

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



Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Doha (Qatar), 13-25 March 2010

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Trade control and marking

IDENTIFICATION OF WORKED SPECIMENS OF BLACK CORAL (*ANTIPATHARIA*)
AND PARTS THEREOF IN TRADE

1. This document has been prepared by Sweden* on behalf of the European Community Member States acting in the interest of the European Community.

Background

2. The entire order of black corals (*Antipatharia*) has been listed under Appendix II of CITES since 1981. The UNEP-WCMC database lists 245 species in seven families. *Antipatharia* spp. have never been subject to a complete taxonomic revision and there is no standard reference for nomenclature under Res. Conf. 12.11 (Rev. Cop14) (UNEP-WCMC, 2008). An ongoing revision of the order currently has five parts published (2001-2006), covering the families Aphanipathidae (22 spp.), Cladopathidae (16 spp.), Myriopathidae (32 spp.), Schizopathidae (37 spp.) and Stylopathidae (8 spp.), leaving the Antipathidae (approx. 122 spp.) and the Leiopathidae (6 spp.) still to be dealt with (UNEP-WCMC, 2008).
3. International trade in black corals is substantial. (Bruckner *et al.*, 2008) report that between 1982-1998 72t and 7.4m pieces of black coral were reported in trade with an average of 430,000 pieces a year. UNEP-WCMC record 504,102 pieces and 4298kg of raw black coral reported by importers between 1997 and 2007. Much of the trade is in worked items: a total of 2,625,902 individual pieces and 2,271kg of carvings were reported by importing countries between 1997 and 2007 (source: UNEP-WCMC). Trade reported by exporters is less than that recorded by importers.
4. Over 90% of reported trade is in three categories: *Antipatharia* spp., *Antipathes* spp. and *Cirripathes* spp. Whilst the majority of specimens in trade are identified to species level, a significant proportion is identified only to the level of genus. The major recorded exporter of raw and processed black coral is Taiwan, Province of China, and the major importer is the United States of America. The majority of trade in processed black coral is for jewellery. Other significant exporting states include Cyprus, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, New Caledonia, the Philippines and the United States.

Identification of worked items of black coral in trade

5. Resolution Conf.12.3 Part XIV e) requires Parties to refuse to accept permits which do not indicate the scientific name of the species concerned unless the Conference of the Parties has accepted the use of higher taxon names or a Party has communicated a good justification to Secretariat. We are not aware of any such decision by the Conference of Parties, nor are we aware of any justification provided by Parties to the Secretariat for the use of higher taxon names for worked specimens of black coral.

* The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat or the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.

6. There is considerable confusion with regard to black coral taxonomy. Eleven genera are reported in trade (Bruckner *et al.*, 2008); specimens in trade of seven of these are reported only to the level of genus with thirteen species recorded in trade in the other four genera. Identification of worked specimens to species, or even genus, level is reported to be difficult if not impossible (Bruckner *et al.*, 2008; Tony Montgomery, pers. comm.; Dennis Opresko, pers. comm.).

Recommendation

7. Action is therefore needed to assist in the identification of black coral (*Antipatharia*) in trade and to provide guidance to Parties on the taxonomic level to which worked specimens of black coral should be identified on permits. Such guidance has already been provided to Parties with respect to stony corals (in the Order Scleractinia) through Notification 2003/020.

8. The Conference of the Parties is requested to:

Amendment of Resolution 12.3 and Notification 2006/030

- a. Agree that worked specimens of black coral (*Antipatharia*) in trade may be identified to the taxonomic level of Order for the purpose of reporting and the issue of CITES permits. Draft text is appended at Annex A for either communication to the Parties through a Notification or insertion into Part X of Res. Conf. 12.3 and section 3.b of the Annex to Notification 2006/030 on Annual Reports.

Decisions directed to the Secretariat

- b. Direct the Secretariat to commission the development of guidance on the identification of worked specimens of black coral (*Antipatharia*) in trade at species, genus and higher taxonomic level. A draft decision is appended at Annex B.
9. Raw black coral and live coral should continue to be identified in trade to species level and recommends that Parties should be encouraged to prepare by the sixteenth Conference of Parties improved guidance to Parties on the identification of black coral specimens in trade.
10. Indicative budgets for the work envisaged under paragraph 8 are:

Secretariat staff time	USD 5,000
Translation	USD 7,500
Printing and publication	USD 12,500
TOTAL	USD 25,000

References

Bruckner, A., de Angelis, P. & Montgomery, T. 2008. Case study for black coral from Hawaii. International Expert Workshop on CITES Non-detriment Findings, Cancun, Mexico (November 2008). http://www.conabio.gob.mx/institucion/cooperacion_internacional/TallerNDF/Links-Documentos/WG-CS/WG9-AquaticInvertebrates/WG9-CS1%20BlackCoral/WG9-CS1.pdf

UNEP-WCMC. 2008. Checklist of CITES species. CITES Secretariat / UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre.

COMMENTS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

- A. The Secretariat agrees that guidance to Parties is needed on the identification of black coral (*Antipatharia* spp.) and on the taxonomic level at which worked specimens of black coral should be identified on permits, and supports the proposed amendment to Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP14), and to Section 3.b of the Annex of the *Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual reports* (Notification to the Parties No. 2006/030 of 2 May 2006).
- B. The Secretariat also supports the draft decision directed to it for the development of guidance in the identification of worked specimens of black coral in trade at species, genus and higher taxonomic level. However, the Secretariat believes such guidance on identification, as with any other similar guidance being prepared to assist Parties with identification, does not need to be approved by the Conference of the Parties at a future meeting.
- C. The Secretariat notes, however, that the proposed budget does not include funding for a consultant to prepare this guidance. The Secretariat therefore recommends that the guidance be published online through the Web-based Identification Manual database, and that the budget line identified for printing and publication be used to commission the work from a suitable consultant.
- D. If a decision is made regarding work to be done, the Secretariat will thereafter incorporate the activity and the required amount of external funding into the costed programme of work for the appropriate year, in accordance with priorities established by the Parties.

Proposed amendment to Res. Conf. 12.3 and Notification 2006/030

Insertion into Part X of Res. Conf. 12.3 'Regarding permits and certificates for coral specimens' under RECOMMENDS THAT as new paragraphs (d) and (e).

- d) on permits and certificates for trade in worked specimens of black coral where the species cannot be readily determined, the specimens may be recorded at the genus level and where the genus cannot be readily determined, the scientific name for the given specimens should be 'Antipatharia';
- e) raw black coral and live black coral should continue to be identified in trade to species level.

Insertion into Section 3.b of the Annex (*Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual reports*) to Notification 2006/030, the following:

Regarding black corals, Parties should make every effort to report trade at the species level but if this is not practical they should adopt the following guidance, namely that :

- a) for trade in worked specimens of black coral where the species cannot be readily determined, the specimens may be recorded at the genus level and where the genus cannot be readily determined, the trade may be recorded at the level of Order 'Antipatharia';
- b) trade in raw black coral and live black coral should continue to be identified in trade to species level.

Draft Decisions directed to the Secretariat and the Standing Committee

Directed to the Secretariat:

- 15.xx. The Secretariat shall, subject to the availability of external funds, commission the development of guidance on the identification of worked specimens of black coral (*Antipatharia*) in trade at species, genus and higher taxonomic level for consideration by the sixteenth Conference of Parties.