

CONVENTION SUR LE COMMERCE INTERNATIONAL DES ESPECES
DE FAUNE ET DE FLORE SAUVAGES MENACEES D'EXTINCTION



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Rapports

Rapports des représentants régionaux

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**Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of
Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**

SC54 Regional Report – Oceania

- Australia
- Fiji
- New Zealand
- Palau
- Papua New Guinea
- Samoa
- Vanuatu



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Heritage

This regional report has been prepared by the CITES Management and Scientific Authorities of Australia, as Oceania regional representative to the CITES Standing Committee. The report covers the intersessional period between SC53 and SC54. All CITES Parties in the region were consulted and, where possible, have provided input on the activities of their CITES Management and Scientific Authorities. Please direct all comments or enquiries to:

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1. Introduction

This report outlines the activities undertaken by the Parties of the Oceania region to implement and enforce CITES during the period between the Fifty-third Meeting of the Standing Committee (27 June – 1 July 2005) up to the Fifty-fourth Meeting of the Standing Committee (2 – 6 October 2006).

Australia, as the CITES regional representative for Oceania to the Standing Committee, has prepared this report on behalf of the Parties of the Oceania region – Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Vanuatu.

2. Regional activities

The major activities for the region have included a regional capacity building workshop and regional meeting.

Other activities have included collaboration between Oceania CITES Management Authorities on improved regional compliance and the identification of issues such as regionally appropriate tools and techniques for non-detriment findings and enriching legislative frameworks.

The region is grateful to the CITES Secretariat and other donors for their support of these regional capacity building initiatives.

2.1 Regional Capacity Building Workshop

Decision 13.100 called for the acquisition of funding for a capacity building workshop in Oceania to follow up on the previous workshops. This was achieved, and an Oceania CITES Capacity Building Workshop was held in Brisbane, Australia, from 8-11 May 2006. The workshop was funded by the CITES Secretariat and the British Government with the bulk of the funding coming from the Governments of Australia and New Zealand and organised by the CITES Management Authority of Australia.

Representatives of all Parties of the region attended the workshop, in addition to non-Parties Cook Islands, Solomon Islands and Tonga, the regional representative to the CITES Plants Committee, TRAFFIC Oceania, the South Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP) and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA).

The workshop focussed on three facets of CITES: CITES obligations and procedures, scientific issues, and management issues. Workshop topics were selected with a view to building on the information presented in previous Oceania capacity building workshops.

Fiji provided a progress update on their CITES activities since the previous workshop and New Zealand provided a case study about CITES operations on a small island state.

The scientific aspects of CITES covered in the workshop included non-detriment findings, with presentations on agarwood, crocodiles, reef fisheries, clams and coral. Other topics included the use of harvest quotas, regional scientific cooperation and significant trade reviews.

The workshop provided an excellent opportunity for the sharing of various approaches to managing trade in CITES specimens. The Cook Islands, a non-Party, explained their permitting system while Fiji presented information on their public awareness activities. The effective implementation of the great white shark listing was discussed, and Australia presented information on their permitting system, approach to compliance and enforcement, and training of Customs officials.

The need for adequate funding for the implementation of CITES is an issue consistently raised by Pacific island countries. As a practical exercise, participants broke into country groups to prepare funding proposals for specific identified needs, using a template developed for the workshop. As well as providing an opportunity to learn and share experiences on how to successfully secure funding, the proposals completed during the workshop will actually be presented to potential donors for consideration.

Over the coming year, the region will continue to look at further capacity building opportunities.

2.2 Oceania regional meeting

The regional meeting was a valuable opportunity for Parties and non-Parties to discuss issues specific to Oceania. Participation of non-Parties in regional meetings increases their awareness of CITES issues and builds their capacity in preparation for becoming possible Parties to CITES. Non-Parties the Solomon Islands and the Kingdom of Tonga expressed interest in becoming CITES Parties.

Topics under discussion at the meeting included working groups on the CITES Strategic Plan, compliance guidelines, export quotas, personal/household effects and the review of Scientific Committees. The role of the regional representative and preparations for taking on the task was discussed. Regional Parties also agreed to explore the possibility of establishing a technical working group on aquarium fish and to share awareness and education material.

2.3 Capacity building activities in Fiji

Fiji signed up to CITES in 1997 and has been working since then through the efforts of key stakeholders including the Fiji Department of Environment, the Department of Fisheries, Fiji Customs and Quarantine Services, TRAFFIC, WWF, the Wildlife Conservation Society, the British Government and the Australian Government to increase public awareness of wildlife trade issues in Fiji and to build its capacity to manage CITES issues. As part of these efforts, the Australian Government placed an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development (AYAD), Peta Mills, with the Fiji Department of Environment to assist on a range of issues, including implementation of Fiji's CITES legislation, the Endangered and Protected Species Act (2002). AYAD is a program funded and managed by Australia's aid agency, AusAID.

Ms Mills worked in Fiji for 12 months on a number of CITES issues ranging from:

- Coordinating Fiji's attendance and participation in international CITES meetings (53rd Standing Committee meeting and Introduction from the Sea Workshop) through: establishment of systems and processes to assist in effective stakeholder consultation; development of policy positions with respect to agenda items; briefing preparation; representation and implementation of outcomes.
- Increasing awareness of CITES and legislative issues through media, TV news, publications, community displays and consultation.
- Working with stakeholders across the government and business to respond to day-to-day issues faced by traders, particularly in the marine aquarium industry.
- Presenting at numerous forums and to a variety of stakeholders on Fiji's legislation, including the EPS Act and its application.
- Seizure of CITES listed species from the Suva Markets (which received good coverage on Fiji News), and reporting on processes and legislative requirements to follow when seizing items under the EPS Act.
- Facilitating the provision of information to the CITES Secretariat and other stakeholders to assist in meeting Fiji's CITES obligations.

2.4 Torres Strait compliance project

The CITES Management Authorities of Australia and Papua New Guinea are currently collaborating on a project to improve compliance in the Torres Strait, which separates the two countries, and is mostly inhabited by traditional communities.

3. Australia

3.1 Participation in CITES activities and projects

Australia has continued as the Oceania regional representative on the Standing Committee (SC) since CoP13. Ms Kerry Smith, Assistant Secretary, Wildlife Branch, is currently honoured to represent the region in this capacity. The CITES Management Authority of Australia has secured funding to enable a representative from the CITES Management Authority of Fiji to attend SC54 as an observer, in preparation for Fiji potentially assuming the role of Oceania Regional Representative in the future.

Australia has been an active participant in several working groups. Australia has provided input to the export quotas, Scientific Committee review and Strategic Plan working groups. A representative from New Zealand attended the Strategic Plan working group meeting in Ottawa on Australia's behalf.

Oceania was represented by Australia and Fiji at the Introduction from the Sea (IFS) Workshop, December 2005.

3.2 Reporting activities

Australia provided a case study on the great white shark using the *Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines* in the listing decision making process in response to notification 2005/052.

Australia submitted information for the significant trade review in giant clam species.

Australia submitted its 2004 CITES Annual Report in December 2005.

Australia has also provided data for the Elephant Trade Inventory System (ETIS) on a regular basis.

3.3 Compliance enforcement activities

The Environment Investigations Unit (EIU) of the Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH) coordinates enforcement activities for wildlife trade. The EIU continued to operate in a tri-agency model of environmental investigations in conjunction with the Australian Federal Police and Australian Customs Service (Customs), and hosts outposted officers from these agencies. Efforts to increase and improve cooperation with other environmental law enforcement agencies are ongoing and have already yielded improvements in wildlife trade enforcement.

The Australian CITES Management Authority has prepared and implemented compliance plans for a number of target species including Hoodia (*H. gordonii*) and Ramin (*Gonystylus* spp.) and has drafted such plans for exotic birds and traditional medicines. By effectively targeting information at businesses and consumers who are involved in the international trade of regulated products, better outcomes can be achieved in the successful implementation of CITES.

A number of CITES Management Authorities and independent scientific institutions were contacted during the year in an effort to learn of developments in the use of DNA technology. A better understanding of the costs and the evidentiary standards required by courts for matters involving wildlife crime will enable the Australian Management Authority to meet CITES objectives.

New policy documents and guidelines for dealing with live forfeited specimens are under development. A review of the current approach led to a period of consultation with key stakeholders including the general public and State and Territory governments. After taking into account feedback from these groups, new guidelines for dealing with live forfeited animals will be implemented.

In August 2005, a man was charged with illegally importing 39 live reptiles, including several CITES listed specimens. In a landmark decision, he was sentenced to three and a half years imprisonment. In February 2006, a man pleaded guilty after attempting to export six native parrot eggs concealed in his clothing. He was charged and fined AUD\$ 25 000. These and similar cases this year indicate a growing recognition by the Australian judiciary of the serious impacts of wildlife crime and a willingness to hand down heavier sentences for illegal activity.

3.4 Education and awareness activities

Each year a thematic approach is adopted with the aim of reducing the proportion of the wildlife product seizures in Australia. This year, outbound passengers were targeted with the distribution of *Tips for Travellers* brochures and Wildlife Trade luggage tags, and advertisements in international airports and inflight magazines.

Other stakeholder-targeted activities have included information stalls at trade fairs such as seashell shows and exotic bird shows, the establishment of an industry advisory group for exotic birds, and editorials and advertisements provided to special interest journals, such as hunters and fashion importers.

Traditional medicines containing ingredients such as bear bile, orchid species and tiger bone are routinely seized on entry to Australia. To reduce the number of products imported illegally, an information booklet, *Wildlife conservation and complementary medicines*, written in both English and Chinese, has been distributed to international travellers and Australia's peak association representing Chinese medicine retailers and practitioners. Being a major, and growing, proportion of seized goods, traditional medicines will be targeted during the next financial year.

4. Fiji

4.1 Capacity building activities

Fiji implemented CITES in 2004 with the help of the Secretariat who provided funding assistance.

Since 2004, Fiji has held meetings with various stakeholders. These include:

- Fishery Department: Trade in Coral
- Ministry of Fijian Affairs: Trade in whales tooth (Tabua), an indigenous cultural item
- Forestry Department: Trade in mahogany and other timber species
- Department of Environment: Representing Management Authority

4.2 Conferences / workshops / training

Training programmes have also been developed for various stakeholders. These are:

- Quarantine Custom Officials by Department Environment and Fishery Officials – funding assistance from TRAFFIC OCEANIA (2004).
- Department of Environment (2005 & 2006)
- Meetings/workshops were held with Customs officials at main centres eg. Nadi/Nausori Airport, those in Suva/Lautoka, Levuka and Savusavu Ports again in 2006 (Jan – May). Funding from the Ministry of Environment.

4.3 Reporting activities

The 2003 and 2004 Annual Reports for CITES for the Fiji Islands have been completed. Currently working on the 2005 Annual Report. These reports are to be tabled in Fiji's Parliament in 2006.

4.4 Participation in CITES activities and projects

Fiji attended the Introduction from the Sea (IFS) workshop in December 2005. Fiji also attended the Oceania CITES Capacity Building Workshop in May 2006 and presented information about their CITES activities.

4.5 CITES species projects

Birds – Survey by Birdlife International for the Fiji Islands completed. A book on Fiji's Important Bird Area (IBA) published and launched by the British Ambassador in Fiji in June 2006. Birdlife International work in Fiji will continue.

International Marinelife Alliance (IMA) of Hawaii has completed their study on Fiji Live Rock Harvesting Assessment. The document is presently being reviewed by stakeholders including aquarium traders, academics, Fishery Division etc...

Fiji Fishery Division re-seeding reefs in Fiji with species of Tridacnidae clams (Appendix II – CITES) with support from communities.

Sea Turtles programmes under South Pacific Regional Environment Programme for 2006 continuing also in Fiji.

A report on the Financial and Economic analysis of Wild Harvest and Cultured Live Coral and Live Rock in Fiji completed in August 2005 by Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International (FSPI)

5. New Zealand

5.1 Capacity building activities

Two representatives from New Zealand attended the Oceania capacity building workshop held in Brisbane in May 2006. New Zealand also contributed funds towards assisting with the travel and accommodation costs of Oceania delegates attending the conference.

5.2 Implementation tools

A new data base for issuing permits, logging illegal imports and seizures and supplying information for New Zealand's Annual Report is under construction and will be ready to come into operation from 1 January 2007.

5.3 Conferences / workshops / training

A number of training courses for border control officers from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and from New Zealand Customs have been held. Officers from these departments undertake CITES work at ports and airports on behalf of the New Zealand CITES Management Authority. Audits of these operations were undertaken at two airports in December 2005 and February 2006.

5.4 Education and awareness activities

Officers have assisted with conservation awareness activities undertaken by zoos in Auckland and Christchurch and a presentation on CITES was given to the 2006 National Conference of the New Zealand Biosecurity Institute.

5.5 Participation in CITES activities and projects

New Zealand participated as the Oceania representative in AC22 and in the same capacity chaired a meeting of the CITES Working Group on Shark Conservation in London in April. New Zealand also participated as Oceania representative in the meeting of the Strategic Plan Working Group in Ottawa in April.

6. Palau

Palau became a Party to CITES in July 2004 and is the smallest country in CITES history to become a Party to the Convention. Despite the fact that Palau has very little wildlife trade, becoming a Party to the Convention demonstrates Palau's commitment to biodiversity conservation. The revenues currently generated from wildlife trade in Palau do not cover the cost of implementation of CITES. Palau urgently needs technical assistance in developing its domestic legislation to implement the Convention in order to meet the obligations placed on Palau as a Party. This has been communicated by Palau at both the first and second Regional Oceania Capacity Building workshops held in 2005 and 2006.

As such a young Party with limited resources, Palau would benefit greatly from any support provided by an experienced Party. The first step needed is to have outside experts on CITES implementation help Palau assess its current institutional framework relevant to CITES and assist in developing legislation that outlines the appropriate institutional framework for CITES implementation in-country. Palau remains hopeful that it will be possible to secure funding to bring in expertise to assist in setting Palau's foundation for CITES implementation.

7. Papua New Guinea

The CITES Management Authority is hoping to build a new permits database, which would enable PNG to generate more accurate trade data on imports and exports, valid permits, seizure data which would enable the Party to report reliable data to the CITES Secretariat.

The CITES Management Authorities of Australia and Papua New Guinea are currently collaborating on a project to improve compliance in the Torres Strait, which separates the two countries, and is mostly inhabited by traditional communities.

8. Samoa

Samoa only became a Party in February 2005, and to date has not received assistance with establishing systems and procedures to administer the Convention.

A number of areas need addressing, including:

- reviewing a number of CITES-related pieces of legislation (e.g. Land and Environment Act, Fisheries Act and marine wildlife regulations) to ensure consistency and complementarity,
- technical assistance to establish administrative, operational and implementation by the Samoan Management and Scientific Authorities,
- capacity building in areas such as non-detriment finding, reporting requirements, community awareness, and enforcement mechanisms.

Samoa is keen to become competent in its CITES administration, which would garner greater international support for its coral and clam trade.

9. Vanuatu

Vanuatu has been a Party to CITES since October 1989, but the Vanuatu Environment Unit, as the CITES Management and Scientific Authorities, still faces difficulties with administering, monitoring and evaluating CITES activities due largely to a lack of technical resources.

Vanuatu has a number of pieces of legislation, all working independently, which causes confusion for government officials and local communities. A consistent approach relating to environment legislation needs to be adopted across the whole of government. Vanuatu would appreciate any assistance that could be provided to meet this aim.