

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

Twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Santiago (Chile), 3-15 November 2002

Strategic and administrative matters

Reports of dialogue meetings

RESULTS OF THE WIDER CARIBBEAN HAWKSBILL TURTLE DIALOGUE MEETINGS

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. The background and history to the dialogue process has been outlined on the Secretariat's website as follows:

*At the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP11), Cuba put forward a proposal (Prop. 11.40) to transfer from Appendix I to Appendix II certain parts of the Caribbean population of hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) inhabiting Cuban waters. This proposal was rejected, but it was suggested that a regional Caribbean meeting be held to strengthen regional cooperation on the hawksbill turtle issue. After CoP11, the Secretariat was asked formally by Costa Rica, contingent on the availability of funds, to convene a technical workshop of Caribbean hawksbill turtle range States and territories to be held within 12 months of CoP11. Other Parties also contacted the Secretariat, supporting the idea of a range State regional meeting, but suggesting different procedures and objectives.*

Faced with these various suggestions, the Secretariat proposed that two wider Caribbean hawksbill turtle range State dialogue meetings (similar to the very successful African elephant dialogue meetings) be held before CoP12, to discuss and, if possible, reach consensus on the many difficult issues raised.

Dialogue meetings are held in a 'neutral' venue and the hosting country provides the neutral chairmanship. The meetings elect Vice Chairmen who work with the Chairman, the Secretariat and IUCN to prepare a final communiqué. However, it is important to emphasize that the CITES dialogue meetings are organized by the range States and, in that context, the Secretariat and IUCN, its partner in this programme, are there simply to assist and facilitate the process. The Secretariat proposes a draft agenda, and seeks input from the range States. Once agreed, the Secretariat coordinates the preparation of discussion documents around the various agenda topics.

Background documents prepared for both meetings are also available on the Secretariat's website.

3. The communiqué of the second meeting is provided as Annex 1. The Secretariat thanks all participants and the Government of the Cayman Islands for providing the venue for the meeting and all the donors who provided support for this meeting (see the Annex to Annex 1).
4. At the first dialogue meeting (Mexico City, Mexico, May 2001), it was decided that a draft resolution on the conservation of hawksbill turtles in the wider Caribbean should be prepared in time for CoP12, in order to promote further regional collaboration. As mentioned in the communiqué in Annex 1, a major

result of the second meeting was a draft resolution, which the Secretariat has been asked to submit on behalf of the participating countries (see Annex 2).

5. The participants in the second dialogue meeting also drafted two decisions for consideration by the Conference of the Parties, and these are provided as Annex 3.
6. The Secretariat appreciates the progress made towards regional cooperation and the commitment shown by the participating States and territories towards the development of a regional conservation strategy, as reflected in the proposed draft resolution. It is laudable that the States and territories of the wider Caribbean have placed so much emphasis on the recovery of this Appendix-I listed species. The Secretariat also appreciates that the dialogue mechanism has been found to be useful by the States and territories of the region, and that there is support to formalize and institutionalize this mechanism, beyond the original concept outlined in paragraph 2 above. The Secretariat is also pleased that in this region, the overseas territories of some Parties, as well as non-Parties, were able to participate in the dialogue process.
7. Mindful, however, of the precedents that could be set for other species and other regions and the implications for CITES in general if the proposed draft resolution and decisions in Annexes 2 and 3 are adopted, the Secretariat would like to make the following comments:
 - a) The proposed draft resolution in Annex 2 deals primarily with regional conservation issues that do not necessarily fall within the mandate of CITES. Several existing Resolutions of the Conference of the Parties have a strong conservation focus, along with provisions addressing trade-related issues and problems. The only provisions in the proposed draft resolution that are directly relevant to trade are recommendations to reduce illegal trade and to control and report on stocks of parts and derivatives. Such provisions have been adopted as part of Resolutions concerning other species or groups of species, but could be appropriate recommendations for many other CITES-listed species.
 - b) The nature of the proposals in the draft resolution in Annex 2 and their regional scope seem to suggest that CITES may not be the most appropriate framework for discussion of these proposals. CITES, however, is the conservation (and trade) agreement with the greatest membership in the wider Caribbean. For this reason, it is not appropriate to recommend that the proposals be directed to other multilateral agreements or programmes focused on conservation in this region or on marine turtles specifically. CITES, on the basis of its broad membership and profile in the region, can be the appropriate vehicle to facilitate collaboration amongst the various entities with a jurisdiction, mandate or interest concerning this species in the wider Caribbean, if such facilitation is in the best interest of CITES.
 - c) The Secretariat, in view of its many other obligations, is concerned about the responsibilities assigned to it in the proposals, particularly concerning the problem of having to secure external funding for the implementation of a significant amount of recurrent activities included in the proposal.
8. The Secretariat wishes to stimulate activities concerning the regional conservation of the hawksbill turtle and believes that the following alternative approach would be the most appropriate to achieve tangible results:
 - a) that further activities concerning the hawksbill turtle in the wider Caribbean under the direct auspices of CITES be focused on resolving problems related to international trade in hawksbill specimens;
 - b) that CITES, because of its broad membership in the region, be used to facilitate collaboration amongst other bodies and international agreements on the conservation of the hawksbill turtle; and
 - c) that the draft decisions presented in Annex 4 be adopted by the Conference of the Parties rather than the draft resolution and draft decisions in Annexes 2 and 3.

Second CITES wider Caribbean hawksbill turtle dialogue meeting

21-23 May 2002

Communiqué

A second meeting of the Wider Caribbean Hawksbill Turtle Range State Dialogue was convened from 21 to 23 May 2002 in the Cayman Islands, United Kingdom. This meeting was attended by 29 States and Territories (see Annex) and continued discussions on issues relating to the conservation of and trade in hawksbill turtles in the wider Caribbean region that began one year earlier in Mexico City. The European Commission, Japan, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, the United States of America and World Wildlife Fund US provided the necessary finances. The CITES Secretariat, with the assistance of IUCN – The World Conservation Union, served as facilitators for this meeting. The Hon. W. McKeever Bush opened the meeting and Mr Charles Clifford and Ms Gina Ebanks-Petrie served as chairmen.

The meeting was convened to allow participants to review progress towards the development and implementation of an effective hawksbill turtle conservation strategy at a regional level, taking into account the full range of national conservation objectives and development needs in the wider Caribbean.

Discussions focused on the main elements of a regional conservation strategy. A draft resolution was prepared for submission to the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, outlining the principle elements of such a strategy, including:

- promoting the recovery of depleted populations and maintaining stable, recovered populations of hawksbill turtles in the region;
- promoting and strengthening existing measures, such as national programmes and those under the Caribbean Environment Programme;
- monitoring and reducing illegal harvest and trade;
- ensuring sufficient resources for implementation of the strategy, including capacity building;
- improving communication and information sharing in the region, including public awareness;
- improving research and monitoring; and
- ensuring active participation of all countries in the region.

Working groups also discussed issues related to development of standardised monitoring protocols for population trends and for legal and illegal use of and trade in specimens of the species.

In addition, some participants provided comments to, and obtained clarification from, the representatives of the Government of Cuba regarding a draft proposal¹ concerning a one-off export of accumulated tortoise-shell stocks, which might be submitted to the upcoming CITES meeting.

Delegates furthermore highlighted the importance of improved communication and sharing of information to ensure improved collaboration and commitment to the conservation of the species in the region. They expressed their appreciation for the benefits of the Dialogue and agreed that future meetings would be important to maintain the commitment to and understanding of issues related to hawksbill conservation in the region.

¹ *Transfer from Appendix I to Appendix II, with an explanatory note, of the population of hawksbill turtle present in Cuban waters for the purpose of allowing the export of legal shell stocks accumulated from Cuban national management programme between 1993 and 2002 (up to 7,900 kg).*

Delegates concluded the meeting by thanking the convenors, the donors and the Government of the Cayman Islands for the facilities and support, which contributed to the success of the meeting. Delegates also expressed their appreciation to the Netherlands and the United Kingdom for facilitating the attendance of their overseas territories at the Dialogue.

Annex

Participating countries and territories

| | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Anguilla | Dominican Republic | Panama |
| Bahamas | France | Saint Kitts and Nevis |
| Barbados | Guatemala | Saint Lucia |
| Bermuda | Honduras | Saint Vincent and the Grenadines |
| British Virgin Islands | Jamaica | Trinidad and Tobago |
| Cayman Islands | Japan | Turks and Caicos Islands |
| Colombia | Mexico | United Kingdom |
| Costa Rica | Netherlands | United States of America |
| Cuba | Netherlands Antilles | Venezuela |
| Dominica | Nicaragua | |

DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

(prepared by the participants in the second dialogue meeting)

Conservation of hawksbill turtles in the wider Caribbean

RECOGNIZING the usefulness of the recent process to facilitate collaboration, planning and information exchange on the management of hawksbill turtles within the wider Caribbean;

RECOGNIZING that the species has been categorized as 'critically endangered' globally, and the fact that hawksbill turtles are still subject to a variety of threats within the region, including illegal catch and trade;

NOTING that the highly migratory nature of the species requires a strategic approach at the regional level in addition to the development of national plans;

NOTING the need for regional and national plans for the conservation and recovery of hawksbill turtles;

RECOGNIZING that the large number of States and territories within the region have a collective and shared responsibility for the conservation of hawksbill turtles which requires active collaboration between them;

ACKNOWLEDGING ongoing efforts within the region by States, territories and Multilateral Environmental Agreements aimed at the conservation and management of the species, in particular by the UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme (UNEP-CEP) and the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC);

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

URGES States and Territories to develop a collaborative regional conservation strategy¹ to enhance the conservation status of hawksbill turtles and, where appropriate, other marine turtles within the wider Caribbean;

URGES States and Territories within the region to implement the strategy through the development and implementation of national management plans;

RECOMMENDS the continued use of the regional dialogue process to facilitate collaboration, planning and information exchange on the management of hawksbill turtles within the wider Caribbean;

URGES the participation of relevant regional and international Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other relevant bodies, such as UNEP-CEP and the IAC, in dialogue meetings to promote joint collaboration;

RECOMMENDS Parties report progress with the implementation of their national plan to each dialogue meeting and, where appropriate, develop actions and share relevant information between dialogue meetings, through *ad hoc* working groups;

URGES Parties to adopt and implement the standard protocols for the monitoring, at recommended and agreed index sites, of populations of nesting and foraging hawksbill turtles and that similar efforts should be taken to monitor legal harvests, by-catch in other fisheries and illegal take;

RECOMMENDS all Parties to implement measures to reduce illegal catch and illegal trade in hawksbill turtles and parts and derivatives thereof;

¹ A suggested framework for such a strategy, with suggested goals and objectives, is provided in Annex 1.

RECOMMENDS all Parties with stocks of hawksbill turtle parts and derivatives to identify, mark, register and secure all such stockpiles and provide a report to the regional dialogue;

CALLS upon all Governments and inter-governmental organizations, international aid agencies and non-governmental organizations to provide funds to enable the implementation of the Caribbean regional hawksbill strategy and to support the regional dialogue process; and

DIRECTS the Secretariat to establish and manage a fund specifically to support regional liaison, coordination and the implementation of the wider Caribbean hawksbill turtle conservation strategy including implementation of population monitoring protocols at index sites, and to assist with raising the necessary funds.

Annex 1

Outline of the strategic plan for the conservation of hawksbill turtles within the wider Caribbean

Vision

To enhance the conservation status of hawksbill turtles so that the Caribbean regional population is no longer considered to be threatened.

General objectives¹

- a) To achieve the recovery of depleted populations;
- b) to ensure that recovered populations are maintained at a stable level; and
- c) to identify recovery levels for all genetically discrete nesting populations.

Mechanisms

- a) Promote and strengthen existing management measures, by:
 - i) ensuring that adequate national legislation is in place to implement a strategy or national plan;
 - ii) ensuring that legal provisions are available for the conservation of hawksbill turtles and their habitats, and for the regulation of trade and of any harvests;
 - iii) seeking to harmonize and standardize regional legislation, programmes and policies whilst recognizing the diversity of views and approaches within the region; and
 - iv) increasing synergy and collaboration with other regional and international agreements including, amongst others, the UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme and the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles.
- b) Undertake research and monitoring necessary to implement the plan, by:
 - i) seeking to identify and target for further study those topics in which significant gaps in knowledge remain;
 - ii) implementing standard monitoring protocols for foraging and nesting populations at agreed and defined index sites;

¹ Definitions of what constitutes a 'recovered' population and indicators and targets for recovery will need to be established at the regional and national levels.

- iii) monitoring take and mortality of hawksbill turtles from legal harvests (including catch-per-unit effort), by-catch in other fisheries and illegal catch;
 - iv) assessing the levels of legal and illegal trade within the region; and
 - v) undertaking studies into the genetic composition of nesting and foraging populations, the migratory movements of hawksbills and the definition of potential management units.
- c) Improve communication and information sharing within the region by:
- i) establishing and maintaining, through UNEP-WCMC, a clearing house of information on hawksbill turtles within the region;
 - ii) continuing the regional dialogue process as a means of bringing the relevant states and territories together;
 - iii) ensuring the involvement of all stakeholders in the region in strategy development and implementation;
 - iv) ensuring that decisions are based on the best scientific and traditional knowledge available; and
 - v) undertaking public awareness and education campaigns concerning, *inter alia*, relevant legal mechanisms and the conservation and management needs for the species.
- d) Ensure the availability of adequate resources for implementation, by:
- i) seeking to ensure adequate funding through allocation of in-house resources, external fund-raising and the provision of other resources;
 - ii) increasing the capacity of Governments, organizations and individuals in the region to implement relevant elements of the strategy; and
 - iii) sharing relevant expertise, technology and resources within the region.

Annex 2

Terms of reference for the wider Caribbean hawksbill turtle sub-regional dialogue meetings

The regional dialogue process has the following goals.

- a) To encourage the development and implementation of a regional strategy and national management plans for the conservation of hawksbill turtles (and, where appropriate, other marine turtles).
- b) To report on the implementation of national management plans as a contribution to regional goals and to establish priorities for collaborative action.
- c) To enable discussion and information sharing relating to the conservation and management of hawksbill turtles.
- d) To share the results of research and monitoring activities.
- e) To focus on specific issues of interest or concern to the region.

- f) To encourage capacity building within the region and to raise awareness of issues relating to hawksbill turtle conservation and management.
- g) To stimulate participation by States and territories within the region in the dialogue process and in the implementation of a regional strategy.

DRAFT DECISIONS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

(prepared by the participants in the second dialogue meeting)

- 12.xx The Secretariat shall arrange, before the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, at least one dialogue meeting of the wider Caribbean region on hawksbill turtles in order to facilitate regional collaboration, planning and information exchange.
- 12.xx The Secretariat shall compile a full report for the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the implementation of the wider Caribbean strategy for the conservation of hawksbill turtles by the relevant States and territories, and on the outcome of the dialogue meeting.

DRAFT DECISIONS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

(proposed by the Secretariat regarding the conservation of hawksbill turtles in the wider Caribbean)

- 12.xx States and territories in the wider Caribbean region should:
- a) develop further a collaborative regional conservation strategy, based on the outline of a strategic plan provided in the Annex, to enhance the conservation status of hawksbill turtles and, where appropriate, other marine turtles within the wider Caribbean;
 - b) implement the strategy through the development and implementation of national management plans;
 - c) adopt and implement standard protocols for the monitoring, at recommended and agreed index sites, of populations of nesting and foraging hawksbill turtles and that similar efforts should be taken to monitor legal harvests, by-catch in other fisheries and illegal take;
 - d) implement measures to reduce illegal catch and illegal trade in hawksbill turtles and parts and derivatives thereof, including measures to improve the control of stocks of hawksbill turtle parts and derivatives by identifying, marking, registering and securing all such stockpiles;
 - e) report on progress with the implementation of the regional conservation strategy and national management plans at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Annex

Outline of a strategic plan for the conservation of hawksbill turtles within the wider Caribbean

Vision

To enhance the conservation status of hawksbill turtles so that the Caribbean regional population is no longer considered to be threatened.

General objectives¹

- a) To achieve the recovery of depleted populations;
- b) to ensure that recovered populations are maintained at a stable level; and
- c) to identify recovery levels for all genetically discrete nesting populations.

Mechanisms

- a) Promote and strengthen existing management measures, by:
 - i) ensuring that adequate national legislation is in place to implement a strategy or national plan;

¹ Definitions of what constitutes a 'recovered' population and indicators and targets for recovery will need to be established at the regional and national levels.

- ii) ensuring that legal provisions are available for the conservation of hawksbill turtles and their habitats, and for the regulation of trade and of any harvests;
 - iii) seeking to harmonize and standardize regional legislation, programmes and policies whilst recognizing the diversity of views and approaches within the region; and
 - iv) increasing synergy and collaboration with other regional and international agreements including, amongst others, the UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme and the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles.
- b) Undertake research and monitoring necessary to implement the plan, by:
- i) seeking to identify and target for further study those topics in which significant gaps in knowledge remain;
 - ii) implementing standard monitoring protocols for foraging and nesting populations at agreed and defined index sites;
 - iii) monitoring take and mortality of hawksbill turtles from legal harvests (including catch-per-unit effort), by-catch in other fisheries and illegal catch;
 - iv) assessing the levels of legal and illegal trade within the region; and
 - v) undertaking studies into the genetic composition of nesting and foraging populations, the migratory movements of hawksbills and the definition of potential management units.
- c) Improve communication and information sharing within the region by:
- i) establishing and maintaining, through UNEP-WCMC, a clearing house of information on hawksbill turtles within the region;
 - ii) continuing the regional dialogue process as a means of bringing the relevant states and territories together;
 - iii) ensuring the involvement of all stakeholders in the region in strategy development and implementation;
 - iv) ensuring that decisions are based on the best scientific and traditional knowledge available; and
 - v) undertaking public awareness and education campaigns concerning, *inter alia*, relevant legal mechanisms and the conservation and management needs for the species.
- d) Ensure the availability of adequate resources for implementation, by:
- i) seeking to ensure adequate funding through allocation of in-house resources, external fund-raising and the provision of other resources;
 - ii) increasing the capacity of Governments, organizations and individuals in the region to implement relevant elements of the strategy; and
 - iii) sharing relevant expertise, technology and resources within the region.

Sub-regional meetings

- a) In the light of the usefulness of the dialogue meetings held under the auspices of the CITES Secretariat to facilitate collaboration, planning and information exchange on the management of hawksbill turtles within the wider Caribbean, such meetings shall be continued, and:
- i) subject to the availability of funding, before the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, at least one dialogue meeting of the wider Caribbean regional on hawksbill turtles shall be arranged in order to facilitate further regional collaboration, planning and information exchange;
 - ii) the participation of relevant regional and international Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other relevant bodies, such as UNEP-CEP and the IAC in dialogue meetings to promote joint collaboration shall be sought; and
 - iii) a full report, *inter alia* for presentation at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES shall be compiled on the outcome of the dialogue meeting.
- b) Parties in the wider Caribbean shall report progress on the implementation of their national plan at each dialogue meeting and, where appropriate, develop actions and share relevant information between dialogue meetings, through *ad hoc* working groups. Non-Parties will be invited to do the same.
- c) Parties agree to the following terms of reference for the wider Caribbean hawksbill turtle sub-regional meetings:

The regional dialogue process has the following goals:

- i) to encourage the development and implementation of a sub-regional strategy and national management plans for the conservation of hawksbill turtles and, where appropriate, other marine turtles;
- ii) to report on the implementation of national management plans as a contribution to regional goals and to establish priorities for collaborative action;
- iii) to enable discussion and information sharing relating to the conservation and management of hawksbill turtles;
- iv) to share the results of research and monitoring activities;
- v) to focus on specific issues of interest or concern to the region;
- vi) to encourage capacity building within the region and to raise awareness of issues relating to hawksbill turtle conservation and management; and
- vii) to stimulate participation by States and territories within the region in the process and in the implementation of a sub-regional strategy.

- 12.xx The Secretariat shall, subject to funding and before the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, arrange at least one dialogue meeting of the wider Caribbean region on hawksbill turtles in order to facilitate regional collaboration, planning and information exchange, as well as collaboration with other bodies and multilateral agreements with a mandate concerning the conservation and management of this species in the wider Caribbean region.

- 12.xx Governments and inter-governmental organizations, international aid agencies and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to provide funds to enable the implementation of the Caribbean regional hawksbill strategy and to support the regional dialogue process.