

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

Eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Gigiri (Kenya), 10-20 April 2000

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

UNIVERSAL TAGGING SYSTEM FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF CROCODILIANS SKINS

1. This document was prepared by the Secretariat and is submitted on behalf of the Animals Committee.

Background

2. At its 10th meeting (Harare, 1997), the Conference of the Parties reviewed the implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.22, which provides for a universal tagging system for the identification of crocodilian skins. While the Conference was generally satisfied that Parties are adequately implementing the system, the Animals Committee was directed to review Resolutions Conf. 9.22 and Conf. 6.17 with the aim of proposing their consolidation at the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The Animals Committee was also instructed (in Decision 10.78) to review the system for tracking the use of crocodilian skin tags.
3. At its 14th meeting (Caracas, Venezuela, 25 to 29 May 1998), the Animals Committee established a working group to collaborate with the Secretariat and the IUCN/SSC Crocodile Specialist Group to prepare appropriate amendments to Resolution Conf. 9.22 for consideration at its next meeting. At the 15th meeting of the Animals Committee (Antananarivo, Madagascar, 5 to 9 July 1999), a revised draft resolution was presented and discussed and the Secretariat was requested to finalize this document. The Secretariat has completed this task and the draft resolution is annexed. The basis of the draft resolution is the text of Resolution Conf. 9.22. Proposed additional text appears in **bold**. Proposed deletions appear in ~~strike through~~.

Issues for consideration

4. Some Parties requested assistance from the Secretariat to clarify the marking of the transparent containers of parts of skins, which are referred to in operative paragraph c) of Resolution Conf. 9.22. The Secretariat, after consultation with the Animals Committee, clarified in Notification to the Parties No. 947 (18 November 1996) that tags used for the marking of containers should comply with the same information requirements as tags for individual skins, flanks and chalecos. Other than being non-reusable, tags for the marking of containers need not conform to the physical requirements for tags for individual skins, flanks and chalecos (i.e. self-locking mechanism, heat resistance, inertia to chemical and mechanical processing and alphanumeric information applied by permanent stamping). The Secretariat is of the opinion that this clarification should be incorporated in the revised resolution, as done in the attached draft resolution.
5. Two additional problems experienced by some Parties were subsequently brought to the attention of the Secretariat concerning the implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.22. These are outlined in Notification to the Parties No. 1999/83.
 - a) As recommended in paragraph d) of Resolution Conf. 9.22, the tags used to mark crocodilian skins should contain the following information: the ISO two-letter code for the country of origin; a unique serial identification number; a standard species code; and the year of production. In some cases, this information appears in the sequence: country of origin, year of production, serial number, species code (e.g. TH990001POR). In these cases, confusion may result regarding the year 2000 (e.g. TH000001POR). In such instances the Secretariat recommends

that Parties separate the year of production and the serial number with a hyphen (-), resulting in the code TH00-0001POR. Not every Party that uses this marking system will be affected, as the sequence within the code may vary. The Secretariat is of the opinion that this recommendation should apply to subsequent years as well. Appropriate text has been included in paragraph d) of the attached draft resolution.

- b) Some Parties have informed the Secretariat of a problem of labelling skins derived from crocodylian hybrids. The Secretariat recommended that, until Resolution Conf. 9.22 is amended by the Conference of the Parties, such Parties use, instead of the standard species code in Annex 1 of the Resolution, the designation HYB or, where the parentage is known, the two three-letter codes for the parents, separated by the character 'x' (e.g. PORxSIA where the hybrid is a cross between *Crocodylus porosus* and *Crocodylus siamensis*). To take account of this, appropriate text has been included in paragraph d) of the attached draft resolution.

Comments from the Secretariat

- 6. Regarding the operative part of the attached draft resolution: paragraphs g) and h) under RECOMMENDS should be transferred to Resolution Conf. 10.2, because they relate to permit requirements. The text of paragraph g) from "or on a separate sheet ..." until "... issuing authority" is already included in Resolution Conf. 10.2 and therefore is superfluous. The second part of paragraph g), starting with "in the case ..." should be a separate paragraph.

DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Universal tagging system for the identification of crocodilian skins

AWARE that all living crocodilian species are listed in Appendix I or II, but concerned that several crocodilian species may be subject to some levels of illegal trade;

RECOGNIZING that certain populations of crocodilians may be transferred from Appendix I to Appendix II subject to specified annual export quotas and that these export quotas are to ensure that the annual take from these populations is not detrimental to their survival;

RECOGNIZING that illegal trade has in the past threatened the survival of certain populations of crocodilians and has undermined the efforts of producer countries to manage their crocodilian resources on a sustainable basis;

RECALLING that Article VI, paragraph 7, of the Convention provides that specimens of species listed in the appendices may be marked to assist in identifying them;

~~NOTING that, in order to assist the Secretariat and the Parties in their efforts efficiently to track crocodilian skins in trade, marking should be standardized and that particular specifications for the design of tags are fundamental and should be generally applied;~~

CONSIDERING that the tagging of all crocodilian skins in international trade would be a fundamental step towards the effective regulation of international trade in crocodilians and that Resolutions Conf. 6.17 and Conf. 9.22 to this effect were adopted at the **sixth (Ottawa, 1987) and ninth (Fort Lauderdale, 1994)** meetings of the Conference of the Parties;

NOTING, however, that strategies for the secure marking of similar species should take into consideration systems currently in place as well as the requirements of legitimate processing industries and that the system established at the ~~eight~~ **ninth** meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Fort Lauderdale, 1994) was found to require improvement;

~~APPROVING the steps already taken by the Secretariat to establish~~ **NOTING the existence of** a register of manufacturers able to produce tags for the marking of crocodilian skins, **established and maintained by the Secretariat**;

RECOGNIZING that any requirement for a marking system that involves the individual identification and documentation of huge numbers of specimens is likely to result in increased errors in documentation;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

RECOMMENDS:

- a) the ~~introduction~~ **maintenance** of a universal tagging system for the identification of raw, tanned, and/or finished crocodilian skins by the general application of non-reusable tags to all crocodilian skins entering international trade from the countries of origin;
- b) that crocodilian skins and flanks be individually tagged and that chalecos have attached a tag to each side (flank) **before export**;
- c) that the non-reusable tags include, as a minimum, the ISO two-letter code for the country of origin; a unique serial identification number; a standard species code (as provided in Annex 1); and, where appropriate, the year of production or harvest in accordance with the provisions of Resolutions ~~Conf. 3.15 and Conf. 8.15 and Conf. 10.18~~ adopted at the ~~third (New Delhi, 1981) and eighth (Kyoto, 1992) and 10th (Harare, 1997)~~ meetings of the Conference of the Parties; and further, that such tags have as a minimum the following characteristics: a self-locking mechanism, heat

resistance, inertia to chemical and mechanical processing, and alphanumeric information applied by permanent stamping;

- d) that the year of production and serial number be separated with a hyphen (-) where the information on tags appears in the sequence: country of origin, year of production, serial number, species code;
- e) that for the labelling of skins derived from crocodylian hybrids, the designation HYB or, where the parentage is known, the two three-letter codes for the parents, separated by the character 'x' (e.g. PORxSIA where the hybrid is a cross between *Crocodylus porosus* and *Crocodylus siamensis*), be used instead of the standard species code in Annex 1 of this Resolution;
- f) that tails, throats, feet, backstrips, and other parts be exported in transparent, sealed containers clearly marked with a **non-reusable** tag together with a description of the content and total weight, **and all the information required for tags for individual skins, flanks and chalcos, as outlined in paragraphs c), d) and e)**;
- g) that the same information as is on the tags be given on the export permit or re-export certificate (or other Convention document) or on a separate sheet, which shall be considered an integral part of the document, carry the same identification number and be validated by the same issuing authority; **and that, in the case of species subject to quotas approved by the Conference of the Parties, no such permit, certificate or other document for skins be issued before the skins are tagged in accordance with the requirements of the issuing Management Authority and their sizes are recorded**;
- h) that, in the event of mismatches of information within such a permit, re-export certificate, or other Convention document, the Management Authority of the importing Party immediately contact its counterpart in the exporting/re-exporting Party to establish whether this was a genuine error arising from the volume of information required by this Resolution, and that, if this is the case, every effort be made to avoid penalizing those involved in such transactions;
- i) that Parties establish, where legally possible, a system of registration or licensing, or both, for **producers, tanners**, importers and exporters of crocodylian skins;
- j) that all countries permitting re-export of raw, tanned, and/or finished crocodylian skins implement an administrative system for the effective matching of imports and re-exports and, further, ensure that skins and flanks are re-exported with the original tags intact unless the pieces originally imported have been further processed and cut into smaller pieces;
- k) that, where the original tags have been lost or removed from raw, tanned, and/or finished skins and flanks, the country of re-export tag each such skin or flank, prior to re-export, with a 're-export tag' meeting all the requirements of paragraph d) above except that the country of origin and standard species codes **and years of production and/or harvest** will not be required; and further, that the same information as is on these tags be given on the re-export certificate together with details of the original permit under which the skins were imported;
- l) that, where a re-export contains untagged skins that pre-date the ~~implementation~~ **entry into effect** of Resolution **Conf. 9.22**, the Management Authority record this on the re-export certificate;
- m) that Parties accept export permits, re-export certificates or other Convention documents for trade in crocodylian skins and parts thereof only if they contain the information referred to in paragraphs c), d), i) or j), as appropriate, and if the related skins and parts thereof are tagged in accordance with the provisions of this Resolution; ~~the only exception to this latter requirement will be where a party has stocks of existing tags that do not bear the information required in d) but has informed the secretariat of the number and details of such tags, and plans to discontinue their use. in such cases, this should be stated on the export documentation which, after confirmation by the secretariat, the Management Authority of the importing Party should accept; and~~
- n) that the Parties ~~and~~, **with the advice** of the Secretariat **if appropriate**, implement a management and tracking system for tags used in trade as outlined in Annex 2 to this Resolution; **and**

- o) that Management Authorities ensure that tags not affixed to skins, flanks and chalecos in the year specified on the tag are destroyed;**

~~DIRECTS the Secretariat, in consultation with the Animals Committee, to monitor the implementation of this Resolution and report its findings with recommendations where appropriate at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties;~~ **to report deficiencies of the system or specific instances of concern to the Animals Committee;** and

REPEALS the Resolutions listed hereunder:

Resolution Conf. 6.17 (Ottawa, 1987) – Implementation of the export quota for Nile and saltwater crocodile skins; and

Resolution Conf. 9.22 (Fort Lauderdale, 1994) – Universal tagging system for the identification of crocodilian skins.

Annex 1

CODES FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF CROCODILIAN SPECIES

Species	Code
<i>Alligator mississippiensis</i>	MIS
<i>Alligator sinensis</i>	SIN
<i>Caiman crocodilus apaporiensis</i>	APA
<i>Caiman crocodilus chiapasius</i>	CHI
<i>Caiman crocodilus crocodilus</i>	CRO
<i>Caiman crocodilus fuscus</i>	FUS
<i>Caiman latirostris</i>	LAT
<i>Caiman yacare</i>	YAC
<i>Crocodylus acutus</i>	ACU
<i>Crocodylus cataphractus</i>	CAT
<i>Crocodylus intermedius</i>	INT
<i>Crocodylus johnstoni</i>	JOH
<i>Crocodylus moreletti</i>	MOR
<i>Crocodylus niloticus</i>	NIL
<i>Crocodylus novaeguineae mindorensis</i>	MIN
<i>Crocodylus novaeguineae novaeguineae</i>	NOV
<i>Crocodylus palustris</i>	PAL
<i>Crocodylus porosus</i>	POR
<i>Crocodylus rhombifer</i>	RHO
<i>Crocodylus siamensis</i>	SIA
<i>Gavialis gangeticus</i>	GAV
<i>Melanosuchus niger</i>	NIG
<i>Osteolaemus tetraspis</i>	TET
<i>Paleosuchus palpebrosus</i>	PAP
<i>Paleosuchus trigonatus</i>	TRI
<i>Tomistoma schlegelii</i>	SCH

Annex 2

MANAGEMENT AND TRACKING SYSTEM FOR TAGS USED IN THE CROCODILIAN SKIN TRADE

1. The CITES Secretariat should establish, maintain, and amend periodically thereafter, a list of approved sources capable of manufacturing tags that meet the minimum requirements as laid down in paragraph d) of this Resolution; and further, the Secretariat should regularly give notice to the Parties of such sources and each Management Authority should obtain tags to mark crocodilian skins only from these approved sources.
2. Any approved tag manufacturer registered by the Secretariat should first agree, in writing, that it will:
 - a) not duplicate any series of tags produced in accordance with this Resolution;
 - b) sell such tags only to Management Authorities or, in non-party States, to designated government agencies recognized by the Secretariat in accordance with Resolution Conf. 9.5, or to bodies approved by these agencies; and
 - c) report direct and immediately to the Secretariat each order for tags that is fulfilled.
3. When ordering tags from approved sources, Management Authorities should immediately inform the Secretariat of the details of each tag order.
4. Upon request by a Management Authority, the Secretariat should purchase and distribute tags for crocodilian skins, and should recover the full cost, except if external funding becomes available for Parties requiring assistance.
- ~~5. The Secretariat should seek additional resources to allow it to computerize the information collected in connection with this resolution.~~
- 5. When issuing export permits or re-export certificates for crocodilian skins, or other specimens referred to in this Resolution, Parties should record the number of the tags associated with each document and make this information available to the Secretariat on request.**
6. The Management Authorities of the exporting, re-exporting and importing Parties should provide to the Secretariat, when directed by the Standing Committee or agreed to between the range State and the CITES Secretariat, a copy of each export permit, re-export certificate, or other Convention document for crocodilian skins or flanks immediately after issuance or receipt as appropriate.
- 7 Parties that require or intend to require the use of tags for containers should send to the Secretariat at least one sample tag for reference.**