

**Minutes of the CSG Steering Committee Meeting,  
Montélimar, France (19 June 2006)**

1. Opening

The Chairman, Grahame Webb, opened the meeting at 0830 h. Agenda papers were available in advance on the website with some spare copies and late papers for members and observers.

Steering committee members present were: Grahame Webb, Dietrich Jelden, Alejandro Larriera, Tom Dacey, Perran Ross, Rich Fergusson, Olivier Behra, Jenny Daltry, Jiang Hongxinw, Uthen Youngprapakorn, Toshinori Tsubouchi, Charlie Manolis, David Wilken, B.C. Choudhury, Tirtha Maskey, Alvaro Velasco, Manuel Muñiz, Roberto Soberón, Giovanni Ulloa, Luciano Verdade, Jon Hutton, Ralf Sommerlad, Allan Woodward, Don Ashley, Yoichi Takehara, Thomas Krallé, Enrico Chiesa, John Caldwell, Fritz Huchzermeyer, Val Lance, Tomme Young, James MacGregor. (Kent Vliet, John Thorbjarnarson and Rom Whitaker arrived on 20 July).

Observers present were: Akira Matsuda, Heng Sovannara, Jerome Caraguel, Alba Imhof, Carlos Piña, Pablo Siroski, Gisela Poletta, Terry Cullen, Ivan Palacios, Maria de la Paz Lopez, Howard Kelly, Sen Rith, Marcos Coutinho, Ricardo Soavinski, Clara Sierra, Mark Merchant, Boyd Simpson, Wu Xiaobing, Chea Somala Sam, Seng Nakheng, Lim Suysovatha, Hideki Sakamoto, Zhu Jialong, Vicente Mercado, Chona Mercado, Giovanna Webb, Robert Sine, Neil Pentolfe, William Belo, Mark Belo, Severino “Toy” Mercado, Wim Janssens, Marc Gansuana.

Apologies were received from: Professor Harry Messel, Phil Wilkinson, Ruth Elsey, Hank Jenkins, Ekke Waitkuwait, Dr. Giam, Nao Thuok, Steve Peucker, Harry Andrews, Jayantha Jayawardene, Bernardo Ortiz, Noel Kinler, Harry Dutton, Yoshio Kaneko, Kevin van Jaarsveldt, C.H. Koh, Philippe Roggwiler, Steve Broad, Chris Banks, Yosapong Temsiripong, Asghar Mobaraki.

1.1. Chairman’s Report

The Chairman, Grahame Webb, welcomed everyone, drew attention to the large agenda and reminded the meeting that although the Chairman was responsible for final decisions he was seeking and would heed guidance from Steering Committee. The Chairman highlighted: changes in CSG operations since taking over Chairmanship in 2004; building up of CSG financial resources; Africa being a big challenge for the future; ongoing support provided by industry representatives; capacity of CSG members to respond to various CSG issues; the need for CSG members to be more active; and, adoption of the Addis Ababa Principles on sustainable utilization by the CBD, IUCN and CITES, with which the CSG was intimately involved.

## 1.2. Executive Officer's Report

Tom Dacey introduced his report, highlighting: composition of the Steering Committee; CSG membership (293 at June 2006); reviews, reports, proposals (eg Cambodia, Palau, Latin America, CITES ranching review, commercial live exports); CSG Newsletter (still mainly hard copy, few electronic subscriptions); communication; financial management; and, CSG involvement in updating and re-publishing of Karlheinz Fuch's book on the identification of crocodylian skins

## 1.3. Financial Report

The Treasurer, Perran Ross, presented the financial report, highlighting the current balance of around \$US171,000 [including funds (\$US6200) held by CSG Tomistoma Task Force]. The Chairman pointed out that this reflect in part significant savings because he was supporting many of the CSG's costs personally, but also that substantial funds would be required for ambitious CSG projects such as Africa.

## 1.4. Financial Arrangements

Perran Ross and Tom Dacey described the new financial arrangements. The primary bank account continues to be maintained at the University of Florida, with a working account in Darwin, Australia. One-off transfers of funds from the Florida account to the Darwin account would be made each year, enabling the more efficient operation of the CSG. The issue of the legal identity of the CSG was raised and the Chairman requested Tomme Young, Perran Ross, Tom Dacey and Charlie Manolis to review the matter and report back before the end of the working meeting (**Action Item 1**).

***Action Item 1:** The delegated group met on 21 June, and discussed issues associated with CSG becoming a legal entity, and the possible implications for CSG financial operations. The proposed actions (1.4) with an operating account in Darwin were confirmed as the best way to proceed in the short-term, and transactions with the Florida account will be reduced markedly as a consequence. Tomme Young will prepare a draft document covering options for "legal status" by 30 September for further consideration.*

## 2. Regional Chair Reports

### 2.1. Africa

The Regional Chairman for Africa, Rich Fergusson, advised that he had been "out of action" for some time with personal issues, but was now active again. Rich briefly addressed the activities in: South Africa (studies at St Lucia, KwaZulu-Natal and Olifants River, Mpumalanga); Botswana (Okavango work being done

by Dr. Alison Leslie); Mozambique (meeting scheduled with management authority mostly concerning surveys, captures and wild harvest at Cahora Bassa in response to HCC incidence there); Namibia (PhD study just started on crocodile ecology and community conservation of crocodiles in the Caprivi region); Zimbabwe (some erosion of the management due to changes in the management authority); Zambia (GEF funding has been obtained for surveys of Kafue ecosystem and WWF has a project including crocodiles and HCC at Bangweulu in northern Zambia); Malawi (survey work - RF completed crocodile and HCC surveys of the lower Shire River in December 2005).

Regional Vice Chair Olivier Behra addressed the meeting, highlighting the following issues: 10 French speaking African participants were attending the CSG meeting for the first time; he was establishing two sustainable use projects in Madagascar; the establishment/expansion of the CSG website for the French-speaking countries would be beneficial (Samuel Martin may be able to advise on this matter); possible development of a project proposal for EU funding for French-speaking countries; ongoing difficulties in Madagascar, with the laundering of wild crocodile skins through farms and the need for further action by the CSG.

The Chairman reiterated that the CSG was not an enforcement agency, but that it would equally not sit idly by and watch obvious and transparent illegal trade. In the case of Madagascar the CSG had already be in contact with the Enforcement Section of the CITES Secretariat with regard to Madagascar and that it would renew efforts to encourage action.

Jon Hutton indicated that there were a lot of good things happening with crocodiles in parts of Africa and that there was a lot of information available. There was a need to bring the information all together and UNEP-WCMC may be able to employ someone to do so.

Dietrich Jelden suggested holding a CSG Regional Meeting in Africa would help the CSG assess what is happening. Zambia was suggested as a possible venue.

Fritz Huchzermeyer said that through sustainable use much was known about the Nile crocodile. However, he expressed concern that little was known about the other African crocodilians (*Osteolaemus tetraspis*, *Crocodylus cataphractus*). Fritz suggested that Cameroon might also be a good venue for a CSG Regional meeting.

The Chairman requested Rich Fergusson, Jon Hutton and Olivier Behra to provide recommendations to the Steering Committee on what actions the CSG should prioritise in Africa (**Action Item 2**).

**Action Item 2:** *Jon Hutton will start making arrangements for a postgraduate student to be based at WCMC for one year for a desktop study to compile existing*

*information on the population status, distribution and threats to all three species in each country in Africa. Further documentation of the legal status and policy environment for crocodiles in each of these countries is also important. It is envisaged that this project will also form the basis of a proposed broad-scale crocodile “atlasing” project, in which the known distribution of crocodiles of each species is mapped for each country at a resolution of quarter degree squares or similar. It is likely that this could be supported in part by either a Commonwealth Scholarship or a Cheavling Scholarship. Rich Fergusson, Jon Hutton and Olivier Behra to facilitate obtaining the documentation for this study, using all CSG contacts within Africa. Additionally, Rich Fergusson will visit the national wildlife authorities responsible for crocodile management in countries where information for this study is lacking, using the existing CSG Africa budget, prioritising those for which we know least and those where crocodile conservation issues are arising. These visits will also serve to introduce and disseminate CSG’s role to African authorities where there has been little or no contact in the past. CSG’s initiatives in documenting HCC and the bushmeat trade will also be facilitated through these visits.*

*The study will indicate more clearly the status of African populations of all three species and, as importantly, will identify gaps in our knowledge. In the next phase, efforts to undertake or promote surveys to cover these gaps will then be the priority. This will likely require additional fundraising and the collaboration of local stakeholders, principally the relevant national wildlife authority, local crocodile producers and any resident conservation organisations. Rich Fergusson, Jon Hutton and Olivier Behra agreed that further efforts should be made wherever possible to collaborate with existing conservation NGO activities (eg WCS and CI programs in central Africa).*

## 2.2. Australia and Oceania

The Regional Chairman for Australia and Oceania, Charlie Manolis, addressed his report, highlighting: the proposed safari hunting contained within the Northern Territory’s Crocodile Management Plan was rejected by the Federal Minister for the Environment; withdrawal of the much publicised permit for proposed safari hunting in Papua New Guinea; and, the CSG review mission to Palau undertaken by Charlie Manolis and Tom Dacey in March 2006. Palau is a recent signatory to CITES, but has reservations on crocodiles and other CITES-listed species. There is currently no legislation in place for the protection of crocodiles. The population appears to be increasing and there was no apparent trade in crocodile products. Palau is developing a management plan and the officer responsible, Joshua Eberdong, supports sustainable utilization. However, Palau requires help. [Rich Fergusson commented that there are no details available on the interaction between safari hunting and ranching.]

### 2.3. East and Southeast Asia

The joint Regional Chairs for East and South East Asia, Jenny Daltry and Jiang Hongxing, presented their Regional report, highlighting: ongoing status problems and conservation efforts with the Philippine crocodile, *Crocodylus mindorensis*, saltwater crocodile, *C. porosus*, and Siamese crocodile, *C. siamensis*. Some wild *C. siamensis* hatchlings were reported in Vietnam where reintroductions had taken place. There had also been re-introductions of *C. siamensis* in Thailand. Only 10 wild *C. siamensis* nests have been found in Cambodia, and loss of habitat has been significant there. The recent CSG review mission stimulated some action and an update on actions taken was provided separately. Progress had been made with the False gharial, *Tomistoma schlegelii* (see Tomistoma Task Force report). With the Chinese alligator, research is continuing and 6 alligators have now been released into the wild, and are being monitored with VHF transmitters.

Heng Sovannara (Cambodia) provided an update on the implementation of the CSG's recommendations resulting from the Cambodia Review Mission: the new Cambodian Fisheries law has been signed by the King of Cambodia: the Department of Fisheries has established the Cambodian Crocodile Monitoring Unit (CCMU): Cambodia is proposing to register more captive breeding farms with CITES.

Fritz Huchzermeyer enquired whether there was any information on the farming of exotic crocodiles in China and he was advised that it was included in the report of the "Commercial Live Exports of Crocodilians" (Agenda Item 4.5).

### 2.4. Europe

Deputy Chairman, Dietrich Jelden, presented the regional report for Europe, highlighting the support given towards the Tomistoma Task Force activities, with more in depth research in Borneo and general taxonomic research on crocodiles in Africa.

Dietrich warmly welcomed Luc Fougéirol and Samuel Martin to CSG Steering Committee and thanked them for their efforts in organizing the CSG meeting in Montélimar.

### 2.5. Latin America and the Caribbean

The Regional Chairman for Latin America and the Caribbean, Alvaro Velasco, presented his report highlighting: review of the regional membership; Caribbean sub-regional membership (the Chairman suggested CITES Management Authorities be contacted to identify people working with crocodilians in the Caribbean); need for funding to conduct a mission to Jamaica; Formosa project in Argentina - *Caiman yacare* wild harvest program; workshop held in Brazil to identify new people working on crocodilians; proposed downlisting of the

*Melanosuchus niger* population in Brazil; *C. yacare* program in Paraguay is still closed; Colombian government accepting the CSG review recommendations about closing off avenues through which wild skins can enter trade based on captive breeding; regional meeting held in Santa Fe, Argentina (May 2005); proposed book on Latin American studies on crocodylian hematology; difficulties with *Crocodylus acutus* trade from Colombia into Europe.

Mr. Takehara raised the issue of difficulty with trade in *Caiman latirostris* between Argentina and Japan, due to Japanese domestic legislation. Although the Argentinian population was downlisted to CITES Appendix II in 1997, other populations are still on Appendix I, and so the species remains listed as such in Japan's legislation. Due to this listing, imports of *C. latirostris* from Argentina into Japan attract a large fee, making imports uneconomical. It was proposed that the CSG write to the Japanese CITES Management Authority seeking a review of the domestic legislation (**Action Item 3**).

*Action Item 3: Following a review of previous correspondence between Argentina and Japan, additional information was provided by the CSG to the Argentinian CITES Management Authority to allow it to submit a better case to the Japanese authorities for possible revision of the legislation.*

## 2.6. North America

Allan Woodward, joint Regional Chair for North America, passed on an apology from Ruth Elsey who was unable to attend the meeting due to work commitments. He highlighted: alligator production figures; proposed downlisting of the Florida population of *Crocodylus acutus*; Mexico's proposed downlisting under the USA Endangered Species Act (ESA) of Morelet's crocodile (*Crocodylus moreletii*) [findings yet to be released]. In view of the CSG comments Mexico will present a revised proposal to the USA seeking a downlisting from "endangered" to "threatened"; Michael Kreger (USFWS) provided updates on the ESA proposals, and it was proposed that he be offered CSG membership (**Action Item 4**); findings about Argentina's *Caiman latirostris* downlisting proposal under the ESA expected in August.

Val Lance reported that alligator nesting in Louisiana is expected to be very low this year due to the hurricane damage last year and current drought conditions. Don Ashley also confirmed the problem of adult displacement from nesting areas and its possible impact for the next 1-2 years.

*Action Item 4: CSG Membership was offered and accepted by Michael Kreger.*

## 2.7. West Asia

The Regional Chairman, B.C. Choudhury, highlighted: gharial status in the wild is not good, but OK in captivity; \$30,000 grant to Madras Crocodile Bank to

review human-crocodile conflict in India; a massive Indian program to interlink major river systems will have a major impact on gharials; gharial may now meet the IUCN Red List criteria for “Critically Endangered”; Tirtha Maskey from Nepal was present at the meeting; Asghar Mobaraki was unable to attend the meeting but provided written comments on the situation in Iran; and, regional CSG members have not had an opportunity to meet, and are seeking external funding to hold a regional meeting.

The Chairman indicated that notwithstanding difficulties, the CSG West Asia region needed to get more active. Any proposed reclassification of the gharial on the IUCN Red List needed to be based strictly on the criteria and not be a criterion of convenience for advocacy within India.

### 3. Thematic Vice Chair Reports

#### 3.1. CITES

In the absence of the Vice-Chair for CITES, Hank Jenkins, the Chairman introduced the report, highlighting: the CSG Ranching Review to be considered at the 22nd CITES Animals Committee meeting (AC22) in Peru in early July, and the review of production systems and use of source codes, also being considered at AC22. Grahame Webb, Don Ashley, Rich Fergusson and Dietrich Jelden all provided briefings on the source code issue.

#### 3.2. IUCN

In his report, Vice Chair, Perran Ross, highlighted that Jon Hutton and himself were working closely with the SSC Chair, Dr. Holly Dublin, on proposed organizational changes within the IUCN-SSC. There may be some changes on how the Specialist Groups function under the umbrella of the IUCN-SSC. CSG will need to manage upwards in order to influence the IUCN decision-making process and policies.

#### 3.3. Industry

The Vice-Chair, Don Ashley, presented an update on the California Penal Code issue, with CSG involvement in Senate Committee hearing. There were two basic issues: how do you ensure stimulation of legal trade will not encourage illegal trade; and, how do you ensure all products are legal? Don agreed to provide a complete list of all the issues raised by the Senate Committee (**Action Item 5**).

***Action Item 5:** Issues raised by the Senate Committee, and to which Don Ashley responded, were: importance of the Bill and alligators to Louisiana; how to ensure that the trade in alligators products is from legal sources and not from an endangered species; whether world trade in crocodylians is monitored by CITES*

*and USFWS; how illegal trade is reported and by whom; and, would increased legal trade in alligators stimulate illegal trade in other endangered crocodilians.*

Don Ashley also addressed the CITES Personnel effects issue. With Resolution Conf. 13.7, the Parties agreed to exempt from the requirement of CITES permits certain personal items (eg up to four crocodilian specimens) carried as personal effects. Interpretation of what constitutes “specimens” is causing problems. Dietrich Jelden indicated that the EU regulations would come into effect in early July 2006, allowing compliance with Resolution Conf. 13.7. Don Ashley and Tomme Young were requested to review the matter and report back to the Chairman (**Action Item 6**).

***Action Item 6:** The consensus CSG input is: not to reopen the personal effects resolution (Resolution Conf. 13.7) at CITES CoP14; restore the text of the Resolution as adopted during CoP12; and, limit the terms of reference for the Working Group to the requirements of Section 2 in CITES Notification 2006-041. Implementation is an important consideration, and improved awareness by Customs and Port Inspectors should be a priority. A listing/delisting timeframe should be considered as part of a “process for consideration”. At this stage it is recommended that the CITES Secretariat be informed of the CSG’s strong interest in this issue, and that we be kept “in the loop”.*

#### 3.4. Trade Monitoring

The Vice Chair, John Caldwell, highlighted: comprehensive trade data for 2004 is now available on the website; CITES have been requesting bi-annual reports from the Parties, yet many Parties are providing annual reports; the proposed electronic “Farming Directory” is now on hold due to lack of available funds. John was requested to come back with suggestions for the implementation of the electronic “Directory” (**Action Item 7**).

***Action Item 7:** John Caldwell advised that UNEP-WCMC does not have the funds to produce the “Directory” even if it is electronic. However UNEP-WCMC will investigate the possibility of making a web-based system available so that farmers/ranchers could populate with their own details. Design of the web interface is currently under consideration. John proposes that this be worked through the CSG Regional Chairs in the first instance. Rich Fergusson is currently talking to South African farmers to see what pitfalls might be encountered.*

#### 3.5. Veterinary Science

The Vice Chair, Fritz Huchzermeyer, presented his report. With regard to disease: typical and atypical poxviruses have been found; and, a Kenyan crocodile farm closed down, with all stock moved to South Africa where they all died. On organisational matters, veterinary help is needed all over the world to prevent the

spread of diseases. “Non-disclosure” clauses regarding the disclosure of information gained is hindering the free exchange of important information.

### 3.6. Zoos and Community Education

The Vice Chair, Kent Vliet, was unavailable to attend due to a flight connection problem. The Chairman requested members with an interest in this area to contact him. Areas of particular interest were: misinformation at airport displays; and, the existence of an IUCN “Advertising and Communication” section which may be able to advise on how to best spread the “sustainable use” message with crocodiles and trade.

### 3.7. General Research

The Vice Chair, Val Lance, reported that crocodylian science is “alive and well”. Articles are mentioned in the CSG newsletter and he is proposing to write further articles for the CSG Newsletter.

### 3.8. Red List Authority

The Vice-Chair, John Thorbjarnarson, was unavailable due to a flight connection problem and Perran Ross presented the report, together with the associated paper (Agenda Item 5.6), on the re-evaluation of crocodylian species using the Red Listing criteria.

The Chairman indicated that the current Red Listing criteria did not provide even a reasonable index for predicting the real risk of global extinction of widely distributed species such as *Crocodylus porosus*, which can be totally secure in some nations but extinct in others.

Perran Ross indicated that the Red Listing criteria work better with the new guidelines and suggested that select CSG members should undertake training in the interpretation of the criteria under the new guidelines. [Further discussions included in Agenda Item 5.6]

### 3.9. Legal Affairs

The Vice Chair, Tomme Young, presented her report, indicating that crocodile management and trade are basically functioning effectively and that relationships with government are operating on a pro-active and positive basis. There were relatively few legal matters to report. General comments were provided on: California Penal Code; CITES personal effects; and, potential future issues (trans-boundary trade; compliance with international and national laws; stricter domestic legislations; and, human-crocodile interactions).

#### 4. Task Force/Working Group Reports

##### 4.1. Gharial

A report was presented on behalf of a Gharial Multi-Task Force (GTMF), which was formed outside the CSG. Tom Dacey discussed further with Rom Whitaker and Janaki Lenin when they arrived. [*Note: GTMF organized a workshop on the evening of 22 June to discuss the gharial situation and to stimulate action by the GTMF. A two-phase approach was considered: Phase I - urgent measures to reverse the decline of gharial populations; Phase II - urgent assessment to determine whether gharial meets the criteria for "Critically Endangered" (see Action Item 10). A summary of this workshop is included in the Proceedings of the CSG working meeting.*]

##### 4.2. Chinese Alligator

The Working Group Chairman, Jiang Hongxing, confirmed that conservation and research efforts were continuing on track. A detailed report will be presented at the working meeting.

##### 4.3. Tomistoma

The Task Force Chairman, Ralf Sommerlad, presented the report. During 2004, two surveys were conducted in West Kalimantan by Mark Bezuijen and PRCF. It is proposed to distribute these reports in Indonesian. There was a rapid field assessment in Sarawak (2004) by Mark Bezuijen and Rob Stuebing for the Grand Perfect Plantation Company and a 2005 survey in Central Kalimantan by Mark Auliya with proposed follow up work to be undertaken by a student (Rene Bonke) from Bonn University. Miami Metro Zoo fundraiser was re-scheduled for February 2007. Possible re-introduction program in southern Thailand was under discussion with the Thai Department of Fisheries. Successful breeding of Tomistoma by Uthen Youngprapakorn at the Utairatch Crocodile Farm. Transfer of Tomistoma to the Hong Kong Wetland Park. Discussion about a Tomistoma Husbandry Manual. DNA and veterinary research in Europe. Support for students from the Munich and Bonn Universities.

##### 4.4. Philippine Crocodile

The Task Force Chairman, Chris Banks, was unable to attend the meeting and the report was noted. Vic Mercado, President, Crocodylus Porosus Philippines, Inc. addressed the Steering Committee about their proposal regarding the Palawan Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Centre. The proposal is to be a research and conservation project to transfer *C. mindorsensis* to various farms in the Philippines and for the commercial farming of the *C. porosus* for financial gain. The Chairman suggested that CSG members should discuss these matters with Vic Mercado over the next few days. Terry Cullen advised that the DNA work on

*C. mindorensis* has been re-activated.

#### 4.5. Commercial Live Exports of Crocodilians

The Task Force Chairman, Perran Ross, tabled the draft report and gave a detailed presentation on the recommendations. The Steering Committee accepted the report, subject to minor modifications, and, the Chairman thanked Perran and the Task Force for their efforts before dissolving the task force. The Chairman requested that the draft Best Management Practices and Guidelines (Report pp. 25-30) be circulated to select expert CSG members for further input while they were at the CSG working meeting (**Action Item 8**).

***Action Item 8:** No immediate comments on BMPs were received in France, other than general agreement in principle. Executive Officer to circulate the draft BMPs to select CSG members out of session for further input.*

#### 4.6. Human-Crocodile Conflict

The Working Group Chairman, Rich Fergusson, presented the report, highlighting: consolidated guidelines on the prevention and management of HCC; database of attacks by crocodiles on humans and livestock; and, a proposed fact sheet on HCC. Rich Fergusson is to meet with the working group members and interested people during the working meeting.

#### 4.7. Review of Crocodilian Ranching Programs

Tom Dacey advised that the CSG report on ranching was to be considered at AC22 in Peru (July 2006). The AC22 document seeks to amend Resolution Conf. 11.16 so that the current reporting requirements on ranching operations, that constitute an annual report obligation on Parties, are reduced and simplified.

### 5. General Business

#### 5.1. CSG Website

The Chairman presented the paper and advised on the need to update the current CSG website, which is hosted through the University of Florida. It was generally agreed to proceed with the update of the website as outlined in the paper, particularly in regard to the publications section and other crocodilian sites linked to the CSG.

#### 5.2. Electronic Journal

This paper was introduced by Tom Dacey and Grahame Webb. It is envisaged that any electronic journal would be developed as part of the upgrade of the CSG

website. Val Lance was asked to form a small working group to discuss options for an electronic journal (**Action Item 9**).

***Action Item 9:** A small group of members convened during the working meeting, and discussed advantages and disadvantages of the CSG developing an electronic journal. It was generally agreed that there was a need for a peer-reviewed electronic journal on crocodylians. It was also agreed that there were many reports and studies did not fit the criteria for peer-reviewed journals, but had useful, valuable information to offer. The CSG Newsletter could be an avenue for publication of such reports, but this would only be possible if the Newsletter were in electronic form only - the costs of producing a hard copy of an expanded Newsletter would be prohibitive. The group decided to look at publishing a special issue of an electronic journal, and Val Lance undertook to formulate guidelines for authors, etc.*

### 5.3. Training in Crocodile Husbandry and Conservation

A paper was introduced by Tom Dacey and subsequent discussions raised the following issues: is this a job for the CSG or for other organizations? There needs to be a database of what is available now; need to be careful how the CSG proceeds with this issue; there is already a lot of information available in the public arena. It was agreed “in principle” to clarify what is available and include it on the CSG website.

### 5.4. Non-reusable CITES Skin Tags

The paper and its origin were introduced by the Chairman, as some non-reusable tags are clearly not tamper proof. CSG needs to consult with the CITES Secretariat. Allan Woodward to check on the outcome of the USA review of reusable tags (**Action Item 10**).

***Action Item 10:** Allan Woodward reported that the USA had problems with CITES skin tags breaking and being susceptible to tampering during the 1990s when plastic tags were being used. They reviewed various materials and styles of tags and found that a nylon tag, the Poly-Lok III, made by the E.J. Brooks Co. (<http://www.ejbrooks.com/>) resisted breakage and was essentially tamper-proof. Attempts to boil one of these tags to see if it would unlock without damage indicated that it remained tightly sealed. Nor was the tag able to be detached from the locking end using conventional tools. These tags also perform well through the tanning process.*

*Louisiana has looked into bar-coding, but initially found that this was not compatible with the Poly-Lok III tag. Louisiana is still investigating bar-coding, and will be conducting an experiment with a sample of bar-coded tags during the 2006 harvest.*

*The Chairman alerted David Morgan of the CITES Secretariat to the potential for re-use of the current tags and sought advice on what should be done. The Secretariat undertook to review the situation and report back.*

#### 5.5. Castillos Award

The paper was introduced by Tom Dacey. Steering Committee members with suggestions on a possible recipient were requested to discuss with the Chairman.

#### 5.6. Critically Endangered Listing for the Indian Gharial

The paper was introduced by the Regional Chairman for West Asia, B.C. Choudhury. The issue had been discussed previously under Agenda Item 4.1, and B.C. Choudhury, Perran Ross, Rom Whitaker and John Thorbjarnarson were asked to review the status against the IUCN criteria and report back (**Action Item 11**).

***Action Item 11:** At the Gharial Multi-Task Force (GMTF) workshop, CSG members took the opportunity to undertake a preliminary evaluation of the Red List status of the Indian gharial and reached the conclusion was that it may qualify as “Critically Endangered” under the following criteria: C. Population size estimated to number fewer than 250 mature individuals; and, C1. An estimated continuing decline of at least 25% within three years or one generation, which ever is the longer, (up to a maximum of 100 years in the future).*

#### 5.7. Brazilian Downlisting Proposal for *Melanosuchus niger*

The paper was introduced by the Regional Chairman for Latin America and the Caribbean, Alvaro Velasco. He outlined the background to the proposal, CSG involvement to date, and how he had been working closely with the Brazilian CITES Management Authority. A draft proposal had been reviewed by 10 CSG members and co-ordinated comments returned to Brazil. Marcos Couthino, on behalf of Brazil, tabled a revised draft of the proposal, which CSG agreed to consider and provide further comments before the end of the working meeting (**Action Item 12**).

***Action Item 12:** A meeting was held with the Brazilian officials during the working meeting and comments were provided by CSG reviewers for further consideration. These comments were provided in writing on 4 July 2006. The CSG indicated that it would be willing to review an updated proposal when it is prepared. The option of submitting a regional proposal for a regional downlisting of *M. niger* was discussed, but it was considered that despite obvious merit there was insufficient time to organize such a proposal by January 2007.*

## 5.8. Wild vs Farmed Skins

Deputy Chair, Alejandro Larriera, explained how the paper stemmed from the Regional Meeting in Santa Fe, Argentina (May 2005). Advice was provided to Colombian government authorities on the system of scute-clipping of hatchlings to close loopholes through which wild-caught caimans can be laundered through captive breeding farms. The system was opposed by some Colombian farmers on the basis of issues such as loss of value of the marked skin and “why us”? The Chairman reiterated that the original request for an identification system came from Colombia itself, not the CSG. The CSG cannot demand implementation of any particular system, it can only advise Colombia on what systems are used in other countries to overcome the problem Colombia is concerned about. The Chairman dismissed the "loss of value" argument, because the clipped scutes are very posterior on the tail, and there is no loss of value in other countries that use this system. The Chairman requested that the Colombian representatives at the meeting get together and come back and advise what could be done to resolve this issue (**Action Item 13**).

***Action Item 13:** A meeting of Colombian representatives was convened. Colombian CSG members reaffirmed the strong commitment of industry (and Government) to ensure that only legal trade takes place, and the implementation of systems to prevent illegal trade. The results of discussions from the Steering Committee and working meetings will be conveyed back to Colombia for further discussion and evaluation by Government and industry.*

## 5.9. *Caiman c. fuscus* Skins Seized in Uruguay and Sold to Mexican Tannery

The Deputy Chair, Alejandro Larriera, recently visited the Mexican tannery which had purchased the old confiscated skins from Uruguay, and provided a detailed report and photographs of the way in which they were being utilised successfully. He estimated that about 30% of the skins were in very poor condition. The Chairman stated that the CSG had learnt a lot from this exercise, because initial concerns by some CSG members were that the old skins were useless, and that the tags may be more valuable than the skins. This is clearly not the case, and it would appear that skins can be kept in a dry form, for many years, and still have economic value.

## 5.10. CSG Communication, Publicity and Promotion

The Chairman provided this paper that raised the issue of where we should be heading in the future with communication, publicity and promotion.

## 6. Next CSG Working Meeting (2008)

A formal application to host the next CSG Working Meeting was tabled by Bolivia, and verbal offers to host the meeting were received from South Africa and Brazil. Cambodia withdrew the offer made previously. The Chairman asked South Africa and Brazil to confirm their proposals in writing, based upon the criteria provided to them by the Executive Officer.

## 7. Other Business

No other business was raised and the meeting closed at 1730 h.

**[Minutes of the CSG Steering Committee meeting will be available at <[www.wmi.com.au/csgarticles](http://www.wmi.com.au/csgarticles)> until 31 December 2006]**