

SUMMARY OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH MEETING OF THE CITES ANIMALS COMMITTEE: 18-22 JULY 2011

The 25th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC 25) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) convened from 18-22 July 2011, in Geneva, Switzerland. AC 25 discussed seventeen substantive items, including: cooperation with other multilateral instruments; strategic planning; capacity building; non-detriment findings; the review of significant trade in Appendix II species; the periodic review of animal species included in the Appendices; amendments to the Appendices; sharks; snakes; and sturgeon.

A record number of more than 200 participants attended the meeting, including representatives of parties, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and industry. As its first meeting since the fifteenth Conference of the Parties (CoP15), AC 25 aimed at initiating actions required to tackle the tasks allocated by the parties and, as such, established a number of working groups to continue intersessionally. The Committee also addressed a full agenda that generated discussion on trade in species including snakes, sharks, the long-tailed macaque, and a number of other species from South-East Asia and elsewhere. The Convention's increasing focus on cooperation with multilateral processes and other organizations was reflected in a number of the items of the agenda as well as in the general mood in discussions in plenary and the working groups throughout the week, where, to a large extent, contentious issues were addressed in a collaborative and congenial manner.

AC 25 adopted recommendations on: the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership; the periodic review; the Review of Significant Trade (RST); ranching; identification of CITES-listed corals in trade; progress on the Identification Manual; production systems; sturgeons; sharks; snakes; turtles and tortoises; and sea cucumbers. The Committee agreed on twelve intersessional working groups, some jointly with the PC including on: sturgeons; sharks; sea cucumbers; and criteria for listing.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CITES ANIMALS COMMITTEE

CITES was established as a response to growing concerns that over-exploitation of wildlife through international trade was contributing to the rapid decline of many species of plants and animals around the world. The Convention was signed

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in Washington, DC, US, on 3 March 1973, and entered into force on 1 July 1975. There are currently 175 parties to the Convention.

The aim of CITES is to ensure that international trade of wild animal and plant species does not threaten their survival. CITES parties regulate wildlife trade through controls and regulations on species listed in three appendices. Appendix I lists species endangered due to international trade, permitting such trade only in exceptional circumstances. Appendix II species are those that may become endangered if their trade is not regulated, thus requiring controls aimed at preventing unsustainable use, maintaining ecosystems and preventing species from entering Appendix I. Appendix III species are those subject to domestic regulation by a party requesting the cooperation of other parties to control international trade in that species. In order to list a species in Appendix I or II, a party must submit a proposal for approval by the CoP, supported by scientific and technical data on population and trade trends. The proposal must be adopted by a two-thirds majority of parties present and voting. As the trade impact on a species increases or decreases, the CoP decides whether or not it should be transferred or removed from the appendices.

There are approximately 5,000 fauna species and 29,000 flora species protected under the three CITES appendices. Parties regulate the international trade of CITES species through a system of permits and certificates that are required before specimens are imported, exported or introduced from the sea. Each party is required to adopt national legislation and to designate two national authorities, namely, a Management Authority responsible for issuing permits and certificates based on the advice of the second national body, the Scientific Authority. These national authorities also assist with CITES enforcement through cooperation with customs, police and other appropriate agencies. Parties maintain trade records that are forwarded annually to the CITES Secretariat, thus enabling the compilation of statistical information on the global volume of international trade in appendix-listed species. The operational bodies of CITES include the Standing Committee (SC) and two scientific committees: the Plants Committee (PC) and the Animals Committee (AC).

CONFERENCES OF THE PARTIES: The first CoP was held in Bern, Switzerland, in November 1976, and subsequent CoPs have been held every two to three years. The CoP meets to, *inter alia*: review progress in the conservation of species included in the appendices; discuss and adopt proposals to amend the lists of species in Appendices I and II; consider recommendations and proposals from parties, the Secretariat, the SC and the scientific committees; and recommend measures to improve the effectiveness of the Convention and the functioning of the Secretariat. The CoP also periodically reviews the list of resolutions and decisions, as well as the species listed in the appendices.

PC 16/AC 22 JOINT SESSION: A joint session of the AC and PC was held from 7-8 July 2006, in Lima, Peru. It addressed issues of common interest to both committees, including: proposed amendments to the rules of procedure; the

review of the scientific committees; the RST in Madagascar; transport of live specimens; and the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity.

AC 22: The 22nd meeting of the CITES Animals Committee convened from 7-13 July 2006, in Lima, Peru. The AC adopted six recommendations to be presented at CoP14 on issues including: the RST; transport of live specimens; sea cucumbers; conservation and management of sharks; and the periodic review.

CITES CoP14: The 14th meeting of the CITES Conference of the Parties convened from 3-15 June 2007, in The Hague, the Netherlands. CoP14 adopted resolutions and decisions including: the CITES Strategic Vision 2008-2013; a guide to compliance with the Convention; management of annual export quotas; and species trade and conservation issues, including Asian big cats, sharks and sturgeons. Regarding species listings, CoP14 decided to list: slenderhorned and Cuvier's gazelles and slow loris on Appendix I; sawfish and eel on Appendix II; and to amend the annotation on African elephants to allow a one-off sale of ivory from Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe with a nine-year resting period for further ivory trade.

PC 17/AC 23 JOINT SESSION: The joint session of the PC and AC convened on 19 April 2008, in Geneva, Switzerland. The PC/AC addressed issues including: the revision of the terms of reference of the scientific committees; cooperation with advisory bodies of other biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements; the RST; an international expert workshop on NDFs; and transport of live animals and plants.

AC 23: The 23rd meeting of the CITES Animals Committee convened from 19-23 April 2008, in Geneva, Switzerland. The AC addressed issues including: the RST; conservation and management of sharks; the periodic review; and a proposal to transfer the Mexican population of *Crocodylus moreletii* from Appendix I to Appendix II.

CoP15: CoP15 convened from 13-25 March 2010, in Doha, Qatar. CoP15 adopted resolutions and decisions on a wide range of topics including: electronic permitting, Asian big cats, rhinoceroses, bigleaf mahogany and Madagascar plant species. Regarding species listings, CoP15 decided to list: Kaiser's spotted newt, five species of tree frogs, the unicorn beetle, rosewood, holywood and several Madagascar plant species, among others.

PC 19: The 19th meeting of the CITES Plants Committee convened from 18-21 April 2011, in Geneva, Switzerland. The PC adopted recommendations on the PC work-plan, NDFs, the periodic review and amendments to the Appendices and the RST; and established seven intersessional working groups, including on NDFs, the periodic review, annotations and climate change.

AC 25 REPORT

On Monday morning, 18 July 2011, in plenary, CITES Secretary-General John Scanlon opened the meeting, emphasizing the role of "sound science" in the functioning of the Convention. He welcomed cooperation between the different bodies of the Convention, as well as with other

multilateral conventions and processes. He highlighted a number of initiatives, including: CITES' involvement in the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES); establishment of the International Consortium on Combatting Wildlife Crime; and exploring the potential of funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and working with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to encourage CBD parties to include CITES activities in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).

The Committee elected Carlos Ibero Solana (Spain) as AC 25 Chair, and Caroline Caceres (Canada) as Vice-Chair by acclamation. Chair Ibero Solana said he was committed to ensuring that the AC's work is an influencing force in CITES' decisions and emphasized building communication between the AC regional representatives and the parties to influence decision making.

The Committee adopted the rules of procedure (AC25 Doc. 3(Rev. 1)), the agenda (AC25 Doc. 4.1) without amendments and the working programme (AC25 Doc. 4.2) with minor amendments. The Committee agreed to admit all the observers that had met the criteria to attend the meeting (AC25 Doc. 5 (Rev. 1)). This report summarizes discussions on each of the items on the agenda of AC 25.

REGIONAL REPORTS

On Thursday, regional representatives, except for Africa, presented their respective reports to plenary (AC25 Doc. 6.1 - 6.6). The Africa representative agreed to present his report once it was uploaded to the CITES website and then, speaking on behalf of Tunisia, took the opportunity to lament the current European Union (EU) export ban on glass eels, saying it goes against CITES and that "conservation should not become protectionism." The Secretariat explained that this issue should be addressed at the SC, not the AC, possibly under the item on cooperation between parties and promotion of multilateral measures, which includes points on stricter domestic measures. On Friday, the Africa representative presented his report.

On the evaluation of the purpose and content of regional reports, the Europe representative introduced the document (AC25 Doc. 6.7) on Thursday, highlighting difficulties in obtaining information from parties and duplication issues, noting the trend towards reducing the reporting burden on parties. He emphasized ensuring that reporting requirements are directed towards obtaining information that is "necessary" and not just "interesting." The North America representative emphasized streamlining requirements and the Asia representative urged including information with a focus on scientific issues.

On Friday in plenary, the AC agreed on a recommendation on the evaluation of the purpose and content of regional reports with minor amendments.

Recommendation: In the recommendation on the evaluation of the purpose and content of regional reports (AC25 DG2 Doc. 1), the AC agrees to focus the content of regional reports on actions regional representatives have taken in fulfilling their duties and information from parties relevant to regional

cooperation and the AC work outlined in the annex; and to reduce the time for presentation of regional reports at AC meetings.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER MULTILATERAL INSTRUMENTS

BIODIVERSITY INDICATORS PARTNERSHIP: On Monday in plenary, the Secretariat reported on the status of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (Decision 15.11), noting that the role of the Partnership is not entirely clear and that an *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group Meeting on the Indicators was established during the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) to the CBD. He highlighted a meeting of this group and other interested parties, held from 20-22 June 2011 in the UK, where CITES was represented by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and said the Secretariat continues to follow the process.

The AC took note of the Secretariat's oral report.

IPBES: On Monday in plenary, the Secretariat introduced the report on IPBES (AC25 Doc. 7.2). He noted the formal creation of the Platform and informed the Committee that the first plenary will be held in October 2011 to operationalize IPBES and consider its structure, principles and procedures, budget and work programme.

The Europe representative suggested prioritizing non-detriment findings (NDFs) and engaging the academic community in CITES issues. Plants Committee (PC) Chair Margarita Clemente (Spain) noted the need for legal support to strengthen CITES' participation in IPBES and encouraged the participation of the SC Chair. She also proposed that CITES request support to countries for non-detriment findings (NDFs) and streamlining the reporting process. Mexico suggested the SC renew the mandate for AC and PC participation in the IPBES plenary. China said CITES should not overlap but rather enhance IPBES work through cooperation.

The AC established a small drafting group and agreed any decision would be forwarded to the PC Chair for circulation. On Friday, plenary adopted the recommendation prepared by the IPBES drafting group.

Recommendation: In the recommendation (AC25 DG1 Doc.1) the AC recommends the scientific committee Chairs participate in IPBES plenary meetings to ensure proper representation of CITES and that IPBES should: support and establish a regular process to seek the views and understand the needs of biodiversity-related conventions and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs); support access to reliable existing knowledge and generate knowledge on, and facilitate regular assessments of, the conservation and sustainable use of key species in ecosystems; and provide particular support to the Scientific Authorities of CITES parties. The recommendation suggests that such support might include: improving access to knowledge to enable CITES bodies and parties to fulfill their functions, especially in making NDFs and the review of significant trade (RST); documenting best practice in using science in biodiversity conservation; and capacity-building support.

CLIMATE CHANGE: On Monday in plenary, the Secretariat introduced the document on climate change (AC25 Doc. 7.3), informing delegates that PC 19 suggested focusing in an intersessional working group on a list of specific aspects of CITES scientific decision-making that are actually or potentially affected by climate change. The North America representative approved the scope of work outlined by PC 19. The Asia representative proposed working taxa by taxa, and identifying benefits from the work of other international processes conserving species, particularly migratory ones, affected by climate change. The Secretariat reported on CITES participation in the Scientific Task Force on Wildlife Diseases established by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS).

The AC agreed to the joint intersessional working group proposed by the PC and appointed members to the group (AC25 Sum. 1), with the AC Vice-Chair as Co-Chair.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

On Monday in plenary, the Secretariat introduced documentation on strategic planning (AC25 Doc. 8.1 and 8.2), inviting the AC to identify priorities for the AC work plan for 2011-2013. An informal group met during AC 25 to discuss the work plan.

NON-DETRIMENT FINDINGS

On Monday in plenary, AC Chair Ibero Solana introduced the document on NDFs (AC25 Doc. 13), noting the PC 19 proposal to hold an intersessional working group to draft non-legally binding guidelines. The Oceania and the Central and South America and the Caribbean representatives supported the PC 19 recommendations. The Europe representative, supported by the Asia representative and WWF, noted the need to revise the proposed timeline to allow more time for initial drafting of the guidelines and consultation with parties before the joint AC/PC meeting in early 2012.

China expressed concern about the impact of general guidelines on countries with limited human resources to carry out NDFs. Mexico emphasized that the guidelines will be a voluntary menu of alternatives for national authorities. Japan stressed that the guidelines should: be realistic for all parties, particularly developing countries; be scientifically sound; not create new obstacles to trade in Appendix-II listed species; and contain various kinds of methodologies for parties to choose.

Japan also suggested that: specific concerns, including socio-economic viewpoints, related to commercially exploited aquatic species be taken into account; FAO and other relevant organizations be involved in the drafting of the guidelines; and all parties that are not members of the intersessional working group be able to participate in the intersessional work. WWF supported the participation of FAO in the intersessional work. Humane Society International (HSI) questioned the need to consider socio-economic concerns in drafting the guidelines. The US proposed involving parties' representatives in the intersessional working group in the same way as for the

evaluation of the RST, with China, India and Indonesia stressing the need for parties to be fully involved in the preparation of the guidelines.

AC Chair Ibero Solana said regional representatives would represent parties in the intersessional working group. PC Chair Clemente recalled that CoP15 called upon parties to provide their views on the outcome of the Cancun workshop on NDFs as an input to the intersessional work and the Europe representative suggested that regional representatives consult closely with parties in their regions. The Oceania representative, supported by the Africa representative, proposed the issuance of a notification to alert parties on these two points.

The AC endorsed PC 19 conclusions (AC25 Sum. 1), with a modification to the timeline for the preparation of the draft guidelines and their circulation to parties before the scientific committees' joint meeting in early 2012, noting the need for notifications addressed to intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) about the submission of proposed representatives' CVs to the intersessional working group, and to parties about the timeline of the intersessional process.

REVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT TRADE

On Monday, the Secretariat presented the documents on the Review of Significant Trade (RST). The AC agreed to establish a working group on the RST co-chaired by Europe representative Vincent Fleming (UK), and AC Vice-Chair Caceres, which addressed several agenda items summarized in the following sub-sections.

EVALUATION OF THE RST: On Thursday in plenary, the Secretariat introduced the document on the evaluation of the RST (AC25 Doc. 9.1), reporting on progress in establishing the advisory working group. He noted the composition of this group had been agreed at AC 24 and PC 18, but that the Co-Chair from the AC needed to be replaced and that four countries had not yet replied with nominations for their focal points. The Secretariat also noted that case studies had been commissioned and would be available for the AC/PC joint meeting. The Committee took note of the report. The AC Chair proposed meeting with the regional representatives to name members and noted the Committee may choose other countries if nominees are not named.

On Friday, the Africa representative named the focal points for Guinea and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the European representative substituted Switzerland and Norway for Iceland and Russia.

OVERVIEW OF THE SPECIES-BASED RST: On Monday in plenary, the CITES Secretariat presented the report on the overview of the species-based RST (AC25 Doc. 9.2), noting the annex summarizes animals selected by CoPs 11-14. He explained that Table 1 indicates completion of the reviews for chameleons (*Calumma* spp. and *Furcifer* spp. except *F. lateralis*, *F. oustaleti*, *F. pardalis* and *F. verrucosus*) and geckos (*Phelsuma* spp. except *P. laticauda*, *P. lineata*, *P. madagascariensis* and *P. quadriocellata*) from Madagascar but that they remain open because of a recommended trade suspension instituted at SC

58. He said the Secretariat had received information from Madagascar about implementation of conditions for lifting the suspension and suggested reviewing Madagascar's response and advising if the proposed quotas should be accepted. The AC agreed to mandate the RST working group to consider Madagascar's response on chameleons and advise on proposed quotas.

On Wednesday, the working group endorsed all zero quotas from Madagascar and supported their publication by the Secretariat. Following debate on the remaining species, the working group proposed that, given the late submission of the document and discrepancies within it, Madagascar's response should be considered at AC 26 following further clarification from Madagascar. On Friday, plenary adopted the working group recommendations.

Recommendation: In the recommendation on RST (AC25 WG1 Doc. 1), the AC notes Madagascar's progress on the RST, endorses all Madagascar's proposed zero quotas and supports their publication by the Secretariat. The AC recommends re-considering Madagascar's response at AC 26 given its late submission and discrepancies contains in it, and asks the Secretariat to clarify the discrepancies with Madagascar in the interim.

SPECIES SELECTED FOR RST FOLLOWING CoP13:

On Monday in plenary, the Secretariat presented the document on species selected for review of significant trade following CoP13 (AC25 Doc. 9.3). On the review of trade in *Mantella* spp. (Malagasy poison frogs), he noted that, with respect to *M. crocea*, *M. expectata* and *M. viridis*, the AC 24 recommended: establishment of a zero quota; that Madagascar should fund for long-term standardized monitoring; establishment of future precautionary quotas; and adoption of adaptive management strategies. He also noted the reinstatement of *M. aurantiaca* into the RST on 1 March 2011. He said Madagascar recently provided information and asked the AC to review the new information and consider whether *M. aurantiaca* should be eliminated from the review or, if not, whether the Secretariat should proceed with the compilation of information regarding the species.

The Africa representative presented a letter from Madagascar, in the country representative's absence, regarding *M. aurantiaca*, *M. bernhardi* and *M. crocea*, and noted it referred to new studies for the first two species, as well as new proposals. He noted the need for Madagascar to send the Secretariat detailed information and Madagascar's intent to use comments from the AC with respect to chameleons.

The AC agreed that the RST working group establish deadlines for the proposed recommendations with respect to *M. crocea*, *M. expectata* and *M. viridis*; and consider whether *M. bernhardi* is a species of priority concern and whether the review process should be reinstated. AC Chair Ibero Solana noted the reinstatement of *M. aurantiaca* might be better considered under the agenda item on species selected at AC 24 (AC25 Doc. 9.5).

On Wednesday, the RST working group considered Madagascar's letter. They noted that Madagascar had established a zero quota for *M. expectata*, *M. viridis* and *M.*

crocea, recommending that the Secretariat seek publication of the zero quotas and ask Madagascar to submit documents for consideration at AC 26 on progress with the remaining recommendations (AC25 Doc. 9.3 paragraphs 8 b) to d). The group agreed to categorize *M. bernhardi* as "urgent concern." On Friday, plenary agreed to the working group's recommendations.

Recommendation: In the RST recommendation (AC25 WG1 Doc. 1), the AC recommends: that the deadline for Madagascar to comply with the proposed recommendations for *M. crocea*, *M. expectata* and *M. viridis* is 15 January 2012; and to include *M. bernhardi* as a priority species in the RST.

SPECIES SELECTED FOR RST FOLLOWING CoP14:

On Monday in plenary, the Secretariat introduced the document on species selected for the RST following CoP14 (AC25 Doc. 9.4), highlighting that the annex contains a report prepared by UNEP-WCMC comprising information about the biology and management of these species and a preliminary categorization of the species.

The RST working group met from Tuesday to Thursday to consider species selected for RST following CoP14. On Thursday, the working group reviewed draft recommendations, including an annex containing short-term recommendations for provision of information and long-term recommendations with actions to address compliance with Article IV (regulation of trade in specimens of Appendix-II listed species).

On *Brookesia decaryi* (spiny leaf chameleon) from Madagascar, UNEP-WCMC noted there is no information on the species, with only one specimen reported in trade since 2004. The group agreed to "least concern," therefore removing it from the RST with the proviso that were trade to continue the species should be re-evaluated for inclusion in the review.

On *Chamaeleo feae* (Fe's chameleon) from Equatorial Guinea, UNEP-WCMC recommended "possible concern." Some participants highlighted possible mis-reporting of trade data and urged categorization as "urgent concern," while others said "possible concern" is sufficient to allow clarification as to why there are specimens in trade with no reported exports. The group agreed on "possible concern."

On *Uroplatus* spp. (geckos) from Madagascar, the group agreed with UNEP-WCMC's categorization of *U. alluaudi*, *U. giganteus*, and *U. malahelo* as "least concern." Following debate on whether to classify the remaining nine species as of "urgent" or "possible" concern, the group decided on "urgent concern" and asked a drafting group to outline further recommendations to Madagascar. The group re-visited the categorization of the nine *Uroplatus* spp. (Madagascar) proposed as "urgent concern," with the drafting group outlining further information provided during their discussions, including that Madagascar had recently issued revised quotas for 2011. The group decided on: "possible concern" on the basis, *inter alia*, that this classification would enable the Secretariat to seek further information on the NDF and report back to AC 26; and a number of time-bound recommendations including developing identification methods and materials.

On *Amyda cartilaginea* (Asiatic softshell turtle) from Indonesia, UNEP-WCMC recommended that the species be

classified as “urgent concern,” on the basis that quotas had been exceeded according to importer data. Indonesia presented an oral report and requested it be removed from the RST because the data used by UNEP-WCMC was pre-CITES listing. The group at first maintained the categorization as “urgent concern,” while noting Indonesia’s additional information. However, on Thursday, Indonesia again queried maintaining the category as “urgent concern,” and presented more detailed information. Several country representatives agreed the categorization should be “possible concern,” given the information submitted by Indonesia, while others were concerned about the lack of sufficient time to consider the additional information. The group noted, however, that a categorization as “possible concern” would still enable the AC to revisit the information with clarification at AC 26 whereas “urgent concern” would mean that it would be referred to the SC. The group eventually agreed to “possible concern.”

On Friday, the plenary adopted the working group’s recommendations. HSI noted that there had been disagreement within the group on both the *Uroplatus* spp. for Madagascar and *Amyda cartilaginea* for Indonesia. On *Amyda cartilaginea* for Indonesia, UNEP-WCMC informed the AC that he had conferred and confirmed with Indonesia that there were no discrepancies between the CITES database and the information provided by Indonesia. The North America representative urged asking UNEP-WCMC and Indonesia to report on this to AC 26.

Recommendation: In the RST recommendation (AC 25 WG1 Doc. 1), the AC recommends, *inter alia*:

- *Uroplatus alluaudi*, *U. giganteus*, and *U. malahelo* (Madagascar) as “least concern” and the remaining six species as “possible concern”;
- *Amyda cartilaginea* as “possible concern” for Indonesia; and
- *Testudo horsfieldii* for Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, “possible concern” and “least concern” for the remaining range states.

For species of “possible concern,” the AC also agrees a number of time-bound recommendations specifying the actions to be undertaken by parties, in compliance with the requirements of Article IV, to enable the AC to determine the categorization of the species as “least” or “urgent” concern.

SPECIES SELECTED FOR RST AT AC 24: On Monday in plenary, the Secretariat introduced the document on species selected for the RST at AC 24 (AC25 Doc. 9.5), explaining that AC 24 had proposed a number of further species for inclusion in the RST. He also reminded the AC that it had just agreed to include *Mantella aurantiaca* in the list to be considered. India appealed for the removal of seahorses *Hippocampus kelloggi* and *Hippocampus kuda* from the RST as the trade of these species is not permitted in India.

The RST working group met from Tuesday to Thursday to consider species selected for RST at AC 24.

On Wednesday, the RST working group proposed retaining *M. aurantiaca* in the RST until further consideration at AC 26, allowing time for proper consideration of the documents given their late submission.

On *Tursiops adnucus*, the group congratulated the Solomon Islands on their efforts to address the AC recommendations and decided to retain the Solomon Islands in the review with current survey results to be taken into account in the next stage.

On *Hippocampus kelloggi*, *H. spinosissimus*, *H. kuda* (seahorses), participants heard reports on significant volumes of trade from Thailand and emphasized the need to support Thailand’s work to implement CITES. Following an oral presentation by China on the application of Article IV for *H. kelloggi*, *H. spinosissimus*, and *H. kuda*, participants took note that China and Thailand are responsible for three-quarters of all export volumes per year. The working group agreed that more time was required to assess the responses and trade details, and retained China in the RST.

On *Huso huso* (sturgeon), the group reviewed the responses provided and eliminated Croatia, Romania, Serbia and Turkey from the RST. They retained the remaining countries in the review, but deferred deciding on Moldova and Azerbaijan while the Secretariat clarified whether information had been provided on zero quotas. On Thursday the group eliminated Moldova as well as Azerbaijan subject to written confirmation to the Secretariat of the zero quota.

On Friday plenary heard the RST working group’s report. On *H. kelloggi*, *H. spinosissimus* and *H. kuda*, India reported on the legislative and conservation status of the species, stressing that collection and trade is prohibited and requested the AC to eliminate India from the recommendation. The AC Chair emphasized that there had been no written response from India. Several countries, including China and Indonesia, also provided information on species under consideration, urging the AC to eliminate them from the review. The Europe representative expressed concern about setting a precedent basing decisions on late or oral responses, stressing strict interpretation of deadlines on responding in writing. The AC agreed to maintain species where there had been no written response and agreed to the recommendations.

Recommendation: In the final recommendation (AC25 WG1 Doc. 1), the AC, *inter alia*:

- on *Tursiops adnucus* (Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin), congratulates the Solomon Islands for efforts to meet the AC recommendations and retains the species in the RST, noting that ongoing population surveys will be taken into account;
- on *Huso huso*, eliminates Azerbaijan, Croatia, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine from the review and retains others;
- on *Hippocampus kelloggi*, eliminates Australia, Indonesia and Malaysia from the review and retains China, India, Thailand and others.

SELECTION OF SPECIES FOR RST FOLLOWING

CoP15: On Monday in plenary, the Secretariat introduced the document on the species selected for reviews following CoP15 (AC25 Doc. 9.6) noting that the annex contains an analysis of data prepared by UNEP-WCMC from the CITES Trade Database of annual report statistics showing the recorded net level of exports for Appendix II species over the five most recent years.

He said the annex also contains a list of possible candidate species identified from the data prepared by UNEP-WCMC so far for consideration by the RST working group.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, the working group on RST started identifying candidate species for the RST. On Wednesday afternoon, the group considered the candidate short list, agreeing to recommend a number of species for inclusion in the RST. On *Macaca fascicularis* (long-tailed macaque), in response to a question from Indonesia as to whether the review must include all range states, Co-Chair Fleming explained that at this stage the Committee recommends whether to include the species in the RST, after which the Secretariat writes to range states for responses on how they implement Article 4 (Regulation of Trade in Appendix-II species). Several NGOs, supported by some parties, urged including all range states at this stage, with the working group agreeing to recommend to do so. On *Psittacus erithacus* (grey parrot), participants noted that the species had been subject to the RST in the past and heard a report from the proponent, endorsed by others, on increased trade and declining populations. One range state said data is not current and urged more surveys be undertaken. One party and the Secretariat noted that the concerns relate in particular to the Central African Republic (CAR) and questioned whether the whole species should be subjected to the RST while SC recommendations still stand. The group agreed to recommend inclusion of the species for all countries where there are no active recommendations or suspensions.

On *Ptyas mucosus*, *Naja* spp. and *Pythons* spp., the proponent noted that UNEP-WCMC highlighted, *inter alia*, high volumes of trade and one party supported inclusion given the current focus on the Asian snake trade. The Secretariat reminded the group that the Asian snake trade workshop recognized the need to improve NDFs. Co-Chair Fleming stressed the RST is not punitive, with the Secretariat emphasizing that there is no requirement on a party selected for the RST to undertake a review. The group agreed to recommend including the species in the RST.

On Thursday, the group continued by considering *Hippocampus* spp. (seahorses). IUCN reported that, due to high volumes of trade, data deficiencies, lack of NDFs, low reproductive rates, and difficulties in differentiating the species of dried specimens, there was a good case to include all seahorse species in the RST. She also presented an alternative option of including in the RST four *Hippocampus* species, *H. barbouri*, *H. trimaculatus*, *H. algiricus* and *H. histrix*, and provided figures to show trade in these species was at a similar or greater scale than other seahorse species already in the RST. The group agreed to recommend including the four species in the RST.

On Friday, in plenary, China expressed concern about including *Hippocampus* spp. pointing to mistakes in the UNEP-WCMC analysis and asked the AC to re-consider snake species in the review. AC Chair Ibero Solana clarified that the RST is not prescriptive but rather looks at where trade may be detrimental within the terms of the Convention. On *Macaca fascicularis*, IUCN and Care for the Wild reported on the lack of data available for the species. Indonesia reported on the conservation

and trade status of *Ptyas mucosus*, *Naja sputatrix*, and *Python reticulatus*, objecting to including these snake species in the review given their abundant populations, stable export trade and, supported by the Asia representative alternate, the potential socio-economic impact. The Oceania representative proposed including wording previously used at AC 24 to assure range states that the RST does not prescribe restrictions on trade. AC 25 agreed to the recommendations with this change.

Recommendation: In the final recommendation (AC25 WG1 Doc. 1), AC 25 recommends the following taxa as of priority concern for review of significant trade, *inter alia*: *Macaca fascicularis*; *Psittacus erithacus* for all range states except those recently subject to previous recommendations under the RST still in effect; *Chamaeleo gracilis*, *C. melleri*, *C. quadricornis*; *Ptyas mucosus*; *Naja sputatrix*; *Python reticulatus*; and four *Hippocampus* species.

The AC further invites the Secretariat to reassure concerned parties that a decision to include a species in the RST was not at the outset intended as a punitive measure and if the AC is satisfied, the species will be eliminated from the review.

PROGRAMME FOR THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF *FALCO CHERRUG* IN MONGOLIA: On Monday in plenary, the Secretariat presented on behalf of Mongolia the document on the programme for the conservation and sustainable use of *Falco cherrug* (saker falcon) in Mongolia (AC25 Doc. 9.7). Kuwait informed the AC about its intention to establish a research center on the saker falcon in Mongolia in cooperation with Mongolia. The CMS Secretariat informed the Committee that the EU has submitted a proposal to include the saker falcon in CMS Appendix I with a note that if the AC considers that the species population is maintained in a sustainable manner then the proposal will be amended to exclude the Mongolian population.

On Tuesday, in the working group on RST, Mongolia reported on an artificial nest programme, noting that a planned export quota of 300 live specimens for 2011 was based on productivity at artificial nests. In reply to queries, Mongolia also reported that: the same quota was not exhausted in previous years; exports have not had a detrimental impact on populations; information on the gender ratio of exports needs to be collected; and electrocution is a more serious threat than harvest for trade. Several countries supported the proposed export quota for 2011, suggesting that Mongolia update the AC on the programme implementation in 2014, although it will no longer be required to submit its proposed quota to the AC.

On Friday in plenary, the Asia representative alternate expressed satisfaction with the outcome and praised Mongolia for its efforts. The Wildlife Conservation Society recalled concerns expressed in the working group that the artificial nest programme has not achieved sustainable harvest, the national conservation programme is only at an initial stage, and that electrocution in powerlines kills 300 falcons per year, calling upon Mongolia to report in the future on progress in the development of the national conservation programme and measures related to electrocution. Plenary adopted the recommendations of the working group.

Recommendation: In the recommendation (AC25 WG1 Doc. 1), the AC: endorses the positive management regime for the saker falcon established by Mongolia; agrees to the proposed export quota of 300 live specimens for 2011; and invites Mongolia to update AC 27 (April 2014) on progress.

CRITERIA FOR THE INCLUSION OF SPECIES IN APPENDICES I AND II

On Monday in plenary, the Secretariat introduced the relevant documentation (AC25 Doc. 10), noting that the AC should develop guidance on the application of certain criteria for listing on Appendices I and II to commercially exploited aquatic species, on the basis of reports prepared by FAO, IUCN and TRAFFIC, without having an effect on other taxa for consideration by SC 62 scheduled in July 2012. The Secretariat further reported on technical difficulties and ambiguities in applying the criteria to the recent proposals on commercially exploited aquatic species, in relation to impact on harvest, by-catch, variation in species status from one part of its range to another, and threats of biological extinction as opposed to commercial extinction. He noted that difficulties are not only scientific but also political.

The FAO Secretariat noted difficulties with: the need to avoid split listings; the distinction between “decline” and “reduction”; the lack of definition of “commercially exploited aquatic species” under CITES; and separate criteria for the long- and short-term. She stressed the need for demonstrable impact on species to justify CITES listings, cautioning against reverting to pre-CoP13 indiscriminate listings. IUCN and TRAFFIC pointed to parties’ divergent views on the aim of Appendix II listing, with some pointing to the aim of ensuring that species do not become eligible for Appendix I listing and others to ensuring the long-term sustainable use of species. She recommended that parties act in the best interest of the conservation of the species concerned. Japan stressed the need to have demonstrated impact on species using quantitative data available before listing commercially exploited aquatic species.

The US stated that Appendix II listing is a tool for the long-term sustainable use of species subject to trade. The Asia representative, supported by the World Conservation Trust (IWMC), stressed that the status of aquatic species may worsen notwithstanding CITES listing, as in the case of sturgeon, and pointed to the need for a cooperation mechanism between CITES and FAO to explore appropriate management systems for different regions. HSI, supported by WWF, argued that differences in the interpretation of criteria by CITES and FAO may not lead to different recommendations about listings, while parties’ ideological differences as to the role of CITES to protect commercially exploited aquatic species are more important in practice. HSI favored a case-by-case approach allowing for flexibility and a precautionary approach.

The AC established an intersessional working group to be chaired by AC Vice-Chair Caceres, mandating it to develop guidance on the application of the listing criteria to commercially

exploited aquatic species and to recommend the best ways to apply such guidance without affecting the application of the criteria to other taxa, for consideration by SC 62.

PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

On Thursday in plenary, the Secretariat orally reported on progress regarding a draft guide for the appropriate use of source codes. The Secretariat reported it received a contribution from the EU and will submit a guide at the joint AC/PC meeting in March 2012. The Committee noted the report.

RANCHING AND TRADE IN RANCHED SPECIMENS OF SPECIES TRANSFERRED FROM APPENDIX I TO APPENDIX II

On Tuesday in plenary, the Secretariat introduced the document on ranching (AC25 Doc. 12), noting that the safeguards applied when transferring a species from Appendix I to Appendix II for ranching are much more onerous than other downlisting criteria under paragraph A. 2 b) or c) in Annex 4 to Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP15) (Criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II) and requested the AC to consider the issue. The Europe representative, the US and India supported the Secretariat’s findings. The Committee agreed to establish a working group to discuss possible revisions.

On Tuesday afternoon, the working group, co-chaired by the representatives for Central and South America and the Caribbean, Marcel Calvar Agrelo (Uruguay) and José Alberto Álvarez Lemus (Cuba), agreed on the merit of separating the criteria for downlisting species from Appendix I to Appendix II for ranching and non-ranching proposals. On Wednesday, participants considered different wording options for Paragraph A. 2 in Annex 4 of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP15) to reflect this separation and clarify that the relevant biological criteria (in Annex 1) do not apply to ranching proposals.

On Friday, plenary adopted the draft recommendations prepared by the working group.

Recommendation: In the final recommendation (AC25 WG2 Doc. 1), the AC recommends amendments to Paragraph A. 2 in Annex 4 of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP15) on criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II. It also recommends the CoP examine the merits of identifying the relevant parts of the resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15) on ranching and trade in ranched specimens of species transferred from Appendix I to Appendix II, and of Resolution Conf. 9.20 (Rev.) on the guidelines for evaluating marine turtle ranching, and, if merit is found, address them in a separate resolution submitted to the CoP.

PERIODIC REVIEW OF CITES APPENDICES

AC 25 discussed the periodic review under a number of agenda items and the following summary addresses these discussions under each relevant item.

OVERVIEW OF SPECIES UNDER PERIODIC

REVIEW: On Tuesday in plenary, the Secretariat introduced the overview of species under review (AC25 Doc. 15.1), which lists previously reviewed species.

The Europe representative noted the backlog of species waiting for review and suggested a working group examine how to address barriers and expedite reviews, noting parties might look to universities for assistance and that reviews are important in terms of science and credibility. HSI noted that many reviews indicated no change was necessary. Mexico suggested IUCN experts might provide assistance and IUCN confirmed it would assist with periodic reviews where possible.

The Committee established a working group, co-chaired by AC Chair Ibero Solana and US representative, Rosemarie Gnam, mandated to make recommendations for addressing the backlog and expediting reviews. On Friday in plenary, AC 25 agreed to the working group recommendations with minor amendments.

Recommendation: In the recommendation (AC25 WG3 Doc. 1), the AC recommends a number of ways to improve performance of the periodic review, including: collaborating with other non-party reviewers, including IUCN specialist groups; using IUCN information on species' conservation; seeking financial support for reviews, including from importer/exporter countries; and asking range states where species are endemic to conduct reviews. The AC further asks the Secretariat to issue a notification inviting parties to complete outstanding reviews including specified information. The AC also agrees to create an intersessional working group chaired by the Asia representatives to review on Galliformes as a test case.

PERIODIC REVIEW OF FELIDAE: On Tuesday in plenary, the US introduced document on the periodic review of Felidae (AC25 Doc 15.2.1) and reported that, aside from Mexico's review of *Panthera onca* (jaguar) and the US review of *Lynx* spp. (lynx), no parties have volunteered to conduct reviews.

India asked the Secretariat for guidance regarding undertaking periodic reviews for its Felidae species while also conducting a study on various species under the RSTs. Mexico supported the recommendations, particularly with respect to *Panthera leo* (lion), and noted lack of volunteers should not imply that a review should be dropped. Kenya, offered to chair a review for *Panthera leo*. South Africa requested other African range states be involved and expressed a desire to be included.

The Committee established a working group to review the US recommendations and make additional recommendations to the AC as appropriate. On Friday, in plenary, the AC heard the periodic review working group report and agreed to the recommendations on Felidae with minor amendments.

Recommendation: In the recommendation on periodic review on Felidae (AC25 WG3 Doc.1), the AC, *inter alia*:

- recommends the Secretariat distribute a notification for periodic review of the species (drafted in collaboration with the AC Chair) asking parties to volunteer to conduct remaining reviews;
- recommends the periodic review of *Prionailurus* as a high priority and requests India to include the review in its NDF Workshop; and
- acknowledges Kenya and Namibia's offer to lead the review of *Panthera leo* in collaboration with range states as a high priority.

PERIODIC REVIEW OF LYNX SPECIES: On Tuesday in plenary, AC Chair Ibero Solana introduced the relevant document (AC25 Doc. 15.2.2). The US reported on the review as completed and recommended keeping *Lynx rufus* (bobcat) in Appendix II for look-alike concerns. The AC established a working group.

On Friday, the AC 25 agreed to the working group's recommendations with minor amendments.

Recommendation: In the recommendation on periodic review (AC25 WG3 Doc. 1), the AC supports the US recommendation to retain *Lynx rufus* (bobcat), *L. canadensis* (Canada lynx) and *L. lynx* (Eurasian Lynx) in Appendix II and *L. pardinus* (Iberian lynx) in Appendix I.

JAGUAR: On Tuesday, in plenary, AC Chair Ibero Solana introduced the document on the review of the *Panthera onca* (jaguar) (AC25 Doc. 15.2.3). Mexico reported on the review and recommended keeping the species on Appendix I, because of a decline in the population size in the wild, threats posed by direct hunting, and illegal international movements related to the species.

Recommendation: According the meeting executive summary (AC25 Sum. 2), the Committee agrees on the recommendation to keep jaguar on Appendix I.

PERIODIC REVIEW OF COLINUS VIRGINIANUS

RIDGWAYI: On Tuesday in plenary, the AC Chair introduced the relevant document (AC25 Doc. 15.3). The US reported on the review of *Colinus virginianus ridgwayi* (masked bobwhite quail), noting that the subspecies meets the biological criteria for Appendix I listing, but is not affected by trade and is possibly extinct in the wild. She recommended, supported by the North America representative, as a precautionary measure, to keep it in Appendix I. The Europe representative opposed the recommendation, remarking that it departed from a purely scientific assessment. Mexico pointed out that the sub-species is extremely sensitive from any removal from the wild. The AC Chair proposed that the working group discuss this.

On Friday, plenary agreed to the recommendations on *Colinus virginianus ridgwayi* with minor amendments.

Recommendation: In the periodic review recommendation (AC25 WG3 Doc. 1), the AC supports the US recommendation to maintain *Colinus virginianus ridgwayi* in Appendix I.

PERIODIC REVIEW OF TYMPANUCHUS: On Tuesday, in plenary, AC Chair Ibero Solana introduced the relevant document (AC25 Doc. 15.4). The US reported on the review of *Tympanuchus cupido attwateri* (Attwater's greater prairie chicken), recommending its de-listing from Appendix I and noting that this is an endemic subspecies that is not affected by trade, is adequately protected by national law, and does not need CITES protection.

The Secretariat clarified that according to Resolution 9.24 (Criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II) removal of species from Appendix I should normally result in down-listing to Appendix II, with the AC Chair noting that in exceptional circumstances a direct de-listing from Appendix I could be possible. The Europe representative supported the US recommendation. Mexico cautioned against creating a precedent

departing from Resolution 9.24, preferring down-listing as a precautionary measure. The US pointed to past instances of direct de-listing of Appendix I species, cautioning against creating instead a precedent of listing on Appendix II a species that does not meet the trade or biological criteria for such listing. AC Chair Ibero Solana proposed that the periodic review working group discuss this.

On Friday, plenary heard the periodic review working group report proposing downlisting. The Committee agreed to the recommendations with minor amendments.

Recommendation: In the final recommendation (AC25 WG3 Doc. 1), the AC agrees to follow Resolution Conf. 9.24 Annex 4 procedures and recommends *Tympanuchus cupido attwateri* for downlisting to Appendix II.

PERIODIC REVIEW OF *CROCODILURUS*

AMAZONICUS: On Tuesday, in plenary, AC Chair Ibero Solana introduced the relevant document (AC25 Doc. 15.5). The US reported on the review of *Crocodilurus amazonicus* (crocodile tegu), noting that, notwithstanding lack of evidence of significant international trade or conservation threats, range states expressed concerns about potential trade issues, limited knowledge, and identification issues; and recommending retaining it on Appendix II. The Europe representative opposed the recommendation, remarking that it departed from a purely scientific assessment, and suggesting that range states use Appendix III. The North America representative supported the US recommendation. AC Chair Ibero Solana proposed that the periodic review working group discuss the review and make recommendations to the AC as appropriate.

On Friday the AC agreed to the working group's recommendations with minor amendments.

Recommendation: In the final recommendation (AC25 WG3 Doc. 1), the AC supports the US recommendation to retain *Crocodilurus amazonicus* in Appendix II.

SELECTION OF SPECIES FOR PERIODIC REVIEW

FOLLOWING COP15: On Tuesday, in plenary, UNEP-WCMC introduced the relevant document (AC25 Doc. 15.6), calling attention to: Appendix-I species traded from wild sources for commercial purposes over the period 1999-2009 (Output 1); Appendix-I species with minimal or no trade over that period (Output 3); and Appendix-II species with minimal or no trade record over that period (Output 4).

AC Chair Ibero Solana noted that Output 1 raised concerns related to illegal trade in contravention of CITES, with Nomenclature Specialist Ute Grimm (Germany) recommending the SC deal with it. The Oceania representative pointed to discrepancies between exports and imports in Output 1. Israel recommended that the AC address the scientific aspects of Output 1, including lack of detailed information to carry out an analysis. On Output 2 (Appendix-II species that are in trade), Mexico emphasized that the periodic review is not only about de-listing or down-listing, but also about reconfirming listings or up-listing. AC Chair Ibero Solana proposed that the periodic review working group: determine if further investigation is appropriate with regards to Output 1 and if transactions are

potentially in contravention of CITES, for transmission to the SC; and prepare the schedule and a list of taxa for periodic review during the intersessional period.

On Wednesday, the periodic review working group, *inter alia*: considered Output 1, to provide additional information to the SC regarding species for which there may not be reason for concern related to trade levels; and discussed the need to revise the periodic review process to clarify its use for up-listing Appendix-II species to Appendix I and receive information on endangered and critically endangered species according to the IUCN Red List for the next AC with reference to Output 2.

On Friday in plenary, the Europe representative proposed a revision to the recommendation from the working group requesting the AC work with the PC on amendments to improve Resolution Conf. 14.8 (Periodic Review of the Appendices) by AC 26. Mexico observed that in the work under Output 2 the AC should consider whether some species in Appendix II could meet the criteria for inclusion in Appendix I. AC 25 agreed to the recommendations with these and other minor amendments.

Recommendation: In the periodic review recommendation (AC25 WG3 Doc. 1), the AC recommends, *inter alia*:

- on Output 1, further investigation is appropriate for species including: *Saguinus oedipus* (cotton-top tamarin); *Crocodylus intermedius* (Orinoco crocodile); *Brachylophus fasciatus* (Fiji banded iguana); and *B. vitiensis* (Fiji crested iguana);
- on Output 2, the AC requests UNEP-WCMC to provide by AC 26 a list of species in the IUCN category as "EN" (endangered) or "CR" (critically endangered);
- on Output 3, species identified in the IUCN category as "LC" (least concern) or "LR/lc (low risk/least concern) or "EX" (extinct), the Secretariat requests range states to comment within 90 days on the need to review the taxa and express interest in undertaking the review; and
- on Output 4 (Appendix-II species with minimal or no trade between 1999-2009), that species identified in the IUCN category as "EX," the Secretariat requests range states to comment within 90 days on the need to review the taxa and express interest in undertaking the review.

The AC also agrees to work in conjunction with the PC on amendments to improve Resolution Conf. 14.8, to be adopted during AC 26.

STURGEONS AND PADDLEFISH

SECRETARIAT'S REPORT: On Tuesday in plenary, the Secretariat presented the report on sturgeons and paddlefish (AC25 Doc. 16.1), adding that Romania established a zero quota. He noted with concern that there are few signs of sturgeon stocks being rebuilt and highlighted increasing aquaculture, particularly outside of sturgeon range states, which could reduce the pressure on the species from fishing as well as reduce the incentive to conserve the species in their habitats.

The Asia representative said the continuing sturgeon decline in the Caspian Sea is principally due to a lack of improvement in sturgeon management and illegal catch, urging support from CITES and FAO before the species becomes extinct. Iran

reported on activities to combat the illegal caviar catch, including a ban on sturgeon fishing, reiterating that illegal catch and domestic use is continuing and reducing wild stock.

The Russian Federation referred to discussions on a moratorium on sturgeon fishing in the Caspian Sea. Caviar Petrossian lamented that while the EU has banned the sale of wild caviar, it is freely available for sale on the internet throughout Europe. IUCN underscored the lack of existing management plans and suggested FAO address this issue given its cooperation with CITES in the Technical Workshop on Combating Illegal Sturgeon Fishing and Trade (Antalya, Turkey, 28-30 September 2009). The Secretariat asked Iran and the Russian Federation for formal notification of their export bans.

The FAO Secretariat reported that between 2006 and 2009, FAO, with others, implemented a Technical Cooperation Programme on Capacity Building for the recovery and management of the sturgeon fisheries of the Caspian Sea, and worked with Caspian countries towards addressing, *inter alia*, stock assessment, survey methodology and setting Total Allowable Catch (TAC) determination methodology. On future action she recommended: Caspian states improve survey design and execution of regional fishery independent surveys and TAC procedures according to the recommendations of the FAO and CITES Workshop on Stock Assessment and TAC Methodologies (Rome, 11-13 November 2008); cooperation and collaboration among the Caspian countries be formalized as an independent working group on stock assessment and TAC setting, consisting of scientists from all the countries; each Caspian state prepare a draft national plan of action (NPOA) to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; and a regional plan of action be prepared. She said financial support is potentially available from FAO via the Central Asia Regional Programme for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development. The Committee took note of the Secretariat's report.

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE EXISTING STURGEON STOCK ASSESSMENT AND TAC DETERMINATION METHODOLOGY IN THE CASPIAN RANGE STATES: The Secretariat introduced the document (AC25 Doc. 16.2). FAO reported on the extent to which AC 24's recommendations (AC24 Doc. 12.2) have been implemented by each Caspian state, and proposals for improvements to existing sturgeon stock assessment and TAC determination methodology and for further steps to improve, *inter alia*, NDFs. He highlighted issues with: methodologies; insufficient data; and lack of rebuilding plans in the region for the sturgeon species. He outlined two series of recommendations including a roadmap for action for the Caspian range states and the establishment by the Commission on Aquatic Bioresources of the Caspian Sea of a stock assessment committee.

Iran explained that it has undertaken the recommended stratified random sampling scheme and encouraged others to do the same. IUCN called for development of a new science-based methodology that could be accepted at the international level.

The Committee established a working group mandated to draft the recommendations to be forwarded to the SC, including, on the request of the Europe representative, specific timelines.

On Tuesday afternoon, the sturgeons working group, chaired by the Asia representative, Mohammad Pourkazemi (Iran), heard a further report from FAO and requested that FAO combine his two series of recommendations into one list for consideration. On Wednesday, the working group discussed: the role of CITES in providing assistance to range states; the role of international experts in the proposed Caspian sea sturgeon stock assessment committee; the need to refer to the range states' commitment to make all efforts to restore the status of sturgeons, or to their setting a zero-quota on all wild specimen exports; and the opportunity to involve consumer states to help detect illegal activities, by tackling issues related to labeling, identification, and mixing of wild and aquacultured sturgeon products.

On Friday, plenary heard the working group's report on Caspian Sea range states agreeing that insufficient expertise in the region for sturgeon stock assessment, along with inappropriate institutional structures to support such activities, impede implementation of FAO's recommendations for improving the stock assessment methodology and TAC estimation. The North American representative noted the lack of time lines, while the Asia representative said the requirement for annual progress reports should address that concern. Regarding financial matters, the Secretariat noted the need to receive direction from the CoP, so the AC agreed to request that this be explored further by the SC.

Recommendations: In the final recommendation (AC25 WG4 Doc. 1), the AC recommends requesting CITES, FAO and other international organizations to provide financial and technical support in stock assessment activities, including training and capacity building, as well as stock assessment experts. The AC also recommends Caspian Sea range states:

- establish a regional sturgeon stock assessment committee for data analysis, stock assessment and development of management recommendations, with a list of tasks for the committee included in an annex to the recommendation;
- hold regular regional workshops to develop common stock assessment methodology and approaches to IUU fishing, fishery management and restoration of stocks; and
- provide annual progress reports.

In addition, the Committee agrees to: establish an intersessional working group to review Resolution Conf 12.7 (Rev. CoP14) on caviar labeling, product sources and species identification and, if necessary, propose draft amendments; instruct the Secretariat to better assist the Caspian Range States in implementing that resolution; and urge parties involved in the caviar trade to reinforce their control of that trade due to serious concern of the legality of sturgeon products on the market.

CAPACITY BUILDING

On Tuesday in plenary, the Secretariat introduced the document on capacity building (AC25 Doc. 14) and explained that the PC and AC have been invited to review the NDF training materials used by the Secretariat when conducting regional capacity-building workshops and provide advice for their improvement. He noted that PC 19 established an

intersessional working group, co-chaired by Madeleine Groves (UK), proposing that it be a joint AC/PC working group with the agreement from the AC.

The North America representative welcomed the establishment of the working group. The Asia and Africa representatives, China and India referred to case studies and methodologies which they could contribute. TRAFFIC commended the Secretariat's work, highlighting the electronic course on NDFs and proposing that the system facilitate access to relevant experts in the field.

The Committee agreed to the intersessional working group with AC Vice-Chair Caceres as Co-Chair.

SHARKS

On Monday in plenary the Secretariat introduced the relevant documents (AC25 Doc. 17), drawing delegates' attention to available national reports and noting that the report of the CITES/FAO joint workshop to review the application and effectiveness of international regulatory measures for the conservation and sustainable use of sharks (Genezzano, Italy, 19-23 July 2010) was unavailable for AC 25 consideration.

China, supported by Japan, emphasized that shark management is a fisheries management issue under the remit of FAO and regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), pointing to measures to facilitate data collection and conservation adopted by RFMOs. The Africa representative asserted that the majority of CITES parties prefer FAO to address shark conservation issues rather than CITES. WWF remarked that: RFMOs' coverage is partial for some shark species and non-existent for others; CITES has a mandate to deal with sharks on the basis of relevant resolutions; and CITES and FAO collaboration should continue on this issue.

The US urged adoption of national plans of action (NPOAs) for shark conservation and management, and consideration of further listing of priority shark species under CITES. TRAFFIC highlighted differences in data submitted by parties and equivalent data submitted by FAO, recommended an audit of countries' shark catch data by FAO, and underscored the need for species-specific information on harvest and trade. Pew Environment Group pointed to the request by the FAO Committee on Fisheries in 2011 for an FAO report on the extent of the implementation of the International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-Sharks), to be produced by July 2012. She also recommended: encouraging FAO to share with CITES information on sharks; requesting parties and RFMOs to report on their restrictions on shark takes; and identifying valuable sharks and other deep-sea species according to CITES criteria. CMS reported on the conclusion and implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Migratory Sharks.

The Committee established a working group to: examine information provided by range states; develop species-specific recommendations on improving shark conservation status, if appropriate; and draft proposals concerning progress in implementation. AC Chair Ibero Solana also suggested that the working group consider opportunities for collaboration between CITES and CMS on migratory sharks.

On Tuesday afternoon, the sharks working group, co-chaired by Hugh Robertson (New Zealand), Oceania representative, and Nobuo Ishii (Japan), Asia representative alternate, highlighted issues to be considered including: efficacy of existing measures; a definition for finning; by-catch; IUU; global capacity; and data collection challenges.

On Wednesday, the group considered national reports, discussing the need to develop a register of national regulations on sharks, including regulations on finning, and the relevance to international trade of fins taken from live sharks and from carcasses. The group developed a questionnaire based on the relevant principles of the IPOA-Sharks, to request CITES to collaborate with FAO and CMS in soliciting inputs from parties. In the afternoon, the working group discussed the need for species-specific recommendations. Some parties and NGOs argued that the AC should evaluate or discuss shark listing proposals based on proposals made at CoP15, as well as new priority species. Parties from one region objected to discussing the list of shark listing proposals made at CoP15, reiterating opposition to CITES role in shark management given the importance of harvest control rather than trade control, and favored action by FAO and RFMOs. The group debated whether to: develop a list of species for which species-specific recommendations can be drawn, noting that such recommendations may concern measures other than CITES listing and can also be addressed to RFMOs; request parties to submit information to the AC on priority species; and explore the opportunity for CITES to call upon importer countries to check the legal origin of shark products and help enforce national laws prohibiting shark fishing.

On Thursday, in the working group, the US reported that the draft questionnaire had been amended to include questions on the status of implementation of measures on port state controls, shark fishing and use of dead sharks. On shark listing proposals, the group discussed issuing a notification to parties to submit a list of shark species for which additional action to enhance conservation and management may be needed, debating whether reference to international trade was necessary and whether an intersessional working group on sharks should be established to consider such information. On cooperation with FAO, the group identified three areas for cooperation: the shark questionnaire, with discussions focusing on whether the questionnaire should be only addressed to "the 26 top shark-fishing states"; current FAO review of implementation of IPOA-Sharks; and a review of RFMOs' sharks regulations and their geographic coverage, with a proposal to include also stock assessments, ecological risk assessment, and conservation and management measures including trade measures. The Secretariat reported on discussions with CMS about the possible alignment of listings under the two conventions, noting that seventeen inconsistencies in listing in higher/lower appendices have been identified, including two for shark species, and alerted participants that the CMS COP in November 2011 will consider two shark listing proposals.

On Friday, plenary agreed to establish an intersessional working group on this item. The North America representative proposed focusing intersessional efforts on the recommendations

incorporating innovative approaches. Mexico proposed adding questions to the questionnaire on identified critical habitats for sharks and protection measures in place.

Canada stated that FAO is the most appropriate body to receive information on shark conservation and management, encouraging CITES to support FAO work in collecting information on sharks. The US and the Pew Environment Group stressed that FAO had confirmed that the questionnaire covers species-specific information that is not collected by FAO under current processes. The Oceania representative noted that FAO may also add questions to the questionnaire. China enquired about targeting the questionnaire only to the “top 26 shark-fishing states,” with Colombia noting his intention to respond to the questionnaire without being one of those states. The Committee adopted the resolution with the additional questions for the questionnaire, which will be addressed to “major shark-fishing states or entities.”

Recommendation: In the final recommendation (AC25 WG6 Doc. 1), which contains an annex titled “Questionnaire for CITES parties engaged in fishing and trade of sharks based on the Principles of the IPOA-Sharks,” the Committee requests the Secretariat to:

- issue a notification inviting all parties to submit a list of shark species that they believe require additional action to enhance their conservation and management, including if possible any concrete measure they believe to be needed, for consideration by the intersessional group on sharks and future AC meetings;
- solicit input from parties based on the annexed questionnaire on domestic regulations on fishing, retention and landing of sharks and on imports and exports of shark parts;
- closely collaborate with FAO regarding the: shark questionnaire; elaboration of the current FAO review on the IPOA-Sharks implementation, particularly inclusion of trade information; and review of RFMO shark regulations and geographical coverage, including stock assessments, ecological risk assessments, conservation and management measures; and
- consult and closely cooperate with CMS on shark issues.

SNAKES

On Tuesday in plenary, the Secretariat introduced the document on snake trade and conservation management (AC25 Doc. 18), which includes the findings and recommendations from the Asian snake trade workshop held in Guangzhou, China, from 11-14 April 2011.

The Europe representative noted the workshop brought producer and consumer countries together and noted its major findings including: lack of scientific data on snake distribution and population size; concerns related to captive breeding; and capacity-building needs. India reported on measures to address the trade, noting that the clandestine trade in various snake products, such as venom, continues. He also pointed to snake charmers in India and the need to address livelihood issues.

China noted that: many Asian countries are both range states and consumer countries for snakes; as a major consumer state, China has had success in breeding snakes balancing sustainable

use and conservation; and close supervision of captive breeding was crucial.

TRAFFIC, supported by HSI, welcomed the spotlight the workshop gave to the trade in and threats to Asian snakes. It requested the AC place particular emphasis on captive breeding and ranching of Asian snake species listed in Appendix II, correct use of CITES source codes, and finding methodologies to differentiate between wild and captive-bred snakes in trade. HSI added that mislabeling and false claims of captive breeding are not only a problem of illegal trade but also impact NDFs, calling for mechanisms to verify claims of captive breeding of snakes, lizards and other animals coming from Southeast Asia. The AC established a working group.

On Tuesday afternoon, the working group on snakes, co-chaired by Suharsono Soemorumekso (Indonesia), the Asia representative and Mathias Loertscher (Switzerland), Europe representative alternate, discussed: establishing conservative annual catch and export quotas for any snake species in trade; identifying data types that should be collected to assist in making NDFs and setting export quotas; case studies on selected snake species from the pet trade; investigation of methodologies to differentiate between wild and captive raised snakes in trade; and the snake venom trade.

On Wednesday, the working group discussed studying the feasibility of captive breeding of snakes for the skin trade, capacity building, forensic identification, and other identification materials for live snakes, parts and derivatives. It recognized challenges from undocumented trade and the need for methods to differentiate between wild and captive-bred CITES-listed snake species in trade. The working group also discussed the need to evaluate different captive production systems, including their biological feasibility and economic viability, and ways this could be carried out.

On Thursday morning, the group discussed: the impact of non-reported trade on conservation of the species, noting that while it is a compliance issue it is also a biological one; and that the top priority was a study of production systems for Asian snake species and, based on that research, developing guidance to assist parties in the evaluation of captive breeding operations and other production systems.

On Friday in plenary, the China representative complimented the working group’s inclusion of most of the Asian snake trade workshop outcomes in its draft recommendations but, Indonesia and the Asia representative alternate, opposed the proposal to encourage the establishment of conservative animal catch and export quotas for any snake species in trade, asking that it be narrowed to refer only to CITES-listed snake species. AC Chair Ibero Solana, supported by the US representative, noted that this was a suggestion and not a requirement. China pointed out that Scientific and Management Authorities do not deal with non-listed species. The Committee agreed to refer only to CITES-listed snake species.

Recommendation: In the final recommendation (AC25 WG5 Doc.1), the AC agrees that, subject to external funding, it should:

- undertake a study on production systems for CITES Appendix II-listed Asian snake species and the use of CITES source codes;
- select one or more high value snake species in the pet trade and engage in case studies to determine the impacts of legal and illegal harvest for the pet trade on wild populations and identify the information necessary to prepare NDFs;
- investigate methodologies to differentiate between traded wild and captive-bred CITES-listed snakes, parts and derivatives; and
- review the output of the IUCN Red Listing process and make recommendations for amending the CITES Appendices.

The Committee also:

- recognized the lack of sufficient scientific data and encouraged scientific and management authorities to establish conservative annual catch and export quotas for CITES-listed snake species in trade;
- agreed to identify the types of data and find examples of good management practices that could assist in making NDFs and setting quotas;
- established an intersessional working group to collate and evaluate existing identification materials for live snakes, parts and derivatives and make recommendations at AC 26 regarding the need for additional materials;
- noted the potential conservation impacts of undocumented trade in CITES-listed snakes and encouraged the SC to examine the trade, including the venom trade and other types of unreported specimens.

TORTOISES AND FRESHWATER TURTLES

On Tuesday in plenary, the Secretariat introduced the relevant documentation (AC25 Doc. 19), including a study of progress on conservation of and trade in CITES-listed tortoises and freshwater turtles in Asia that was prepared by the IUCN Species Survival Commission Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group (IUCN-SSC-TFTSG). The Committee established a working group to review the study and draft recommendations to the SC.

On Wednesday, the working group on turtles, chaired by Africa representative, Samuel Kasiki (Kenya), with Asia representative alternate, Choo-hoo Giam (Singapore), as Vice-Chair, discussed: the need for better data, including on population and trade dynamics and the trade in turtle parts, products and derivatives, for making NDFs; and how the expertise of partners such as IUCN could be beneficial for dealing with confiscated live turtles. The group noted that many recommendations in the study, such as those related to compliance, were outside the Committee's mandate but that the AC could note concern about turtle and tortoise trade management and enforcement challenges. On Thursday morning, the group reiterated the importance of compliance and noted that undocumented trade in parts and derivatives can undermine the ability to make accurate NDFs.

On Friday in plenary, AC 25 adopted the recommendations of the working group.

Recommendation: In the final recommendation (AC25 WG7 Doc. 1) the AC agrees to:

- undertake a study to identify and discuss factors of relevance to making NDFs for tortoises and freshwater turtles and report progress to AC 26 and CoP16;
- make recommendations to amend the Appendices for turtle species;
- encourages parties to engage partners with expertise and resources when evaluating disposal options for confiscated live turtles, such as repatriation or addition to conservation breeding programmes;
- notes that accurate NDFs are undermined by the undocumented trade in parts and derivatives and by the questionable use of source codes, requesting the SC emphasize these topics in its recommendations and expressing concern about trade management challenges; and
- requesting the SC consider proposing a decision at CoP16 directing parties to report on their implementation of enforcement and compliance recommendations.

SEA CUCUMBERS

On Thursday in plenary, the Secretariat introduced the document (AC25 Doc. 20) and noted the CoP15 mandate for the Committee to evaluate the outcomes of the FAO Workshop on Sustainable Use and Management of Sea Cucumber Fisheries (Puerto Ayora, Ecuador, 19-23 November 2007) and recommend appropriate follow-up actions at CoP16. He also reported that the FAO has recently produced a number of publications including *Managing Sea Cucumber Fisheries with an Ecosystem Approach* (AC25 Inf. 8).

FAO described its recent publications on sea cucumbers, noting its draft identification guide for live and dried sea cucumbers is available online and will be finalized by September 2011, and that it will support a regional training workshop in Fiji in November 2011 to assist managers navigate regulatory mechanisms.

HSI, speaking on behalf of Species Survival Network, asked the AC to explore the possibility of listing sea cucumbers on Appendix II, noting that an objection to listing in the past was identification difficulties, and urged parties to adopt a resolution on sea cucumbers at CoP16. China opposed, noting that aquaculture will help reduce the collection of sea cucumbers in the wild and pointed to an evaluation of the effectiveness of a sea cucumber listing by Ecuador that indicated effectiveness was not as good as expected.

The Committee established an intersessional working group to evaluate the outcomes of the FAO workshop and recommend follow-up actions to be presented at CoP16, designating the US representative and Oceania representative as Co-Chairs.

TRANSPORT OF LIVE ANIMALS

On Tuesday in plenary, the Secretariat introduced the document (AC25 Doc. 21), noting it discusses new guidelines for non-air-transport and cooperation with transport-related organizations. She described participation in the Inter-agency Liaison Group on Invasive Alien Species established under the CBD and cooperation with the International Air

Transport Association's Live Animals and Perishables Board. She suggested the AC join the intersessional working group established at PC 19 and the Committee agreed.

NOMENCLATURE MATTERS

Ute Grimm, Nomenclature Specialist, presented the documentation on this agenda item (AC25 Doc. 22 Rev.1). The Committee established a working group that would present a written report to AC 25. The Oceania representative requested that the AC recommend to the CoP changing the species name *Crocodylus johnsoni* to *Crocodylus Johnstoni* as this is the common name in Australia and the Committee agreed.

On Friday, plenary heard the working group report, noting that the first task of the working group related to changes in nomenclature that have come to the attention of the Nomenclature Specialist since the last AC, and that initial recommendations will be reviewed in light of new scientific information at the next AC. HSI suggested listing the frog species *Epipedobates machalilla* in Appendix II as a precautionary measure and offered to help with a listing proposal. The Central and South America and Caribbean representatives agreed to consult with Ecuador about the process and see if they could submit the proposal to the CoP.

Recommendation: In the final recommendation (AC25 WG8 Doc. 1), the Committee recommends, *inter alia*, regarding frog species, *Epipedobates machalilla*, which was recently transferred from the genus *Colosthus* (not listed in CITES) to *Epipedobates* (which are listed under Appendix II), preparing a proposal for CoP16 to include *E. machalilla* in Appendix II.

CORALS

On Thursday in plenary the Secretariat introduced the document on identification of CITES-listed corals in trade (AC25 Doc. 23), which includes a list adopted by the Animals Committee of 49 coral taxa where identification to genus level is acceptable, but which should be identified to species level where feasible, and invited the Committee to update this list so that it can be transmitted to parties.

The Committee formed an intersessional working group to draft a proposal to update the list to be co-chaired by the Asia representative and Europe representative.

IDENTIFICATION MANUAL

On Thursday in plenary, the Secretariat introduced its progress report on the identification manual (AC25 Doc. 24) and noted the CITES Wiki Identification Manual has completed the transition from its paper-based version to a completely web-based database. Noting the database is open to all, he said that after users register they can add materials and modify content related to identification, with all modifications attributed, traceable and reversible if necessary. He encouraged greater participation.

The Oceania representative, supported by the Africa representative, Israel and Mexico, noted the difficulties in some countries of working electronically, suggested making the database available through a DVD or other mechanism, and requested the AC ask the Secretariat to actively find financial

support for the provision of suitable media for developing countries to use in day-to-day management of wildlife. The Secretariat noted that the AC Chair could propose the matter be taken up by the CoP. The Oceania representative agreed to canvas representatives to explore the potential use of such materials, with the North American representative suggesting seeing who would like a stand-alone database. The UK suggested seeking feedback from enforcement authorities. HSI suggested the search and print functions be improved.

The Committee noted the report, and requested the Secretariat explore requirements for a stand-alone database.

TIME AND VENUE OF AC 26

On Friday, the Secretariat informed the plenary that AC 26 will be held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 15-20 March 2012 (excluding Sunday, 18 March), followed by a joint AC/PC meeting in Dublin, Ireland from 22-24 March 2012.

CLOSING REMARKS

On Friday in plenary, CITES Secretary-General Scanlon congratulated AC delegates for their work, remarking that the CoP must be provided with best possible scientific advice available, although, as in other MEAs, the CoP reserves the right to decide on that basis. He identified as highlights of the week: progress made by Mongolia on the saker falcon; the recommendations on sturgeons, snakes and IPBES; and the outcome on sharks, notwithstanding differences of opinion. He thanked FAO for their active involvement in AC 25, encouraging tighter cooperation also on forestry and wildlife to be addressed by the SC; and noted the need to reconsider the periodic review of CITES Appendices as a seriously resource-constrained process. Indonesia lamented developing country delegations' inability to follow all working groups, suggesting that plenary be allocated more time in future meetings. AC Chair Ibero Solana gavelled the meeting to a close at 6:28 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF AC 25

UNITED WE STAND...

The CITES Secretariat has now the smallest core staff of all biodiversity-related conventions—as CITES Secretary-General John Scanlon pointed out to participants to AC 25. In trying to live up to the Convention's reputation as one of the most effective multilateral environmental agreements, while facing this and other resource constraints, AC 25 explored to an unprecedented level concrete synergies between CITES and other international agreements or organizations. While hints of an increasing focus on collaboration had emerged at the nineteenth meeting of the CITES PC in April, AC 25 showed much more systematically that cooperation is becoming the way forward in the *modus operandi* of the Convention.

This brief analysis will trace how increasing cooperation, particularly with FAO, CMS and IUCN, has characterized the Committee's discussions on key species and on science-based decision-making processes (to be jointly addressed with the PC), as well as highlight the continued relevance of cooperation

discussions in next month's Standing Committee meeting, with a view to exploring how synergies can be used to the best advantage of all processes involved.

ALL HANDS ON DECK FOR ANIMAL CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

Aquatic species elicited much attention at AC 25, with the most contentious discussions concerning sharks. Delegates struggled to move beyond the political debates at CoP15, where several shark listing proposals were rejected, with no opportunity to consider the science behind past and new listing proposals. While the Committee only managed to agree to continue discussions intersessionally on the basis of further information from parties, it nonetheless made considerable progress in honing cooperation with FAO, swiftly developing a joint questionnaire for improving national reporting on implementing the International Plan of Action (IPOA)-Sharks at the species-specific level, neatly complementing ongoing information-gathering efforts by FAO. Those participants that were pushing for a clear recognition of the role of CITES in sharks conservation were pleased with this development as a "positive signal" that, even in the absence of listings, CITES can influence shark-fishing states, RFMOs and consumer countries towards shark conservation and better management. In addition, these discussions also pointed to the usefulness of cooperation with CMS, and its MoU on migratory sharks: as the MoU has limited membership, particularly on the fishing states' front, collaboration with CITES may help in reaching a wider audience as many range states are parties to CITES but not to CMS. Cooperation also builds on emerging efforts between the secretariats of these conventions to align their respective listing for species that are protected from any "take" (including hunting and capturing) under CMS Appendix I but can be traded under CITES Appendix II. This is particularly important as almost all CMS parties are also CITES parties.

Increased cooperation with FAO also emerged as a course of action in the context of sturgeons, where range states expressed their commitment to improve the status of conservation in the Caspian Sea and ensure sustainable use, but notably did not commit officially to a zero-quota. With a view to ensuring actual progress in sturgeon management, the AC recommendation focuses on international assistance from FAO and CITES in training and capacity building for range states individually and in the establishment of a regional committee for stock assessment.

Non-aquatic species also gave rise to interesting discussions on synergies, this time at parties' initiatives. Progress made by Mongolia in managing the saker falcon, including issuing of passports for these birds, was well received in the context of the RST. This had a domino effect for its listing under CMS, as AC 25 learned of the EU's offer to qualify its forthcoming proposal to uplist the falcon to CMS Appendix I with an exception for the Mongolian population. If successful, the EU proposal for uplisting under the CMS will reward the country for its progress under the CITES RST, making it the only country among the

bird's range states allowed to capture saker falcons—a potential encouragement for other states to follow its good-practice example.

Discussions on snakes—another highlight at AC 25—also demonstrated the spirit of cooperation across CITES' activities. Facing a major lack of information on snakes' biological characteristics, CITES intends to utilize the outcome of the IUCN Red Listing process for Asian snakes to prioritize species for possible new listings. The Convention will also build on the success of the snake trade workshop held in China in April that cemented collaboration between importer and exporter countries (the US and China jointly organized the workshop), as well as cooperation with industry. Meanwhile, renewed attention on snakes is likely to pervade CITES processes with new snake species entering the RST, and the SC being called upon to look into unreported trade and identification problems linked to captive breeding.

JOINING FORCES FOR SCIENCE-BASED DECISION-MAKING

Concrete ideas for collaboration also surfaced in the AC work on items that are also on the agenda of the PC, and that will be jointly tackled by the two Scientific Committees during the intersessional period. On climate change, for instance, the Secretariat noted that impacts on animal species are already being tackled by CMS, while non-detriment findings under CITES will have to be adjusted to include climate change considerations, and that CITES will participate in the FAO/CMS Scientific Task Force on Wildlife Diseases.

Given the ongoing scarcity of resources and volunteers to carry out the periodic review, the Committee's discussion on speeding up this process again turned to the possibility of cooperation, notably inviting input from IUCN Specialists Groups and utilizing IUCN information on species' conservation status. The Committee also agreed to work with the PC on the need to improve the relevant resolution on the periodic review, showing that parties may wish to have their own take on this, since CoP15 rejected the Secretariat's proposal to revamp that resolution. Mexico in particular emphasized the often overlooked role of the periodic review in suggesting uplisting of species (rather than just cleaning up Appendices of species that no longer need protection), and proposed relying to that effect on the IUCN classification of "endangered" and "critically endangered" species.

With the first plenary of IPBES soon to convene, AC 25 also considered collaboration within the Platform, with more substantive discussion than that entertained by the PC. In particular, while the form and work of IPBES are still uncertain, the AC (with the participation of the PC Chair) identified concrete ideas for IPBES to support CITES, such as facilitating access to existing knowledge and providing capacity-building support to developing country scientific and management authorities, with capacity building for NDFs being the most obvious candidate. The timeliness of this initiative is quite significant, as the next AC meeting will only occur after the first meeting of the IPBES plenary, which will likely discuss the

Platform's work programme. It is therefore now up to the SC to provide a new mandate to the Scientific Committees' Chairs to pursue CITES interests in that forum.

STRATEGIC COOPERATION ON THE HORIZON?

IPBES will not be the only cooperation-related strategic issue on the agenda of SC 61, which will convene a mere three weeks after AC 25. On the SC agenda are also the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (which crystallizes cooperation with INTERPOL, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Bank and the World Customs Organization) and continued work on livelihoods (where involvement of FAO and the other biodiversity-related conventions working on bushmeat will be discussed).

Other strategic cooperation questions to be addressed by SC 61 will concern access to funding. CITES has never received GEF funding, not even through the CBD window, and the Secretariat has put forward a proposal for GEF to become the financial mechanism for the Convention for possible adoption at CoP16, in time for the GEF's sixth replenishment. As a shorter-term measure, the Secretariat has also issued guidelines for CITES parties to use their updating of the CBD national biodiversity strategies and action plans so as to highlight CITES implementation activities at the national level, with a view to channeling GEF and other funding to CITES implementation through synergies at the national level.

Another proposal that links to the role of CITES vis-à-vis other international processes, notably RFMOs, is the Secretariat's proposal for time-bound listing that specifically targets species that are managed by other international processes, taking stock of CITES parties' reticence manifested at CoP15 to list new species for fear that they will never be able to de-list them. A proposal to automatically remove a species from the Appendices based only on the elapse of time may be controversial, because of a perceived move away from science-based decision-making. Another concrete proposal is also on the SC table, suggesting specific cooperation between CITES and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas. Clearly all paths are being explored in defining how CITES can contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of commercially exploited aquatic species—an item that encountered clear opposition from the Asian region at AC 25.

ON-THE-GROUND SYNERGIES

Overall, AC participants seemed pleased with the CITES Secretariat methodically reaching out to other processes, particularly in a bid to overcome parties' impasses on listing proposals and ensure that all data available "out there" contributes to informed and more cost-efficient scientific decision-making under the Convention. Some participants, however, cautioned that, in doing so, CITES needs to fully account for its own specificities (its species-based approach, attention to country-specific assessments and trade-related focus) vis-à-vis the objectives and methodologies of other processes.

While this shift in *modus operandi* is still in the making and its overall implications remain to be seen, AC 25 showed the potential for resource scarcity to be a positive driver in creating

linkages among international processes out of necessity. AC 25 may thus prove that MEAs synergies—a long-standing item on the global environmental governance agenda—may be better achieved on the ground, in the identification of concrete action-oriented (rather than administrative) areas for cooperation. In the eyes of parties, however, cost-efficiency cannot necessarily prevail over the long-standing ingredients of CITES perceived success.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

IPBES Informal Scientific Workshop on Assessment: An informal scientific workshop on assessment will be convened by Japan and hosted by the UN University in preparation for the first session of the plenary meeting on an Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). The goal of the workshop is to increase the understanding of the nature and scope of assessments to be undertaken by IPBES, and to provide options and recommendations, as well as a more detailed analysis of the key elements that might guide the discussions and decisions at the plenary meeting. **dates:** 25-27 July 2011 **location:** UN University, Tokyo, Japan **www:** <http://www.ipbes.net/related-events.html>

2011 International Biodiversity Conference: This Conference will focus on scientific issues related to biodiversity conservation and tropical ecology. **dates:** 29 July - 4 August 2011 **location:** Baños, Ecuador **contact:** Wild Spots Foundation **email:** info@wsfbioconference.org **www:** <http://www.wsfbioconference.org/>

CITES Standing Committee 61: The 61st meeting of the CITES Standing Committee will address, *inter alia*, relationships with UNEP and cooperation with other organizations; financial matters and access to funding, including GEF funding; livelihoods; and a variety of compliance and enforcement matters. **dates:** 15-19 August 2011 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** CITES Secretariat **phone:** +41 22 917 8139 **fax:** +41 22 797 3417 **email:** info@cites.org **www:** <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/SC/index.shtml>

International Workshop on Modern Methods of Sturgeon Species Stock Assessment and TAC Substantiation: The workshop will focus on methods of sturgeon species stock assessment. **dates:** 15-19 August 2011 **location:** Astrahan, Russian Federation **contact:** Dmitry Kremenyuk, International Cooperation Department of the Federal Agency for Fisheries **phone:** +7 495 987 05 93 **fax:** +7 495 621 95 94 **email:** d.kremenyuk@fishcom.ru

141st American Fisheries Society Conference: The theme for this meeting is: "New Frontiers in Fisheries Management and Ecology: Leading the Way in a Changing World." **dates:** 4-8 September 2011 **location:** Seattle, US **contact:** Larry Dominguez, Conference Co-Chair **email:** LD50_@msn.com **www:** <http://afs2011.org/>

Second World Biodiversity Congress: The congress, organized by Century Foundation, India, focuses on the themes of biodiversity in relation to global and climate change, the economics and value of biodiversity, sustainable agriculture and rural development, biodiversity information management,

conservation of bio-resources for sustainable livelihoods, and education and public awareness on biodiversity conservation. **dates:** 8-12 September 2011 **location:** Kuching, Malaysia **contact:** WBC Secretariat **phone:** +91 80 2296 1315 **fax:** +91 80 2318 1443 **email:** biodiversity2011@gmail.com **www:** <http://www.worldbiodiversity2011.com/>

First Plenary Meeting of IPBES: The First Plenary Meeting of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is expected to adopt the platform's rules of procedure, and modalities for participation and membership. The meeting will also discuss offers from governments to host the platform's secretariat and is expected to decide on a detailed work programme and budget. **dates:** 3-7 October 2011 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** UNEP IPBES Secretariat **phone:** +254 20 762 5135 **fax:** +254 20 762 3926 **email:** ipbes.unep@unep.org **www:** <http://ipbes.net/plenary-sessions.html>

CBD SBSTTA 15: The fifteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 15) of the Convention on Biological Diversity will address, *inter alia*: the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020, including indicators; capacity-building strategy for the Global Taxonomy Initiative; invasive alien species; sustainable use; and inland waters biodiversity. **dates:** 7-11 November 2011 **location:** Montreal, Canada **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1 514 288 2220 **fax:** +1 514 288 6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=SBSTTA-15>

17th Meeting of the CMS Scientific Council and 38th Meeting of the CMS Standing Committee: Both will precede the 10th meeting of the CMS Conference of the Parties. **dates:** 17-18 November 2011 for CMS Scientific Council and 19 November 2011 for CMS Standing Committee **location:** Bergen, Norway **contact:** UNEP/CMS Secretariat **phone:** +49 228 815 2426 **fax:** +49 228 815 2449 **email:** secretariat@cms.int **www:** <http://www.cms.int/news/events.htm>

Tenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species: CMS COP 10 will address, *inter alia*: Strategic Plan 2012-2014; measures to improve the conservation status of listed species; climate change and migratory species; guidelines on the integration of migratory species into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and other outcomes from CBD COP 10. **dates:** 20-25 November 2011 **location:** Bergen, Norway **contact:** UNEP/CMS Secretariat **phone:** +49 228 815 2426 **fax:** +49 228 815 2449 **email:** secretariat@cms.int **www:** <http://www.cms.int/news/events.htm>

CITES Animals Committee 26: The 26th meeting of the CITES Animals Committee will address, *inter alia*: sharks, snakes, sturgeons, corals, and listing criteria to commercially exploited aquatic species. **dates:** 15–20 March (excluding Sunday, 18 March) 2012 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** CITES Secretariat **phone:** +41 22 917 8139/40 **fax:** +41 22 797 3417 **email:** info@cites.org **www:** <http://www.cites.org/eng/news/calendar.shtml>

CITES Joint meeting of the Animals and Plants Committees: Joint meeting of the CITES Animals and Plants Committees will, *inter alia*, address cooperation with other

conventions, guidelines on NDFs, transport of live specimens, and the evaluation of the RST. **dates:** 22–24 March 2012 **location:** Dublin, Ireland **contact:** CITES Secretariat **phone:** +41 22 917 8139/40 **fax:** +41 22 797 3417 **email:** info@cites.org **www:** <http://www.cites.org/eng/news/calendar.shtml>

GLOSSARY

AC	CITES Animals Committee
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CMS	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
CoP	Conference of the Parties
FAO	UN Food and Agriculture Organization
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HSI	Humane Society International
IPBES	Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IPOA	International Plan of Action
IUU	Illegal, unreported and unregulated (fishing)
MEA	Multilateral environmental agreement
MoU	Memorandum of understanding
NDF	Non-detriment findings
NPOA	National Plan of Action
PC	Plants Committee
RFMO	Regional fisheries management organization
RST	Review of significant trade
SC	Standing Committee
TAC	Total allowable catch
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WCMC	UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre