

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

Thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Bangkok (Thailand), 2-14 October 2004

Interpretation and implementation of the convention

Exemptions and special trade provisions

Operations that breed Appendix-I species in captivity for commercial purposes

Relationship between *ex situ* breeding and *in situ* conservation

REPORT OF THE ANIMALS COMMITTEE

1. This document has been prepared by the Animals Committee.
2. Decision 11.102 (Rev. CoP12), directed to the Animals Committee, states:

*The Animals Committee shall continue to examine the complex issues related to the origin of founder breeding stock and the relationship between *ex situ* breeding operations and *in situ* conservation of the species and, in collaboration with the Plants Committee, the American Zoo and Aquarium Association, the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, identify possible strategies and other mechanisms by which registered *ex situ* breeding operations may contribute to enhancing the recovery and/or conservation of the species within the countries of origin, and report its findings at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

3. Decision 12.78, also directed to the Animals Committee, states:

The Animals Committee shall study and evaluate the process for registering operations that breed Appendix-I animal species for commercial purposes and report at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. It shall:

- a) describe and analyze the specific problems that limit the wider use of the registration procedure;*
- b) provide recommendations to resolve those problems; and*
- c) study and evaluate how commercial captive breeding of Appendix-I species and the process for registration of breeding operations contributes to conservation of Appendix-I species.*

4. At its 19th meeting (AC19; Geneva, 2003), the Animals Committee established a working group to address the different aspects of Decision 11.102 (Rev. CoP12) and paragraph c) of Decision 12.78. This working group worked intersessionally. The Committee further adopted the following Terms of Reference for the working group:

- a) to evaluate the effects of *ex situ* operations on the *in situ* conservation of the species using the expertise of its members, responses to Notification to the Parties No. 2001/091 of 19 December 2001, and input from specialized organizations and the Plants Committee; and
- b) to identify, in liaison with the Plants Committee, possible strategies and other mechanisms by which (nationally or internationally) registered or non-registered *ex situ* breeding operations may contribute to enhancing the recovery or conservation of CITES-listed species within the

countries of origin *in situ*, and consider the development of a draft resolution for discussion at the 13th meeting of the Conference of Parties on tools for Scientific and Management Authorities to assist in monitoring and assessing the impacts of captive production systems, and to develop recommendations concerning *ex situ* production and *in situ* conservation of CITES-listed species.

5. Furthermore, the Animals Committee asked the Secretariat at AC19 to send a Notification to the Parties, requesting Parties and interested organizations to provide case study information that might be of assistance in examining the relationship between *ex situ* production and *in situ* conservation of CITES-listed species.
6. The Secretariat sent Notification to the Parties No. 2003/72 of 12 November 2003 on behalf of the Animals Committee, asking Parties and organizations to provide information on case studies on the relationship between *ex situ* breeding operations and *in situ* conservation of CITES-listed species for compilation and analysis by the Animals Committee. It received a total of 80 case studies concerning 72 taxa. These were discussed at AC20 (Johannesburg, March-April 2004).
7. From the discussion in the Animals Committee working group on this matter at AC20, the following emerged:
 - a) The working group felt that there were not enough submissions of case studies of operations breeding Appendix-I species for commercial trade, and that this prevented it from assessing the effect of commercial captive breeding of CITES-listed animal species on the *in situ* conservation of those species. The working group therefore believed that there was a need to continue with the process of compiling additional case studies.
 - b) Furthermore, the working group felt that it might be necessary to have a detailed and standardized analysis of the submitted case studies (and perhaps also of additional ones), entrusted to a consultant, subject to identification of appropriate funds.
 - c) The working group recognized the need to prepare a document entitled "Guidelines for assessing contributions of *ex-situ* breeding operations to *in-situ* conservation" for Parties to use in evaluating this issue. In this regard the aspect of a continuing monitoring of the operations was raised in the working group to assess whether or not the *ex situ* operation would also be having a long term positive impact on *in situ* conservation programmes.
 - d) The working group considered potential adverse effects of *ex situ* commercial operations, and believed that strategies for addressing such effects could be considered when trading specimens from such operations.
 - e) The working group identified a need to synergize with the issue of the process for registration of operations that breed Appendix-I species for commercial purposes, which is another matter to be addressed by the Animals Committee.
8. The Decisions referred to in paragraphs 2 and 3 direct the Animals Committee to report its findings at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP13). While there are a great number of case studies available, the Animals Committee felt however that they did not provide the answers to the questions asked and that more – and quite substantial – work seemed to be necessary at and after CoP13 in order to come up with substantial findings and meaningful recommendations. Fears were also expressed that the Animals Committee might run into a very time-consuming process that would be beyond its mandate, that might not bear direct relevance to CITES and lead to discussions of a rather philosophical nature. In addition, it seemed increasingly difficult to discuss the issue under a purely CITES perspective (trade that is "detrimental" or "non-detrimental" to the survival of the species concerned) and to keep it separate from the Convention on Biodiversity issue of access and benefit sharing in relation to *ex situ* production of species.
9. The Animals Committee therefore has to report that for various reasons, it was unable to finalize the tasks given to it through Decisions 11.102 (Rev. CoP12) and 12.78, paragraph c), and that it was not possible to come to concrete conclusions and recommendations on this matter – and this even after several years of work.

10. The Animals Committee therefore recommends referring issues regarding the relationship between *ex situ* breeding operations and *in situ* conservation of CITES-listed species to the Standing Committee which, acting as a clearing house, should direct them to the appropriate CITES bodies. The Animals Committee would have to receive new and very precise instructions if the Standing Committee concludes that the Animals Committee should continue to deal with these issues or relevant aspects thereof. It might also be worth considering this matter in the context of the joint work programme on the relationships between CITES and CBD or the "economic incentives" agenda of the Standing Committee, or to take a "time out" and wait for the findings of additional research on this matter, such as the results of a review by the IUCN Crocodile Specialist Group of the impacts of crocodile ranching operations and *ex situ* production on *in situ* conservation of crocodilians.

COMMENTS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

- A. The Secretariat supports the proposal to better integrate work on the relationship between *ex situ* breeding operation and *in situ* conservation of CITES-listed species with work on national wildlife trade policies and economic incentives.
- B. The Secretariat agrees that the Standing Committee is the most appropriate body to take the lead in matters regarding the relationship between *ex situ* production systems and their interaction with *in situ* conservation actions. They require a multi-disciplinary approach, involving conservation and species management science, socio-economic considerations, policy and regulatory measures, etc. and are therefore very compatible with the Standing Committee's work on national wildlife trade policies and related economic incentives.
- C. The Secretariat recommends that this issue be added to the national trade policy reviews, and addressed at the second workshop on economic incentives proposed in document CoP13 Doc. 13. The findings and recommendations of that workshop may help the Standing Committee to formulate precise instructions on how the Animals or Plants Committee can best contribute in future to this debate.
- D. The Secretariat stresses the need for the Conferences of the Parties to provide or identify the financial resources required for further action.