



NOTIFICATION TO THE PARTIES

No. 2015/064

Geneva, 16 December 2015

CONCERNING:

COLOMBIA

Export of skins of *Caiman crocodilus*

1. This Notification is published at the request of the Management Authority of Colombia.
2. Under Resolution 923 of 2007, the Colombian authorities established a means of ensuring the traceability of captive-bred specimens of *Caiman crocodilus*, namely the presence of a scar button resulting from amputation at birth of the 10th caudal scute.
3. When whole skins at any stage of processing are exported, this requirement will be explicitly mentioned in box 5, "Special Conditions," in CITES export permits issued by Colombia.
4. Verification of the scar button is a prerequisite for authorization of export, import or re-export of whole skins of Colombian *Caiman crocodilus*.
5. This revised policy regarding the export of *Caiman crocodilus* skins was adopted in response to representations submitted by some Parties and by the Crocodile Specialist Group of the IUCN Species Survival Commission, which maintains and promotes the adoption of it, through the use of a guide (prepared with assistance from the Crocodile Specialist Group, CSG-IUCN) which helps Parties in identifying and unambiguously identifying the scar resulting from amputation of the scute carried out on newly-born live hatchlings, as compared with a scar resulting from amputation of the scute carried out on adult specimens or post-mortem, which may have been done fraudulently (see the Annex: "Guidance Document for CITES Enforcement Authorities").
6. Seeking to raise the value added of the production chain of *Caiman crocodilus* skins, Colombia will permit, from this date on, the export of whole skins or parts or fragments of skins only in the following conditions and applying strict internal control measures, with monitoring of the traceability of the origin of the skins both before and after their removal and export, to be executed by the CITES Management Authority of Colombia:
 - Whole skins, raw or at any stage of processing (wet-blue, crust, tanned or finished) having an evident scar button that is a genuine result of amputation of the 10th caudal scute.
 - Finished flanks joined naturally together by the part of the tail where the scar button is present, as the result of amputation of the 10th caudal scute and properly marked with non-reusable tags.
 - Other finished skin segments corresponding to identifiable parts of the animal's body, properly marked with non-reusable tags.
 - Irregular-shaped pieces of finished skins, packed in transparent containers and marked with non-reusable tags, as recommended in paragraph f) of CITES Resolution Conf. 11.12 (Rev. CoP15).
 - Manufactured articles properly identified with labels.

7. Export of the following parts of *Caiman crocodilus* is not permitted:
 - Skins at any stage of processing that do not show a scar button resulting from amputation of the 10th caudal scute.
 - Parts or fragments of raw, wet-blue or crust skins.
8. The CITES Management Authority of Colombia requests the collaboration of all Parties in checking that shipments of crocodilian specimens from Colombia are in conformity with the requirements indicated above.
9. The CITES Management Authority of Colombia requests the Parties, in the event that they observe any irregularity, to confiscate the specimens concerned or take any measure that may be applied in accordance with their legislation until the legality of the origin of the specimens is ascertained.
10. The CITES Management Authority of Colombia requests the cooperation of the Parties in making the appropriate notation in box 5 of the marking when issuing CITES re-export permits for crocodilian items originating in Colombia.
11. The present Notification replaces Notification to the Parties No. 2014/033 of 24 June 2014.

ANNEX

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR CITES ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES**Implementing Notification to the Parties 2014/033
“Colombia – Export of Skins from *Caiman crocodilus*”****Verification of the SCAR BUTTON system****1. Background and objectives**

1.1 On 24 July 2014 the CITES Secretariat released Notification to the Parties No. 2014/033 (<http://cites.org/sites/default/files/notif/E-Notif-2014-033.pdf>) *Export of skins of Caiman crocodilus*, in which paragraphs 2 and 3 state:

2. *From 15 July 2014, the Management Authority of Colombia has suspended the issuance of CITES permits for the export of skins of Caiman crocodilus fuscus that are not marked with a ‘scar button’, due to amputation of the 10th caudal scale.*
3. *The scar button was established as a control measure by the Colombian authorities through Resolution 923 of 2007. This requirement will be explicitly mentioned in box 5 ‘special conditions’ of CITES export permits issued by Colombia. The verification of the scar button is a prior requirement for authorization of export, import and re-export of specimens of Caiman crocodilus fuscus.*

1.2 Paragraph 5 specifically requests assistance from the Parties in implementing their national program by checking shipments and verifying compliance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of Notification 2014/033 above:

5. *The CITES Management Authority of Colombia requests the collaboration of all Parties in checking that shipments of crocodilian specimens from Colombia are in conformity with the requirements indicated above. In addition, the Management Authority of Colombia requests that, if Parties notice any irregularity, they seize the specimens concerned or take any other similar measure applicable under their legislation until the legality of the origin of the specimens is ascertained.*

1.3 The ability of Parties to assist Colombia, as requested, depends on them being able to detect all three of the following conditions:

- a. That a *Caiman crocodilus* skin being imported or re-exported, of Colombia origin, contains a complete tail skin, to at least the 10th caudal scute (i.e. that the tail skin must *not* have been cut off).
- b. That on the tail skin, the 10th caudal scute has been amputated; and,
- c. That the amputation site is a “scar button” (see below) and not a fresh amputation made post-mortem.

2. The tail, numbering and Scar Button Marking System

2.1 The skin of the tail of all crocodilians contains discrete rows or “whorls” of scales (scutes) around the tail. Along the top of the tail, on each whorl, there are raised, fin-like, caudal scutes. These rows and caudal scales are all fixed structures, from the time of hatching (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Hatchling *Caiman crocodilus* showing raised caudal (tail) scutes.

2.2 The raised caudal scutes are in pairs, double rows, on the front end of the tail (Figure 2), and single caudal scutes, single rows, on the back end of the tail. Colombia numbers these single rows from the front (No. 1 = first single caudal).

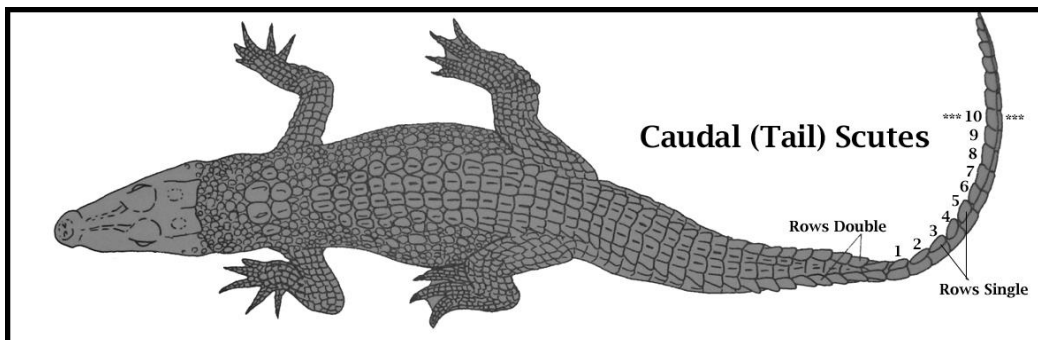


Figure 2. Double and numbered single rows of caudal scutes. * = 10th single row.

2.3. When a single raised caudal scute is amputated, deliberately, it leaves a “notch” in the row of scales (Fig. 3). This is a permanent mark.

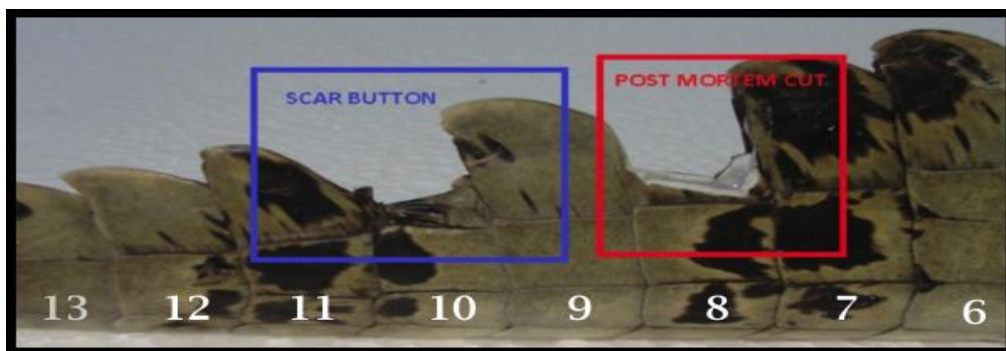


Figure 3. The 8th (fresh) and 10th (scar button – old and healed) amputations.

2.4. Colombia exports only *Caiman crocodilus* skins resulting from captive breeding on farms, and since 2006, has required all hatchlings, at birth, to have the 10th single, caudal, scute amputated.

2.5. In accordance with Notification 2014/33, all skins legally in trade from Colombia *must* have the tail attached, and a healed “scar button” (eg fig. 3 No. 10), and *not* a fresh amputation (Fig. 3 No. 7).

3. Recognising legal Scar Buttons

3.1. When a caudal scute is amputated, and heals over, after 4 to 8 months, a “scar button” forms. This can be regular or irregular in shape (Fig. 4) on a live animal or a skin that is raw or processed to the final tanned leather.

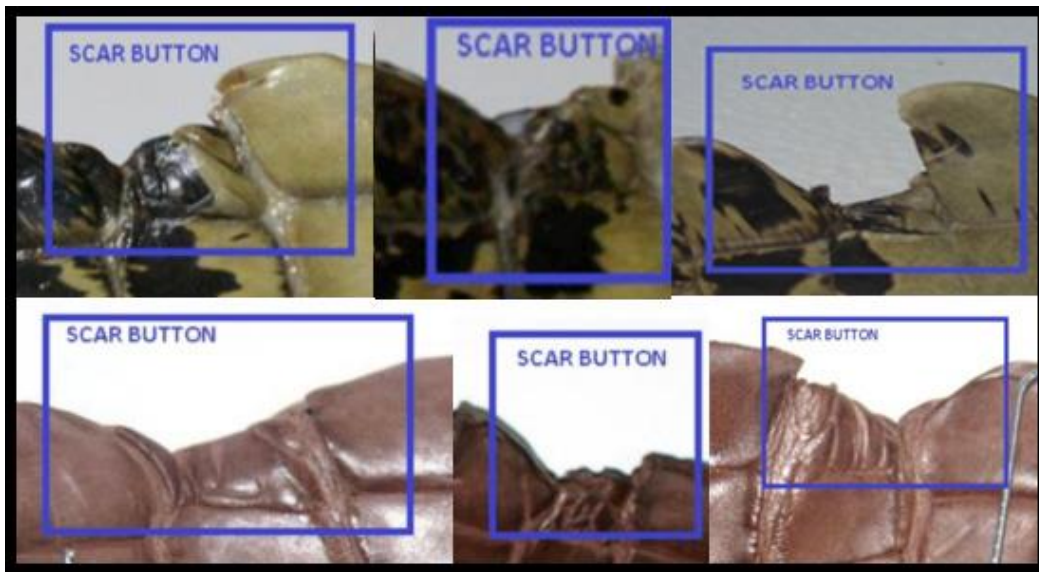


Figure 4. Legal, healed “scar buttons” that have various irregular shapes but are distinct from adjoining caudals.

4. Recognising illegal Scar Buttons

4.1. When a caudal scute has been amputated recently, on say a wild skin, and no healing has taken place, there is *no* irregular “scar button” with a smooth, healed surfaces. Post-mortem amputations usually present clean and sharp cuts (Fig. 5) on skins when raw or processed.

4.2. Legal and illegal amputations on raw skins (Fig. 3), crust tanned skins (Fig. 6) or finished leather (Fig. 7) are usually obvious.

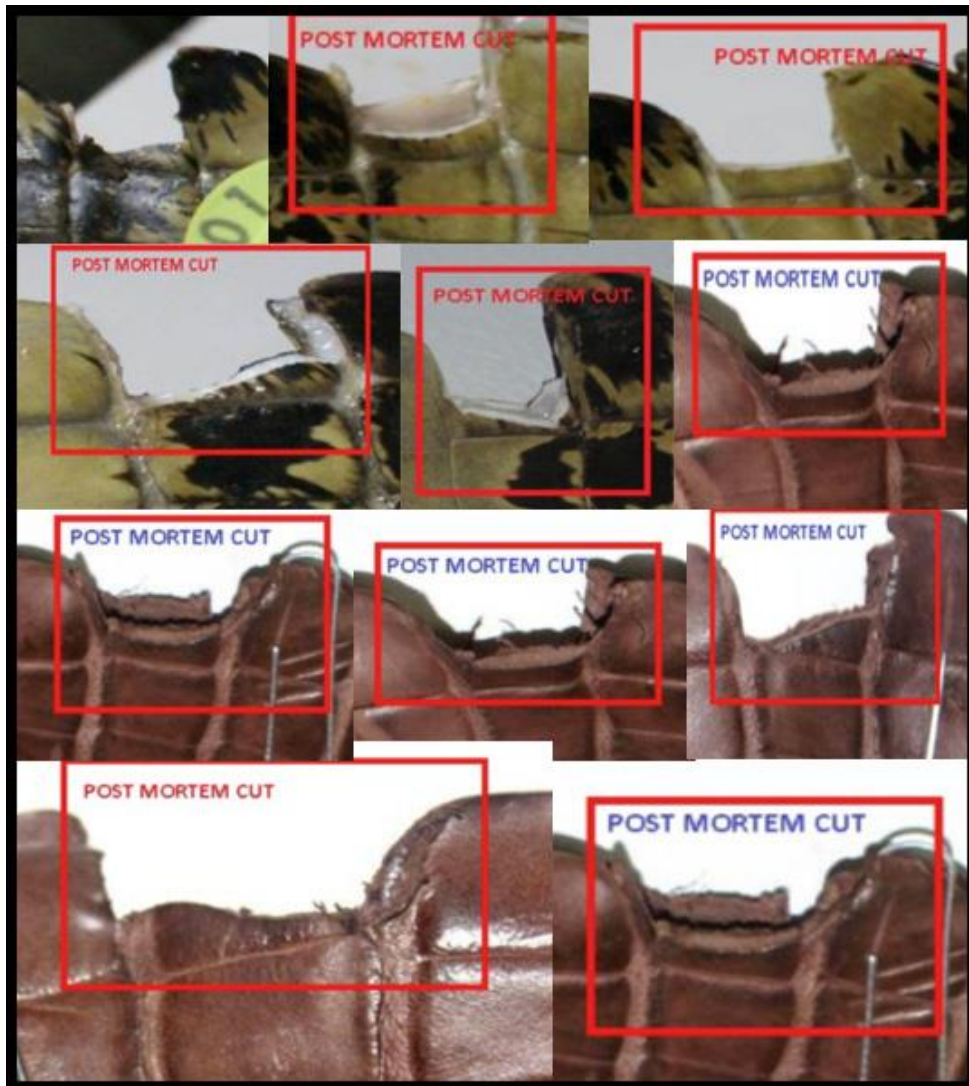


Figure 5. Illegal amputations, on raw skins and processed leather showing no healing or smooth surfaces as in Fig. 4.



Figure 6. Illegal amputations on two skins tanned to crust stage



Figure 7. Legal scar button (left) and illegal amputation (right) on a final tanned skin.