocodile ranches.

The collection of eggs to supply farms has been concentrated in the Besalampy region and does not appear to have impacted that population negatively. The activity is well managed and involves rural communities in the area, which benefit financially by selling the eggs to crocodile farmers.

External trade in crocodile skins appears to be well controlled and CITES procedures well implemented.

Illegal exports of locally manufactured products to Mauritius and La Réunion and problems with the internal trade in such products were among the main reasons (if not the main ones) put forward for rejecting similar proposals in the past, although the Secretariat considered these problems as negligible. The Secretariat's view was confirmed by the consultant who visited Madagascar in October 1996. In addition, the Management Authority of Mauritius has stated that there have been very few illegal imports into that

country. The Management Authority of Madagascar has suspended the hunting of crocodiles since 1996, pending a full study of this problem.

The CITES consultant strongly felt that the commercial use of the Nile crocodile in Madagascar was the only way to ensure its conservation there and that the inclusion of the species in Appendix II with a quota should be replaced by the inclusion there in accordance with Resolution Conf. 3.15 on Ranching, to allow the development of the ranching industry. Extending the successful egg-collecting scheme to other areas would benefit crocodile populations by promoting the local protection of breeding populations for egg harvesting but will be possible only if the population is maintained in Appendix II for ranching, since the number of operators and the size of their operations can not increase under the current quota constraints. Returning the Malagasy population of *Crocodylus niloticus* to Appendix I would serve no conservation purpose and would be detrimental to the conservation of the species in Madagascar as it would effectively remove any incentive to protect crocodile populations in the world's 11th-poorest country.

The Secretariat supports the proposal on the condition that Madagascar undertakes to implement the measures recommended by the CITES consultant, and the recommendations resulting from CITES project S-102. A review should be carried out in 1998 by the Secretariat and/or the IUCN/SSC Crocodile Specialist Group to assess progress made in the implementation of these recommendations and also to determine an appropriate level of export quota for wild-taken skins. If the Secretariat is not satisfied with the measures taken, action should be taken in accordance with Resolution Conf. 9.24 Annex 4, paragraph C.1.

Secretariat's recommendation: **Accept.**

Prop. 10.3: Maintenance of the Ugandan population of *Crocodylus niloticus* in Appendix II

At its eighth meeting (Kyoto, 1992), the Conference of the Parties agreed to the transfer of the Nile crocodile population of Uganda to Appendix II, with an annual export quota of 2,500 skins. At the ninth meeting (Fort Lauderdale, 1994) the Conference agreed to maintain the population in Appendix II with the same annual export quota for a further three-year period, because Uganda needed time to collect the necessary information to support its proposal for the maintenance of its population in Appendix II for ranching. The Secretariat has no reason to believe that Uganda has exceeded the quotas granted to it.

From the survey conducted in 1996, and surveys conducted previously, the crocodile population of Uganda appears to be recovering well. However, there is a need to conduct further surveys and to extend these to parts of the crocodile habitat not covered in the 1996 survey of the presence and population status of the species. There is an important population of the species in the Murchison Falls area, which has been used to provide eggs for the crocodile farm mentioned in the proposal. The results of the 1996 survey indicate that

there is a higher ratio of adults to sub-adults and juveniles than previously thought, and suggests that this could be the result of egg removal for ranching. This needs further study because many other factors (such as crocodile size, behaviour of juveniles, weather, experience of surveyors, etc.) may have influenced the results. The proposal indicates that monitoring of the success of released crocodiles will be intensified in this area.

The most important threat to crocodile populations that are located outside protected areas (national parks and game reserves) is fisheries. No studies appear to have been conducted to determine the extent of conflicts between humans and crocodiles in areas used for fishing, and how this might be resolved. The report of the above-mentioned survey recommends that this be studied. Connected with this, there should be a study on the integration of crocodile utilization in rural development programmes, which might improve human tolerance of crocodiles. Such an approach is implied in the proposal but is not explicit.

In Annex I to the proposal Uganda has specified the procedure that it will adopt should the Parties agree to the maintenance of its crocodile population in Appendix II for ranching. In Annex II the procedures for the management of egg collecting in the Murchison Falls National Park and monitoring of its impact are explained. The Secretariat considers both to be practical and implementable.

With respect to the annual export quota of 25 wild-taken skins from nuisance animals, Uganda has undertaken to use this quota only when necessary. It has also undertaken to allocate part of the revenue from the sale of such skins for community development projects. However, there is no indication as to the proportion of the revenue that would be used for this purpose. This needs to be specified, and also how such funds will be managed.

On the basis of the supporting statement, the results of the 1996 survey and the proposed management programme, the population of Uganda should be maintained in Appendix II for ranching, on the condition that:

- a) the collection of crocodile eggs is restricted to the Murchison Falls National Park area, as before;
- b) the monitoring of the impact of releasing juveniles into the wild is intensified and undertaken on a regular basis, and the results are made available to the Secretariat; and
- c) the Government of Uganda agrees to allow an evaluation of the performance of the ranching programme by the Secretariat or by an expert agreed upon by the Secretariat and the Management Authority of Uganda.

The discretionary annual export quota of 25 skins from nuisance animals appears to be reasonable but the Management Authority of Uganda should provide the Secretariat annually with a report on the management of this quota.

Secretariat's recommendation: **Accept.**