

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



Twenty-third meeting of the Animals Committee
Geneva, (Switzerland), 19-24 April 2008

Regional Reports

OCEANIA

1. This document has been prepared and submitted by the representative of Oceania.

General information

2. AC Membership: At CoP14 (The Hague) the region noted that Rod Hay (New Zealand) would continue his current term as member representing the region, with John Aruga of Papua New Guinea continuing as alternate representative.
3. Number of Parties in the region: There are now eight Parties in the region, with the membership of the Solomon Islands entering into force on the 24 June 2007, immediately following CoP14. The Members are Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Note that France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America are other Parties with territories in the Oceanian region. Where appropriate, there is communication on Oceanian issues with their management and scientific authorities.
4. The following 10 countries in Oceania are not Parties to the Convention: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Tokelau and Tuvalu. The Cook Islands and Niue are self-governing in free association with New Zealand, and Tokelau is a self-administering dependency of New Zealand. While New Zealand assumes some responsibility for foreign affairs for these countries this does not render them party to CITES under New Zealand law. In contrast, the French overseas territories of New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna, and the Australian, United States and United Kingdom Territories in the region do come under the CITES umbrella through the membership of their metropolitan states.
5. The addition of Solomon Islands as the 171st member of the Convention means that a virtual majority of countries in the region are now Parties. Arguably this also means that most international commerce in CITES species in our region is amongst Convention members. The Solomon Islands is an exporter of CITES species, including coral and clams, but also birds and a small but high-profile number of bottlenose dolphins, which are the subject of consideration at this meeting. The membership of the Solomons is indeed welcome!

Communication with Parties in the region since AC23 Lima (Peru), July 2006

6. Following the 22nd meeting of the Animals Committee, Mr Hay circulated the draft report of the meeting to the Parties in the region for their information.

7. Mr Hay circulated the agenda of AC23 to all Management and Scientific Authorities across the region and received comprehensive briefings on key issues from Australia and New Zealand with significant input on some key issues from other interested groups and NGOs.
8. As regional representative on the Standing Committee, Australia has also continued to communicate on a range of matters relevant to the Animals Committee. The active leadership of Australia in this regard has been very beneficial to the region in general.
9. There has also been communication with other institutions and NGOs and with the representatives on the Plants Committee on matters of common interest since AC22.
10. The regional meetings held in conjunction with CoP14 provided an excellent opportunity for communication on technical as well as administrative matters.
11. The representative of Oceania has continued his role regarding sharks and CITES by chairing a working group on the subject at CoP14. The results of the CoP14 deliberations are on the agenda for consideration by this meeting.
12. Perhaps as a result of that experience, Mr Hay was also asked if he would co-chair a marine fish working group at the Non-Detriment workshop to be held in Mexico in November 2008. This request was declined and he was able to retreat to the relative comfort and familiarity by co-chairing the bird group. The marine fish group at that Workshop will nonetheless be co-chaired by another Oceanian, Mr Glenn Sant of TRAFFIC.

Follow-up on agenda items since AC22 - Lima (Peru), July 2006

13. The representative of Oceania chaired the CoP14 working group on sharks, continuing the work assigned to the Animals Committee.

Relevant CITES implementation issues in the region

14. Oceania covers a vast area of mostly tropical regions dominated by the marine environment. Trade risks to wild fauna and flora must be seen in the context of the usual range of environmental threats, including habitat loss, invasive species, domestic over-exploitation and global climate change. Coral bleaching has had a dramatic effect on the reefs in some parts of the region (e.g. in Fiji). Marine resources form a key part of the local economy. Therefore trade issues concerning them are of critical and growing interest to the countries of the region. The relationship between trade and other pressures needs to be kept in mind, but CITES has an important potential role in sustainable use and protection of species in the marine environment of the region.
15. Capacity remains a critical issue for the Parties and non-Parties. However, the capacity building workshops held up to 2006 have been greatly beneficial and have been a key driver for the growth of membership from Oceania.
16. Scientific expertise is often difficult to obtain when needed, hence the value of building regional networks of expertise which can fulfil some of the technical requirements of CITES, notably those of Scientific Authorities.
17. In general, awareness and activity in support of conservation and sustainable use of natural resources are advancing significantly in the region, with increasing locally and externally funded activities.

Activities conducted in the framework of Resolution Conf. 11.1 (Rev. CoP14)

18. No specific activities since AC22.
19. Following a number of informal approaches reminding the region that Oceania has never hosted an Animals Committee meeting, the regional representative communicated with the Secretariat regarding costs and requirements and consulted the New Zealand Management Authority on the matter. Regrettably, CoP14 decisions and a current review of the New Zealand Department of

Conservation conspire to render it impractical for New Zealand to offer to host a meeting in the near future. Doubtless this will be kept under review.

Capacity-building activities

20. The capacity-building workshop held in Brisbane in May 2006 was the last formal technical meeting for the whole region. It provided an outstanding opportunity for sharing information and capacity and doubtless was a major stimulus for the increase in CITES membership.
21. Work is still needed on the development of a regional directory of technical experts, to complement that already developed by the Plants Committee.

Agenda Items of particular relevance to the Oceanian region

22. The following items are of particular interest to the eight Parties of Oceania:
 - a) Review of the use of Source Code R
 - b) Significant trade review – Corals and Seahorses feature prominently in the statistics
 - c) Solomon Islands Dolphins
 - d) Conservation and Management of Sharks
23. Of particular note is the importance of analysis of Production Systems and definition of Source Codes taking account of the systems of “ranching” of giant clams, Tridacnidae, used in a number of the countries of the tropical Pacific.

Work to be done by the next meeting of the Animals Committee

24. Prepare a Directory of Experts as prepared for the Plants Committee.