

Tortoises and freshwater turtles working group.

CONSERVATION OF AND TRADE IN TORTOISES AND FRESHWATER TURTLES.

INTERSESSIONAL DISCUSSION: POST AC 19 AND RUNNING UP TO COP 13.

The Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles Working Group met for a one-day workshop on 20 August, 2003.

The Working Group was provided with terms of reference for their discussions by the Secretariat, which were to:

- Consider the Annexes 1 to AC19 Doc. 15.1 and 1 and 2 to AC19 Doc. 15.2 (Rev.1) and formulate recommendations for follow-up.
- Monitor the implementation of Resolution Conf. 11.9 (Rev. CoP12) and follow up on the recommendations and findings formulated at the Technical Workshop on Conservation of and Trade in Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles held in Kunming, China, 25-28 March 2002 (see Document CoP12 Doc 10.1, paragraph 99).
- Address the actions called for in Decision 12.43 regarding *Malacochersus tornieri* (pancake tortoise) [see AC19 Doc. 15.3 (Rev.1)-pp 1-2].

Deliberations and conclusions from the workshop are enumerated in the group report AC19 WG6 Doc. 1(Rev.1).

Of particular interest here, it was decided :

- The pancake tortoise (*Malachochersus torneri*) issue would be dealt with separately, and Peter Paul van Dijk (as co-chair of the TFWTWG) volunteered to drive intersessional work.
- Intersessional work was required to adequately address the Asian freshwater turtle trade. This was partially because the time allocated at AC 19 was short, but more so because important views were not fully represented at this meeting. Intersessional work would allow the full participation of additional parties and stakeholders.
- Recommendations from the Kunming workshop were fundamentally sound and these should be used as the basis of the TFWTWG's current considerations (these proceedings have not yet been collated, but a first draft is available in AC18 Inf.12, annex 3).

Not all points included in this current document were discussed at and can therefore be considered a result of the discussion at AC19. For example there was no time to discuss recommendations resulting from Doc.15.1 in detail. This document is an effort at combining discussion and recommendations arising from AC19 as well as previous fora for the purpose of moving the issue forward.

Continuing Development of Conservation Measures for Asian Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles

1) Future listings

The working group:

- a) Encourages range states to proceed with the development of proposals to list all remaining unlisted species of Asian freshwater turtles on Appendix II of CITES by CoP13 [referring to AC19 Doc.15.1 and the recommendations of the Kunming Workshop in AC19 Doc. 15.3 (Rev. 1)]. This would facilitate border controls and other enforcement efforts, as well as the gathering of trade data.

b) Recommends that if all species cannot be proposed for Appendix II listing, then the following species be regarded as priority species, following the recommendations contained within document AC19 Doc. 15.1. ie.

- i) *Carettochelys insculpta*
- ii) *Chelodina* spp. (*C. mccordi*, *C. parkeri*, *C. siebenrocki*, and others for look-alike reasons)
- iii) *Chinemys* spp. (*C. reevesii*, *C. megaloccephala*, *C. nigricans*)
- iv) *Morenia petersi*
- v) *Cyclemys* spp. (*C. dentata*, *C. atripons*, *C. oldhamii*, and others)
- vi) *Amyda cartilaginea*
- vii) *Malayemys subtrijuga*

c) If it is not feasible for range states to prepare listing proposals for all Asian freshwater turtles for CoP13 (October 2004, submission by 5 may 2004), the WG recommends that the range states list the remaining species on Appendix III as an interim measure. It should be remembered that CITES Article XVI, paragraphs 1 and 4, allows this option only if the listing state provides for such listings.

d) As these recommendations should be regarded as urgent , the WG requests:

- i) The Secretariat to immediately send out a notification to Parties about the three recommendations above, stressing the need to prepare proposals for COP 13, and to remind Parties that listings on Appendix III can be done anytime (not requiring a COP proposal).
- ii) The Asian AC Representatives to liaise with Parties in their region about these recommendations and facilitate the process wherever possible.
- iii) NGOs with expertise and resources to support and assist Parties to prepare proposals for listings of these species at COP 13, or in the case of Appendix III listings, anytime..
- iv) Although the WG recognizes that all range states can benefit from assistance, the WG requests the Secretariat to compile a prioritized list of countries most requiring assistance. The WG sees the need for this type of assistance in the medium and long term as well, specifically to assist range states to assess conservation and trade status of taxa, as specified in points f and g outlined below.

f) In the event that the recommendations above cannot be fulfilled, the WG encourages range states to pursue the medium-term goal of implementing those recommendations, and additionally, of changing the status of species already listed on CITES, as recommended below, with proposals submitted to COP14.

Taxon	Current CITES listing	Proposed CITES listing
<i>Callagur borneoensis</i>	II	Uplist to I
<i>Cuora aurocapitata</i>	II	Uplist to I
<i>Cuora galbinifrons</i>	II	Uplist to I
<i>Cuora mccordi</i>	II	Uplist to I
<i>Cuora pani</i>	II	Uplist to I
<i>Cuora trifasciata</i>	II	Uplist to I
<i>Cuora yunnanensis</i>	II	Uplist to I if rediscovered
<i>Cuora zhoui</i>	II	Uplist to I
<i>Geoclemys hamiltonii</i>	I	Downlist to II, but not a priority
<i>Heosemys depressa</i>	II	Uplist to I
<i>Heosemys leytenensis</i>	II	Uplist to I
<i>Kachuga kachugaq</i>	II	Uplist to I
<i>Kachuga tecta</i>	I	Downlist to II, but not a priority
<i>Leucocephalon yuwonoi</i>	II	Uplist to I
<i>Mauremys annamensis</i>	II	Uplist to I
<i>Melanochelys tricarinata</i>	I	Downlist to II, but not a priority
<i>Geochelone platynota</i>	II	Uplist to I
<i>Indotestudo elongata</i>	II	Uplist to I
<i>Indotestudo forstenii</i>	II	Uplist to I
<i>Indotestudo travancorica</i>	II	Uplist to I
<i>Manouria emys</i>	II	Uplist to I
<i>Chitra chitra</i>	II	Uplist to I

g) Further encourages range states to prepare listing proposals for the following taxa currently not listed by CITES. Due to present information on conservation status and trade, these are taxa which probably merit CITES listing.

The WG encourages states to prepare proposals for COP14.

<u>Taxon</u>	<u>IUCN RL status</u>	<u>Proposed CITES listing</u>
<i>Chinemys megalocephala</i>	EN	Appendix II
<i>Chinemys nigricans</i>	EN	Appendix II
<i>Chinemys reevesii</i>	EN	Appendix II
<i>Cyclemys dentata</i>	LR:nt	Appendix II
<i>Geoemyda spengleri</i>	EN	Appendix II
<i>Hardella thurjii</i>	VU	Appendix II
<i>Malayemys subtrijuga</i>	VU	Appendix II
<i>Morenia petersi</i>	VU	Appendix II
<i>Notochelys platynota</i>	VU	Appendix II
<i>Ocadia sinensis</i>	EN	Appendix II
<i>Sacalia bealei</i>	EN	Appendix II
<i>Sacalia quadriocellata</i>	EN	Appendix II
<i>Carettochelys insculpta</i>	VU	Appendix II
<i>Chelodina mccordi</i>	CR	Appendix I or II
<i>Chelodina parkeri</i>	VU	Appendix II
<i>Chelodina siebenrocki</i>	LR:nt	Appendix II
<i>Amyda cartilaginea</i>	VU	Appendix II
<i>Aspideretes hurum</i>	VU	Appendix II
<i>Aspideretes leithii</i>	VU	Appendix II
<i>Lissemys scutata</i>	DD	Appendix II
<i>Nilssonina formosa</i>	EN	Appendix II
<i>Palea steindachneri</i>	EN	Appendix II
<i>Pelodiscus sinensis</i>	VU	Appendix II
<i>Rafetus swinhoei</i>	CR	Appendix I or II

h) The following list of 16 (of 40) Asian species not listed by CITES need to be monitored for potential future review, especially the Endangered and Vulnerable species. Consideration for listing these species should be made for look-alike reasons and to complete the listing of all Asian freshwater turtles.

<u>Taxon</u>	<u>IUCN Red List Status</u>
<i>Geoemyda japonica</i>	EN
<i>Geoemyda silvatica</i>	EN
<i>Mauremys iversoni</i>	DD
<i>Mauremys japonica</i>	LR:nt
<i>Mauremys pritchardi</i>	DD

<i>Melanochelys trijuga</i>	LR:nt
<i>Ocadia glyphistoma</i>	DD
<i>Ocadia philippeni</i>	DD
<i>Sacalia pseudocellata</i>	DD
<i>Chelodina novaeguineae</i>	LR:lc
<i>Chelodina pritchardi</i>	EN
<i>Chelodina reimanni</i>	LR:nt
<i>Elseya branderhorsti</i>	VU
<i>Elseya novaeguineae</i>	LR:lc
<i>Emydura subglobosa</i>	LR:lc
<i>Dogania subplana</i>	LR:lc

2) Legislation

The working group recommends that:

- a) Lao PDR, the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, and the Maldives be encouraged to become parties to CITES (as set out in Article XXI of the Convention), whether or not they are important range states in the trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles or not.
 - CCountries interested in becoming a Party to CITES should first evaluate the adequacy of their legislation and other implementation needs, and develop a plan to address those needs.
- b) All Asian range state Parties work towards achieving the goal of achieving Category 1 legislation status. Legislation must meet the four requirements for CITES implementation (designate at least one Management Authority and Scientific Authority, prohibit trade in violation of the Convention, penalize such trade, and confiscate specimens illegally traded or possessed). In regards to the National Legislation Project, the Secretariat is requested to give guidance here.
- c) Gaps in legislation, identified in prior fora include:
 - i) Insufficient coverage of CITES species (no Appendix III or only domestic/native species).
The WG recommends: access assistance to enable Parties to list all remaining unlisted species on Appendix III (as a minimum or as an interim measure).
 - ii) means to update species lists after each COP and use of scientific names.
The WG recommends: The Secretariat to issue a CD-ROM as described below under General Recommendations (pt. B.d)
 - iii) common names and trade names
The WG recommends: Same as ii) above.
 - iv) required compliance with IATA regulations
The WG recommends:
Parties to pass legislation, making IATA compliance mandatory to carry CITES shipments i.e. urgently implement Res. Conf. 10.21 on transport of live animals.
 - v) use of labels to prove existence of CITES species in product

The WG recommends: Encourage Parties to adopt "Truth in Labeling" legislation that ensures that any products containing CITES specimens is correctly labeled. The T&FWTWG will liaise with technical groups and make specific recommendations.

vi) control of transit and transshipment

The WG recommends: Proper implementation of Resolution Conf. 9.7

vii) consistency among wildlife, customs and other relevant legislation, and clarification of institutional responsibilities and coordination mechanisms.

The WG recommends: establishment of a national CITES management forum, where all interested and affected parties are members, to be hosted by the national CITES Management Authority.

viii) inadequate penalties

The WG recommends

[suggestions?]

- d) Strengthening and improving legislation should be regarded as a continuous process for all parties, and legislation should be flexible and have the ability to quickly adapt to rapidly changing situations.

Three major issues highlighted in previous fora are:

i) insufficiency of authority to control transit in accordance with Resolution Conf. 9.7.

ii) Institutional clarification and coordination should focus inter alia on the role of fisheries departments and the need to have power to deal with unprotected species, nationally protected species and CITES species. The respective roles of sectoral agencies as well as local, provincial and central authorities should be clear, consistent and complementary.

iii) It might be helpful to reconsider wildlife trade policies/legislation, as total bans on domestic and/or international trade do not seem effective and may be contributing to illegal trade. Although this subject is outside the mandate of CITES, results from a socio/legislative study (consultancy) could identify fundamental flaws in the implementation of CITES in certain cultures

- e) that although outside assistance can be of value in a broad array of national CITES activities, it is in this particular arena (points i & ii above) that it may be most useful. Therefore the WG encourages interested NGO's and other Parties, particularly, neighbours and parties with Category 1 status to assist countries in joining CITES, developing effective legislation and/or improving existing legislation.

3) Enforcement

The WG acknowledges that without adequate enforcement of legislation, national initiatives to meet CITES goals will not be successful. The WG also acknowledges that some of the suggestions presented here are beyond the mandate of CITES, but could be useful for national and regional approaches. Since, the trade is an expanding issue, current CITES resources cannot keep up with identified problems, and therefore resources also need to be expanded. The Secretariat is therefore encouraged to seek funding to help expand resources regarding the Asian tortoise and freshwater turtle trade.

The WG therefore recommends:

- a) Improvement of the regional situation (Asian tortoise and freshwater turtle range states), by establishing a Regional Enforcement Task Force. This body would have as a primary task the coordination, on a regional scale, of all enforcement/trade issues.
- i) The body would be only an advisory body regarding national issues, but would take a central role in intra-regional and international data-gathering and enforcement issues. The body would pool the region's experience, resources and skills, and make this resource available to neighbour-Parties with Category 1 legislative status. MOU's could be used to formalize these relationships.
 - ii) Objectives to focus on regional trends and to formulate a strategic regional approach. Overall regional trade is better documented by a regional view, rather than by juggling multiple national data.
 - iii) Establish a web-based site for regional enforcement issues. This should also incorporate a provision for informant's participation. Profiles on known offenders can be developed and displayed unless such is in contravention of local laws. Access should also be available to Parties outside the Asian trade zone e.g. importing and exporting Parties from the West. Full contact details of key individuals must be available; this to include individuals in national Scientific and Management Authorities, law enforcement officers, regional CITES representatives (Standing, Animals and Plants Committees) and forensic laboratories etc.
 - iv) Mediate conflicts and propose solutions (at a low diplomatic level) to issues centering at points of multiple-jurisdiction (e.g. borders).
 - v) Access improved analysis of intelligence through the use of specialized intelligence officers and assistance from Interpol and the World Customs Organization..
 - vi) Many of the issues facing national authorities could be repeated at the regional level; use of informants, payment of informants fees, needs for capacity building and in particular CITES training specific to regional needs.
 - vii) Although the WG agrees that information materials are most effective at the national level, there is a need for an awareness campaign directed at the regional level as well. Posters and brochures can be effective in ports, international lounges and borders, and institutional needs include identification and law enforcement manuals relevant to regional trade.
 - viii) Identification manuals are urgently required. Order of products could be: 1). Full guide to the region, including all species (including exotics), and in relevant CITES languages; 2). National guides, only including relevant species, in national language, and giving all relevant common names. These initiatives can be a joint effort between CITES and the Parties; in any case, identification sheets are required (Resolution Conf. 11.9) from Parties within one year after successfully listing a species on Appendix I or II.
 - ix) Regional CITES representatives (Standing, Animals and Plants Committees) would play a major role in steering the activities of the body. The WG requests the Secretariat to provide specialized training courses, focusing on the regional approach to law enforcement and data gathering.
 - x) The WG views the above proposals as classic opportunities for participation by NGO's and other experts and donor organisations. This proposed network will depend to a large extent on the provision of infrastructure and associated capacity building. The WG therefore requests the Secretariat to facilitate access to funding.

- b) Improvement of national situations by:

- i) Establishment of national CITES coordinating bodies, to include all interested and affected parties. NGO's and other donor agencies could contribute to infrastructure and capacity building for these core bodies.
- ii) Encourage the gathering of intelligence information by regular and reliable informants (and the payment of rewards for information that leads to convictions.), traders, NGOs, the public and others by the use of web sites (also as in the regional proposal above), a hotline, brochures & posters in schools, clinics, post offices, airports and ports.
- iii) The establishment of compliance incentives needs thorough consideration. Although several limited schemes are practiced by some Parties, the full range of options and possibilities needs identification, and throughout the trade region. The WG acknowledges that schemes will need to be developed with full understanding of local cultural and government norms, and therefore it is primarily a socio/cultural/economic issue. The WG therefore urges the Secretariat to investigate the possibility of contracting a study on the potential usefulness and feasibility of national-level incentives.
 Terms of reference would include, but not be limited to:
 - 1) The study would encompass the entire trade region.
 - 2) Study would be informative to all levels of trade/governance, ie. producer level to national government level.
 - 3) all interested and affected parties would be inventoried.
 - 4) biological and ecological information would be provided by the T&FWTWG.
 - 5) provide specific recommendations, specific to turtle species/farming-market method/province/Party. This includes the feasibility of specific Parties providing subsidies.
 - 6) consider establishment of production and trade associations, on regional and national scale.
 - 7) recommendations on CITES and NGO information and technical support needs – on a local as well as national and regional level.
 - 8) identify economic alternatives
- iv) Specialized training on enforcement is required, and this is needed at the generic level as well as specific to turtles and tortoises. The WG recommends that regional Asian Parties involved in the T&FWT trade be given priority over other countries on the Secretariat's training schedule. Training for these countries should include specific modules that focus on enforcement and identification problems specific to the trade in turtles and tortoises, as well as general enforcement training. These courses could be given under the umbrella of the Regional Enforcement Task Force described above.
- v) Develop appropriate information, with emphasis on rural-field identification, in local languages and using indigenous names. Emphasis on visual information transfer. This requires wide distribution in rural communities.
- vi) Develop appropriate information for a more sophisticated audience i.e.. enforcement officials, and using a higher level of technology; this includes CD-ROMs and a website dedicated to enforcement issues, and in particular species identification. This information also needs to be available in hard copy.
- vii) Expert systems should be developed through specialist bodies such as IUCN/SSC Specialist Groups. A web-based network should be developed that allows national authorities to access expert advice. This should involve, as one means, the use of digital photography. The WG requests the Secretariat to investigate sources of funding for a consultancy, where necessary the T&FWTWG will assist drafting terms of reference.
- viii) The WG requests the Secretariat to search for funding to facilitate establishment of national capacity, including hardware (e.g. digital capacity) and personnel training.
- ix) The Secretariat should continue the development of a handbook on wildlife crime for the judiciary that would describe the approaches by various countries.

4) Confiscation and Disposal

- a) Although all Parties have the power to confiscate specimens in illegal trade, many do not exercise this power regularly. The WG recommends that all Parties make confiscation mandatory, as required under Resolution Conf. 8.4
- b) Confiscated specimens must be disposed of as required under Resolution Conf. 10.7 annex 1 and Resolution Conf. 9.10 (Rev)..
- c) Confiscated specimens should be handled as required under Resolution Conf. 10.7 and returned to the place of origin as required under CITES Article III, paragraph 4 . Regional cooperation and coordination is required for this to be successful, and this is best accomplished by the Regional Enforcement Task Force, described above.
- d) all Parties should work towards establishing at least one Rescue Center (mandated and supported by legislation) to hold confiscated specimens and further process specimens as recommended as required under Resolution 10.7 and CITES Article 8, paragraph 4. NGO's and other donor organizations are encouraged to participate in developing these national capacities.

5) Transport

- a) The WG recognized that turtles are, at times, shipped as "Fisheries Products", and recommends Parties adopt Harmonized Customs Codes to prevent such misrepresentations. It must also be pointed out that CITES permits and certificates are only issued for specific species (see Notification no. 2002/022 of 9 April 2002) and therefore will not legitimise "Fisheries Products",
- b) Similar concerns were aired about parts and derivatives in commercial products, and that most Parties do not have "Truth in Advertising" legislation. It is therefore recommended that the WG consider labelling further, and in particular considering the methods established for caviar (Resolution Conf.12.7) and crocodilians (Resolution Conf. 11.12) as examples.
- c) The WG requests the Secretariat to strongly urge all Parties to enforce IATA regulations, and that national authorities insist that airlines adhere to these regulations. The WG further requests the Secretariat to consider a proposal for COP 13 which will require CITES-permitted shipments be flown on IATA carriers only.
- d) Close liaison be developed with the Transport Working Group.
- e) The WG recommends that the proposed regional coordinating task force, be closely involved with these initiatives, as the trade is primarily inter-regional.

6) In-situ Conservation and Management Issues

The Working group:

- a) Recommended further consideration be given to various marking and identification techniques for turtles (which are expected to vary from species to species), including consideration of the specific problems involving small and juvenile animals (considering the management utility and conservation value of restricting trade to specific size classes in the trade in *Malacochersus tornieri*). As a species by species analysis will be a long-term undertaking, the WG suggests the following species (by priority) for immediate consideration:
 - i) *Malacochersus tornieri*
 - ii) a freshwater hardshell species
 - iii) a softshell species
 - iv) Malagasy species could be incorporated as part of the ongoing Country-Wide Review

Ultimately, the WG foresees the management and enforcement value of a marking and identification manual which covers all species of Chelonians.

- b) Discussed whether farming affects harvest pressure on wild populations. In certain cases, a higher value may be placed on wild specimens, and in some cases, the introduction of farming may stimulate an increase in the value of wild specimens. Alternatively, farming may help prevent extreme pressure on wild resources through overall price moderation due to market forces. The group concluded that the impacts of farming can vary, highlighting the fact that each species/market/venue must be considered separately.
- c) Discussed the issue of invasive species and agreed that this issue is best considered in the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity (see also Decision 10.76). However, as the T&FWTWG is well placed to collect and interpret data, involvement in the issue should remain high. The WG will establish links with SSC- Invasive Species Specialist Group. First priority would be to thoroughly document the extent of the current situation.
- d) Guidelines for CITES Scientific Authorities (Checklist to Assist in Making Non-detriment Findings for Appendix II Species) are now available. However, Parties still need guidance on generic adaptive management frameworks that take into consideration the ecological and biological characteristics of tortoises and freshwater turtles [e.g. differentiate between “soft shell” and “hard shell” species; between habitat specialist and generalists; reflecting distinctive reproduction strategies; etc.]. Adaptive management frameworks and Guidelines should be applicable to both CITES-listed and non-listed species.
- e) The Scientific and Management Authorities in most range states should be trained in the making of Non-Detriment Findings, in developing management programmes and in monitoring compliance with Article IV. The Secretariat is requested to give the region priority when scheduling capacity building workshops.
- f) In making non-detriment findings, the particular biology of tortoises and freshwater turtles should be taken into consideration. The harvesting of wild adults should be limited and precautionary because the removal of slow growing, mature animals may have significant impacts on the viability of the population that is targeted. Although it may generally be perceived as preferable to harvest small (juvenile) individuals, it was noted that unlike in tortoises, the offtake of juveniles in wild populations of freshwater turtles is relatively easy, that the removal of certain age classes may negatively impact wild populations, and that in practice, all age classes are often harvested. Also, juveniles do not necessarily or readily meet the demand for turtles and tortoises in the food and medicinal markets.
- g) Some form of reporting [to the Secretariat, the AC and/or CoP] on progress in implementing the different actions that the Parties are urged to undertake should be considered. This could be in the form of a CoP Decision or an amendment to the Resolution. It was recognised that the existing reporting duties of CITES Parties are considerable. Additional reporting should therefore only target those Parties that are most concerned by the trade in and conservation of tortoises and freshwater turtles, and require for information that would make the reports as meaningful and useful as possible to these Parties.
- h) Parties should explore ways in which government income directly derived from trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles through taxation, fees or other forms of charges can be reinvested in activities that benefit the conservation management of the species concerned and that improve baseline knowledge and research capacity. A recommendation along these lines could be incorporated into the Resolution.
- i) The establishment of export quotas should be based on non-detriment findings, and would benefit from involving experts in conservation and management of tortoises and freshwater turtles (where available). In case levels of export are significant or considered to be of conservation concern, Resolution Conf. 12.8 provides a mechanism whereby the CITES Animals Committee can review the situation and formulate recommendations to ensure that the export is not detrimental to wild populations.

- j) Information should be monitored on commercial captive breeding operations, including on species being bred, annual production and production trends, the types of animals that are commercialized and for which market niche (food, medicine, pets or a combination thereof).
- k) The working group agrees that practical recommendations on commercial farming and ranching of Asian turtles and tortoises, and on controls and monitoring of such operations would be useful for the relevant authorities and for the traders concerned. It notes that a very large amount of good quality materials concerning commercial breeding of different species is widely available in China (books, videos, DVD's, CD ROMs, etc.), and this is a good example.
- l) Base line data for many species of Asian turtles and tortoises is not readily available, and should be obtained via experts, networks (IUCN/SSC), internet, field studies, etc.. Field studies can be conducted by scientists, university students, NGO's, government agencies, etc.
- m) The Secretariat is requested to seek support from donor countries and the Commission of the European Union to help develop guidelines and protocols to manage wild populations of tortoises and freshwater turtles in Asia, to conduct field studies as appropriate, and to obtain baseline data on several species that are heavily traded. To facilitate fundraising from potential donors such as the USA, countries in Asia are requested to indicate priority species that would require (and benefit most from) such management projects and research activities.
- n) Priority for research and management guidance should be give to species with specific ecological and habitat requirements, which are rare, or that are otherwise more vulnerable than common species or species that apparently adapt to human environments such as *Heosemys grandis*, *Aspideretes gangeticus*, *Kachuga tecta*/?*tentoria*/?*smithi*?, *Cuora amboinensis*, or *Siebenrockiella crassicollis*.

7) Information Transfer and Training.

Information and training were identified by the Parties as the primary obstacles to successful implementation of CITES obligations. Examples relevant to specific subjects are discussed under those headings.

- a) The "training for trainers" approach is recommended so to encourage proliferation of informed personnel.
- b) The diversity of local languages, lack of communications, funding constraints, low priority placed on freshwater turtles and tortoises, discontinuity of CITES staff on their posts are considered the main gaps and challenges in capacity building.
- c) The establishment of national CITES coordination committees, regional coordinating committees, and CITES regional offices (based on the IUCN plan) are regarded as the best way to address communication problems at all levels.
- d) The paucity of reliable taxonomic information for certain species groups and access to facilities for the identification of derivative materials are considered major constraints.
- e) Various outreach efforts on the awareness of wildlife conservation and CITES are carried out in most participating countries, often in cooperation with NGOs, yet most of them do not contain a strong component on freshwater turtles and tortoises. It is therefore recommended that freshwater turtles and tortoises be incorporated in existing outreach programmes, and efforts be made to develop new and innovative outreach programmes specifically for the protection of freshwater turtles and tortoises.
- f) Whilst enhancing the awareness on the legal protection status of freshwater turtles and tortoises are believed to be appropriate for all Parties, the following awareness building activities are recommended for each specific interest group:

- i) Basic knowledge on the potential environmental damage of releasing exotic species in the environment (direct ecological competition/damage, zoonoses etc).
 - ii) Information on maintaining animals in captivity, including farming operations (sound aquaculture and animal welfare practices).
 - iii) Hobbyists (through amateur and professional organizations, and through local regulating bodies) should be encouraged to keep where possible only captive-bred specimens and avoid species that are trade-threatened related (not encourage illicit trade).
 - iv) Conservationist should help raise the profile of freshwater turtle and tortoises species as important components of natural ecosystems.
 - v) Collectors and hunters of wild animals should adopt an approach of sustainable harvest. Guidelines for harvesting should be developed, which could involve restrictions on the size and sex of animals and season of harvesting. Experiences from wild harvesting of fish, crocodilians, game animals and plants may be appropriate.
 - vi) Zoos, museums and aquaria should, as hobbyists, not promote illicit or unethical trade by obtaining specimens of questionable origin. They should also be encouraged to help promote public interest in, and highlight the current crisis of freshwater turtles and tortoises in their exhibitions.
 - vii) Medical industries and restaurants should be invited to engage in dialogues with conservationists about the use of sustainably produced sources of supply only.
 - viii) Enforcement officers and legislators should be made aware of the threatened status of freshwater turtles and tortoises. In the absence of effective legislation, this effort is meant to build awareness among legislators, thereby promoting the enactment of appropriate legislation. Every effort should be made to include the protection of freshwater turtles and tortoises in new wildlife legislation. It should be made clear that poor management (due to inadequate and/or implemented legislation) endangers an actual or potential resource. Participants in all levels of the trade should be involved, from the beginning, in developing legislation.
 - ix) Religious leaders and communities should be made aware of the threatened status of wild freshwater and tortoises and solicit their support in influencing people to abandon environmentally harmful practices.
- g) Research on legitimate medicinal properties and effectiveness should be conducted, with emphasis on alternatives (or sustainable sources). Physicians, medical scientists, medical councils, traditional healers and nutritionists can be invited to help educate consumers. Awareness and education programmes should be developed and implemented for consuming communities.
- h) Efforts should be made to encourage the participation of collectors/hunters, traders, exporters, importers and consumers in the conservation of and sustainable trade in freshwater turtle and tortoises species so that they can move to more positive utilization approaches. Collectors/hunters should adopt sustainable harvest methods and a collector/hunter community forum can be established. Associations of traders of freshwater turtles and tortoise already exist in Thailand and Myanmar. It is desirable to set up such associations in other countries in the region.

8) General Recommendations

The working group recommends:

- a) All Asian Parties involved in the trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles (importing and exporting) should be encouraged to participate intersessionally in further development of specific working group priorities.

- b) Parties' primary obstacles were identified as 1) lack of information, and 2) insufficient national implementation. Implementation was seen as a function of legislation, political will and institutional capacity, and outside intervention was perceived as having a potentially positive but limited influence, with the exception of training. Collecting, analysing and making information relevant and available is seen as the field where outside assistance can be most useful. The WG urges the Secretariat to pursue both these spheres of influence.
- c) Establishment of regional CITES offices, patterned after the IUCN system, is seen as potentially solving many problems in regional coordination and information transfer. The WG recognises current financial constraints, and requests the Secretariat to pursue this concept and submit a proposal for consideration at COP13. Support from consortiums of regional Parties, NGO's, other donor agencies, and "CITES tax levies" should be investigated. Refer to CITES Decisions 11.29, 12.25 and 12.26.
- d) Parties declared non-access to already-existing information to be a major obstacle to implementing CITES requirements. There is a fundamental need for authorities to access and keep up with constantly changing CITES detail, especially after COP's. In addition, although nearly all authorities have access to computers, this tool is of limited utility due to non-expertise of local operators, high changeover of operators (public service culture) and internet access being non-existent, slow and unreliable. Therefore the WG sees the need for a user-friendly CD-Rom which would make current detailed information assessable, without the need for internet access. The WG envisions the CD as having many general applications, such as automatic report writing, based on a Party's specific database and customized Party profile (generated by an array of pic-lists). Specifically the WG suggests the following information will help national authorities in day-to-day administration of tortoise and freshwater turtle trade issues:
 - i) lists of all appendix species in both scientific names and CITES – languages common names.
 - ii) Each scientific name should have a limited background of synonyms. All synonyms would not be required, just those most frequently used in applications.
 - iii) Each scientific name should be reachable through a complete array of common names, and in particular, national and local common names.
 - iv) Search facilities should allow entry of a local common name and return a CITES-acceptable scientific name. And vice versa.
 - v) The WG should discuss the feasibility of placing identification information, for all relevant groups of species on the CD also.
- e) A follow-up regional workshop after CoP13 should be held, to share successful achievements and assist with further development towards implementation of prioritised recommendations, and to address outstanding challenges.
- f) The full Proceedings of the Kunming Workshop should be made available as a matter of priority. The WG requests that the full proceedings be made available before the above-proposed post-COP13 workshop.