

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



Twentieth meeting of the Animals Committee
Johannesburg (South Africa), 29 March-2 April 2004

Conservation of and trade in sea cucumbers in the families Holothuridae and Stichopodidae
(Decisions 12.60 and 12.61)

REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP

Members of the working group

Regional representative for Asia, Mohamad Pourkazemi (Chair);

Regional representatives: Schwann Tunhikhorn, regional representative of Asia, Choo-Hoo Giam (Alternate representative of Asia);

Observers from Parties: Belgium, China, France, Japan, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, the United Republic of Tanzania and the United States of America;

Observers from inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations: Observers from Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association Ltd., Ornamental Fish International, Project Seahorse and TRAFFIC; and

The CITES Secretariat.

Terms of reference

1. Examine the outcomes of the Technical Workshop;
2. draft findings and recommendations to be included in a discussion paper on the biological and trade status of sea cucumbers for CoP13; provide guidance on actions needed to secure their conservation status; and
3. determine how the reporting requirements in accordance with Decision 12.60 will be implemented.

Summary of the discussions and recommendations

The Chairman presented an overview of the objectives of the technical workshop and the findings and recommendations identified by the workshop participants on national fisheries management, priorities for international conservation, and potential CITES issues.

Several members of the WG concluded that the findings and recommendations identified a number of critical issues regarding the conservation, management and trade in sea cucumbers. The participants that attended the workshop reminded the WG that there was no consensus on certain aspects of the KL workshop. They also suggested that a thorough evaluation of the document was premature, because not all range states present at the workshop had provided comments and WG members had an insufficient amount of time to evaluate the report.

The Secretariat reminded the WG that its main tasks were to consider the KL workshop and FAO workshop outputs when formulating the priority actions that could be included in a discussion document for CoP13.

The group initiated discussions on several of the proposed national management options, adaptive management strategies, the importance of stakeholder involvement in the management process, and the role the Animals Committee should play in the future.

The WG then discussed the format, outline and content for the discussion document (Annex I) and began identifying possible recommendations and conservation actions for sea cucumbers (Annex II). The WG was unable to identify members that were able to draft the discussion document due to the short available time and the detailed review that is necessary, and recommends that the Secretariat contract this out to an appropriate organization or individual.

CONSERVATION OF AND TRADE IN SEA CUCUMBERS IN THE FAMILIES
HOLOTHURIDAE AND STICHOPODIDAE

Outline of the discussion document to be submitted by the Animals Committee pursuant to Decision 12.60 regarding priority actions to secure the conservation status of sea cucumbers

The WG agreed that these sections maybe re-organized as necessary.

1. Summary of recommendations and actions
2. Background
3. Decision 12.61
4. Species in trade (scale and routes)
5. Biology
6. Taxonomy and Identification
7. Distribution and Movement
8. Morphology
9. Survival
10. Feeding
11. Reproduction
12. Current Fisheries Management Arrangements
13. Trade Volumes, Uses and Controls
14. Aquaculture and Restocking
15. Conservation Initiatives (national policy and user initiatives)
16. Decision to Secretariat
17. Outcomes of Technical Workshop
18. Animals Committee Recommendations
19. References

Maximum Length: 12 pages

Animals Committee Recommendations

The WG does not feel that it is appropriate to comment on the value of a CITES listing because there is insufficient information and evaluation at this stage to determine whether this is appropriate. The WG feels that conservation and sustainable use of sea cucumbers may be achieved through CITES coordination with FAO and other regional bodies, but recommends that further CITES considerations for certain countries or species should be examined in the future and the effects assessed.

The Animals Committee makes the following recommendation to the Conference of the Parties:

Request the CITES Secretariat

1. In coordination with the Animals Committee, to encourage FAO to continue and, as far as possible, increase its efforts to address the challenges of managing sea cucumber fisheries for sustainability, as identified in the FAO Advances in Sea Cucumber Aquaculture and Management Workshop in Dalian (ASCAM) and the CITES Technical Workshop on the Conservation of Sea Cucumbers in the Families Holothuridae and Stichopodidae (KL Workshop).
2. In consultation with the FAO Secretariat, and possibly at the meeting of the FAO Subcommittee on Fish Trade and COFI, to evaluate and recommend voluntary measures for trade monitoring and, where appropriate, export controls.
3. To seek financial support to continue activities relating to sea cucumber trade inter-sessionally, as outlined below.
4. In consultation with the FAO Secretariat, to contract a detailed review of data not available at the KL workshop, including the status of sea cucumber biology, fisheries, trades, management and conservation actions.
5. In consultation with the FAO Secretariat, and in evaluating actions taken by the Parties to manage and conserve sea cucumber populations, to consider the necessity of a follow-up workshop on sea cucumber biology, fisheries, trades, management and conservation in the next two years, and take action accordingly.
6. In consultation with the FAO Secretariat where appropriate, work with the World Customs Organization (WCO) to develop harmonized codes useful for sea cucumber trade monitoring and management.

Request the Animals Committee

8. In dialogue with the FAO Secretariat, and mindful of FAO action, to review the outputs of the KL and FAO ASCAM workshops, and give opinions on the feasibility and priorities of proposed recommendations. Should a further CITES workshop on sea cucumbers be held (as per 5 above), then those outcomes should also be considered.

Request the Parties

9. To endorse the recommendations of the FAO ASCAM workshop, and urge their Fisheries Agencies to act accordingly, with actions including:
 - research on biology, fisheries and trade;
 - research to resolve taxonomy and identification difficulties;
 - monitoring the status and trends of stocks;
 - consultation with the fishing industry and other stakeholders in the development and adoption of voluntary conservation guidelines;
 - establishment of national management plans; and
 - regional co-operation in management and conservation, particularly for acquisition and sharing of fisheries and trade data.
10. To urge their CITES Scientific and Management Authorities to improve coordination with their fisheries management agencies on monitoring, assessment, and management of sea cucumber fisheries and trades.
11. To explore the benefits of trade certification for sea cucumbers, through appropriate organizations.