

Crocodile Specialist Group Steering Committee Meeting

(Gainesville, FL, USA; 6 October 2002)

Present: Prof. H. Messel, P. Ross, W. King, A. Velasco, R. Fergusson, J. Hutton, D. Ashley, A. Woodward, P. Stobbs, O. Menghi, G. Webb, Y. Takehara, B. Ortiz, A. Larriera, J. Thorbjarnarson, F. Huchzermeyer, V. Lance, R. Elsey, L. Brisbin. Observers: T. Dacey, J. Daltry, P. Hall, J. Saieh, H. Zamberano, L. Martinez, R. Xiandong, J. Hongxing, N. Thuok, J. Caldwell, J. MacGregor, P. Siroski, C. Pina, A. Matsuda, C. Adams, K. Vliet, H. Dutton, L. Sigler, M. Lopez, R. Ramos, I. Torres, M. Muniz, R. Soberon, M. Tabet, F. Watlington, P. Wilkinson, C. Wilkinson, E. Espinosa, A. Llobet.

The chairman opened the meeting at 9:20 am with comments on the excellent attendance and very broad experience represented in the room.

FINANCES. CSG accounts through September 2002 were presented, showing revenues totaling

\$79,149 and expenses totaling \$84,670:

Donations \$59,185

Newsletter subs 2,381

Sales 1,150

Project grants and contracts 16,433

Bank charges 1,779

Equipment 1,777

Mail 4,029

Project and grant expenses 13,260

Publications and printing 4,344

Salaries and fringe * 54,393

Supplies 705

Telephone 1,000

Travel 2,380

Misc. other 994

* Includes prepayments to salary account through March 2003

With funds carried forward from previous years the CSG current balance is \$61,000. The chairman accepted the report and offered thanks again to all the CSG donors both present and absent.

Allan Woodward reported on behalf of the organizing committee that 262 pre-registered participants were expected and the draft program of presentations and events was submitted. The Chairman thanked Woody and the committee for their excellent organization and the high quality of presentations in the program.

RELATIONSHIP WITH NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TELEVISION. The executive officer presented a report detailing a series of issues and difficulties arising from the retainer relationship between CSG and NGTV. This included non-payment of

fees, complaints from field researchers and an overall concern about the quality and content of documentaries made with CSG input and member participation. Responses of the committee were mixed, some expressing great satisfaction and others with similar problems. After discussion it was recognized that such a relationship with a commercial entertainment company should be expected to not completely meet CSG needs. The committee concluded that CSG needed to communicate to NGTV administration and producers that we expected completely professional treatment by them regarding payments and agreements, but that CSG members also needed to be realistic about the needs of documentary filming. A solution would be to advise CSG members about to participate in such ventures of the need to make clear written arrangements about responsibilities and expectations prior to the activity. Following the Committee meeting a representative of NGTV presented CSG with a check for outstanding payments and showed sample documentaries from their current series, inviting critical comment. In the following discussions a clearer basis for continuing the arrangement was achieved.

CSG NEWSLETTER. A proposal to diversify editorial input and production capacity for the newsletter was presented by P. Ross and J. Thorbjarnarson. Recent newsletters run around

1000 copies printed and 800 - 950 copies distributed, vary between 18 and 26 pages of content and cost \$1,798 - \$2,717 to print. Estimated effort of production was 100 person hours per issue, four times a year. The current editors P. Ross and F. W. King have discussed with J. Thorbjarnarson outsourcing elements of production and assembly to his office in Wildlife Conservation Society. Committee members raised issues of loss of editorial control to an external organization, duplication of costs, conflicts in editorial policy. After discussion the committee concluded that a complete transfer of editorial responsibility was risky and premature. The chairman ruled that on a trial basis Dr. Thorbjarnarson should be added to the editorial board and diverse procedures for optimizing assembly and production with his assistance, under the direction of the current editors, could be attempted.

CROCODILE ATTACK DATABASE. Suggestions have been made that CSG should compile statistics on crocodile attacks on people worldwide. A similar program for shark attacks is a model. After brief discussion, the issue was deferred to the agenda item on crocodile-human conflict for discussion there

REPORT OF THE VETERINARY SECTION. Fritz Huchzermeyer reported that procedures for pre-disease screening of crocodilians developed by members of the veterinary group had been included as a chapter in a publication on such procedures distributed widely by the SSC Vet Specialist group (Huchzermeyer, F.W. 2001. *Crocodylia*. Pp. 71-73 in: M.H. Woodford ed. *Quarantine and health screening protocols for wildlife prior to translocation and release into the wild*. Office International des Epizooties, Paris, 104 p.). The very high cost and limited production of the immobilizing agent gallamine had led to development of alternative curare based agents that were currently being tested and a brief technical discussion of immobilizing and anesthetic agents for crocodilians followed. Fritz offered the idea that most mortality of captive crocodilians was due to non-contagious agents and represented management and

husbandry problems rather than disease or infectious agents and the vet group should pursue this idea.

REPORT FROM THE ASIAN AND OCEANIA SECTION. G. Webb reported on the recent publication of a detailed work on anatomy of crocodilians based on *C. porosus*. In Australia, the Department of Primary Industry continues to be a primary focus of research in Queensland. In the northern Territory, recent political changes raised expectations of a renewal of the program there following recent inactivity. The issue of effects of dispersal of exotic, toxic cane toads into the range of crocodiles and other reptiles was discussed. High mortality of crocodiles on initial exposure to toxic toads and their tadpoles is reported. Dr. Webb's group is conducting baseline studies in advance of the invasion front in the McKinlay River area and considered that the issue was not extinction of crocodiles, but rather large numbers of crocodiles being killed, and baseline survival rates and ecological relationships (on which current management is based) being altered permanently. This study is being funded largely by WMI, in what appears to be an absence of institutional interest.

In **Indonesia**, recent WMI work by Mark Bezuijen on *Tomistoma* included a community workshop for *Tomistoma* conservation, involving all levels of Government and a resurvey of the Merang River and other nearby sites in Sumatra. The impact of illegal logging and burning is becoming very severe, and unless action is taken in the immediate future, this important site for *Tomistoma* will not exist. A catchment level forestry management plan is being developed with local communities and Government with assistance by WMI and local NGOs. However, the situation is grave and requires the involvement of a major donor. It is now beyond what WMI can support with assistance of various small donors.

In **Vietnam**, initial indications are that the reintroduction of *C. siamensis* into protected habitat in Cat Tien National Park has been successful. A detailed report was expected at the CSG meeting. Six captive breeding farms have applied to CITES for registration, and protocols to monitor the farms are under development. The major trade continues to be one of live farmraised *siamensis* (and *siamensis-rhombifer* hybrids) to China for food and to a more limited degree, possibly captive breeding in China. Prices are reported to be US\$ 200 for a 10 kg specimen up to \$1,000 for a 40 kg adult. The effect of trade on the wild population is virtually unknown, because the wild population appears to have been largely extirpated over time.

Cambodia: E-mail from John Thorbjarnarson circulated to SC in August expressed concern about the continued removal of wild crocodiles and their sale to local crocodile farms. Mr. Nao Thuok, Director of Fisheries, was present and responded that the Authorities continued to try and control this process and that a workshop on the issue had been conducted. Mr. D. Cheang, Director of Fauna and Flora was also present. A new law has been drafted, and is being implemented, which increases control over farms and improves regulation of crocodile movement between farms. A census of farm broodstock (adults) was proposed and the movement of wild adults into smaller farms was much reduced. There was a continuing need for technical training for enforcement personnel.

Jenny Daltry of FFI gave an update of the situation in the Cardamom Mts. where further surveys with local people had located 15 sites and a minimum population of 103 crocodiles in the region. Improved access was increasing human impacts and threat to the sites. Jenny and FFI continue to work with local communities to build conservation interest and hope to link this effort to major development projects in the region. A critical problem is the lack of trained technical personnel.

Nao Thuok then gave a short summary of current efforts by his office to control the situation. An ad-hoc working group on Siamese crocodile was to be convened at the meeting later in the week.

Chinese alligator: The conservation momentum initiated at the CSG meeting in 2000 and focused through the IUCN-World Conservation Congress had made great steps forward. Following the workshops held in September 2001, a Conservation Plan was adopted and official funding for reintroduction programs released for Anhui and Zhiangjiang provinces. Mr. Ruan Xiangdong, representing China's State Forest Administration (SFA), reported that Mr. Jiang Hongxing was appointed official contact and national coordinator for Chinese alligator conservation in the national Research Development center. In Anhui a pilot release project was underway and in Zhiangjing an experimental release into 400 ha was being planned. Technical support was being sought for monitoring wild populations, habitat evaluation, conservation and management of both existing wild and captive populations, and for commercial use. The final Proceedings of the 2001 workshops were officially presented to CSG and copies distributed. Professor Messel expressed his strongest congratulations and wishes for continued cooperation between SFA, Chinese interests and the CSG, to continue this important work.

Philippines: A short summary of the extensive history of CSG intervention in the Philippines crocodile was presented. However, current activity seemed paralyzed again by internal politics and economic difficulties, such that conservation action for the Philippines crocodile was currently stalled. The task force formed in 2000 was inactive and was not addressing current crises of managing and providing resources for the captive population. A detailed report from Chris Banks based on his visit to Philippines in May 2002 was presented for discussion. Concern was expressed by international zoo representatives and other conservation interests. One current bright spot was the Dutch project in Luzon, combining community development with crocodile conservation, and the discovery of several new sites occupied by small populations of Philippine crocs. The ongoing survey and genetic analysis by Fred Pontillas was recognized as a valuable component to future work with this species. A special meeting of interested parties was convened to discuss the problem (see report below, pp. 20-22). After some two decades of talk about restocking, and millions of dollars invested in producing stock through captive breeding for restocking, one general perception is that some pragmatic action needs to be taken in order to establish confidence in the program by potential donors.

Papua New Guinea: The economic and political situation continued to deteriorate to the detriment of crocodile management. There are increasing concerns about loss of nesting

habitat throughout the Sepik (river) systems, with the vegetation mats used for nesting being burned to improve fishing access. Jack Cox sent a report detailing current unofficial efforts to work directly with traditional resource owners, to restructure egg collection protocols and improve returns to local people. The government had not provided funds from the special account to support surveys since 2000 and there are concerns that the funds may have been improperly diverted to other uses. PNG now stands in danger of being unable to meet its CITES obligations for non-detriment findings, which could result in CITES censure. Mobilization of higher level political support and the establishment of a separate inviolate account for crocodile skin export levies (which pay for the monitoring) are considered urgent actions needed to restart the surveys. The CSG undertook to inform the Animals Committee of CITES of the dilemma. Paul Stobbs reported results of research indicating that hatchlings derived from the wild egg harvest were of lower quality (survival and growth) than those derived from captive bred eggs. This provides an additional concern about viability of the wild harvest program and its conservation incentives.

After the meeting, the following letter was sent:

10 October 2002

Dr. Marinus Hoogmoed
Chairman CITES Animals Committee
CITES Secretariat
Chemin des Anemones
Geneva
Switzerland

RE: Resolution Conference 8.9 Review of trade in Appendix II crocodiles from Papua New Guinea.

Dear Dr. Hoogmoed,

In our capacity as an expert advisor to the Animals Committee of CITES we write to request that you initiate a review of the trade in crocodylians from Papua New Guinea under the conditions of CITES Resolution Conf. 8.9 Review of Significant Trade. As we detail below and in the attached materials, trade in Appendix II crocodylian skins has increased to approximately 25,000 skins/year of two species (*Crocodylus porosus* and *Crocodylus novaeguineae*). Most, if not all, of these are of wild origin, either as wild hunted adult skins or as eggs collected from the wild and raised in ranches, although they are sometimes (erroneously) reported in CITES reports as bred in captivity. Papua New Guinea has failed to adequately survey crocodile habitat since 1998 and prior to that date, surveys indicated variable and possibly declining trends. We also have reports of extensive loss of nesting habitat by deliberate burning of floating vegetation mats where crocodiles nest. There is therefore no objective basis to determine that the current and continuing harvest of crocodiles from the wild is meeting the requirements of the

convention Article IV paras 2 (a) (monitoring) and 3 (nondetriment). As expert advisors on crocodylians we request that the Animals Committee place crocodile populations (*Crocodylus porosus* and *Crocodylus novaeguineae*) of Papua New Guinea on the list of species considered to be significantly affected by trade (Resolution Conf. 9.1(Rev)) and immediately initiate a review of biological, trade and other relevant information. We undertake to assist the Animals Committee to conduct this review in a timely manner.

The management and conservation of crocodylians in Papua New Guinea (PNG) was long considered a model program combining sustainable resource use, integration with local community benefits, implementation of CITES permit and skin tagging requirements and a regular monitoring program. The monitoring program, designed originally as part of a multimillion dollar FAO project, was conducted for 15 years, 1982-1996 by annual aerial surveys of crocodile nests in a set of representative sample areas in the area where adult crocodiles or crocodile eggs were harvested. In 1996, at the request of the PNG CITES Management Authority (Department of Environment and Conservation) a CSG expert evaluated the program and made recommendations for streamlining the surveys and more easily interpreting the results. Monitoring was supported by a levy upon each skin exported to pay for the annual survey. PNG has built up a strong team of well trained and dedicated technical personnel who are fully capable of conducting and interpreting aerial nest surveys.

At the time of the experts review, the raw survey data indicated a fluctuating decline in the nesting index between 1993 and 1996 but this was thought to be due to environmental conditions (dry El Niño weather). A major recommendation of the expert review was that surveys be conducted on a reduced number of key areas at a minimum of every two years to ensure that any decline in the population due to environmental conditions, habitat loss or over harvesting could be detected. We are therefore surprised and disappointed to report that surveys were only intermittently and incompletely conducted in 1997-1999 and have not been conducted at all in 2000, 2001 and 2002. In the same period the export levy has been paid but apparently the funds have been diverted or misappropriated and not applied to monitoring program. The deficiency is therefore not lack of capacity or personnel but a failure to apply the available funds.

We have engaged in extensive correspondence with both the administrative and technical levels of the management authority (attached copies) but despite numerous communications, no surveys result and the situation has reached a crisis point. A consideration of crocodylian population dynamics, the known rate of extraction of adult crocodiles and eggs for commercial trade and reports of serious habitat degradation in the nesting areas all suggest that continued extraction of wild crocodiles in the absence of current monitoring data is in violation of Article IV para 2 a and 3 of the Convention.

We recommend that this situation be given immediate consideration by the Animals Committee for review and we can assist the committee by providing most of the necessary data to evaluate the situation. The most urgent priority is to survey the population at the next appropriate season (January-March 2003) to ensure that no detriment to the wild population is being experienced and this should be a condition of

continued harvest and export. We propose as an interim measure to achieve this goal that funds be sought to conduct the surveys from the private sector engaged in production, export and trade of PNG crocodiles. We recommend that these and the skin levy funds must be secured in a separate account while the diversion of the funds from their proper purpose can be investigated and prevented. We have been advised by commercial interests that they would provide such funds if they could be properly secured and applied.

We hope that by a prompt application of the review process and application of some quite easily met secondary recommendations regarding surveys, that any detrimental harvest of crocodiles in PNG can be avoided and the program put back onto its previously stable basis.

Sincerely yours,

Professor Harry Messel
Chairman, CSG; cc.: TRAFFIC International,
IUCN Trade Program, CITES Secretariat

In response, the CITES Animals Committee Chairman intervened via the regional representative for the South Pacific to formally inquire of PNG about the situation. Additional discussions were held in Chile during the CITES COP and at the time of writing indications from PNG are that the government is being responsive and will be developing action along the recommended lines.

The group broke for lunch at 12.30 and reconvened at 2:00 pm.

A serious request to Mr. Terry Steve Irwin, the crocodile hunter, to join in partnership with CSG for a long term global crocodile conservation initiative received an amusingly unresponsive reply--a misspelled letter and a signed photo of Mr. Irwin. A proposal to respond with a signed photo of the Chairman's arse was suggested but not approved. No one was prepared to take the photos!

REPORT FROM AFRICA. Vice Chairman Rich Fergusson provided a detailed report for the Africa region.

South Africa: There has been little activity on wild crocs but research/impact assessment on two dams has been conducted. Dr A. Leslie is also aiming to restimulate research in St Lucia population studies, TSD and global warming, endocrine disruptors and population genetics.

Botswana: Dr. A. Leslie's research is also extending into an widespread program in the Okovango on crocodile ecology.

Mozambique: Swannie Swanepoel's proposed project on human conflict and populations/utilization is still pending approval by the Mozambique authorities. There are continuing reports of increasing human/crocodile conflict on the Zambezi River.

Zimbabwe: CFAZ has instituted a number of additional surveys of the wild population, mostly tied to the egg collection activities. The wild populations appear stable but there

are concerns about declining average clutch sizes, which may reflect trophy hunting or changes in the productivity of Lake Kariba. There has been considerable disruption of the ranching/farming system related to the land seizures, and there have been severe shortages of food for crocodiles, although this has mostly affected the smaller producers.

Zambia: Zambia Wildlife Authority have reported human/crocodile conflict problems in west and southern Zambia, and there have been calls for the wildlife authorities to reduce the wild crocodile population.

Malawi: Again there are continued reports of increasing conflict between humans and crocodiles in southern Malawi, but very little communication between the CSG and the local wildlife authority. Malawi continues to export the skins of 200 nuisance animals/year

Tanzania: After obtaining an Appendix II downlisting at COP 11 (2000), wild harvesting has now taken place for 3 years. One interim report for year 2000 was received and an update on the success of the harvest program to 2002 is expected shortly. There have been some allegations of inefficient harvesting and regulatory problems, but exports match the quotas, albeit somewhat delayed. No population surveys have apparently been done since downlisting and it is understood that an increased quota of wild skin exports has been requested for future years. There has been no known activity from farms/ranches.

Democratic Republic of Congo: There has been a proposal to farm crocodiles in central DRC, primarily for the meat market. This may have potential for offsetting the bushmeat trade in wild crocodilians. The feasibility of the proposal will be assessed in Nov/Dec. This is a potentially important development because all 3 species of African crocodiles occur in DRC, there has been very little information about them from this area in recent years, and the development of a farm can be expected to promote some research.

Uganda: One report recently received from the wildlife authority emphasizes human conflict and the threat it creates to the wild population.

Kenya: There are no recent data on the status of any Kenyan crocodile populations, but there are many reports of human/crocodile conflict. The wildlife authority commissioned a study on this, held a workshop to discuss results, and has examined policy changes that may be needed to better manage the situation.

Exports of skins from the farms are slowly increasing. It is understood that a number of new licenses for crocodile ranching have been issued by the management authority.

Ethiopia: Despite requests, no new information on wild crocodile populations has been obtained. The one ranch has recently held a large sale to destock and is attempting to modernize and improve.

Egypt: No information on wild populations. One request from Egypt for information on ranching, but no contact since.

Cote d'Ivoire & Liberia: Ekki Waitkuwait has recently started gathering information on all 3 species of African crocodile here, but this has been interrupted by the current political conflict in Ivory Coast. There are isolated populations of each species, although these have been reduced by hunting and fishing pressures.

Nigeria & Niger: Efforts have been started to establish contacts between the CSG and each of these countries, with the aim of assessing the status of wild crocodile populations in both countries.

Deputy Vice Chair Olivier Behra submitted a written prospectus for additional action in Francophone Africa, centered on cooperative actions with ECOFAC (Conservation and Sustainable use of Forestry Ecosystems of Central Africa program) in Gabon and with ECOPAS (a similar program for sub-saharan Africa) in Niger, Burkina Faso, and Benin. Two new French speaking CSG members from the region have been proposed. In Mauritania a travel agency is developing crocodile-based ecotourism in conjunction with M. Luc Fougereole of the Fermes aux Crocodiles. In Ghana a student is working on the distribution of crocodiles in the country, and will produce a distribution map.

HUMAN/CROCODILE CONFLICT PROBLEMS.

Richard Fergusson referred to the spreading concerns on this issue all over the world and the need for an accelerated concrete response by CSG. Without this, politically motivated calls for the complete elimination of crocodiles in several African countries, and quite possibly elsewhere, could not be countered. Richard proposed to form a working group or task force on the topic, and to use the proposed session at the 16th Meeting to initiate the task force (see pp. 16-20). The possibility of cross-linking with other SSC groups where animal-people conflict occurs (e.g., elephants, cats, canids) was noted, and the EO will coordinate with Richard on this issue.

The human conflict issue in Africa was seen to be related to wider concerns about the way in which management goals and programs in 2002 have increasingly diverged from the earlier models, and the possible need to undertake a new review of crocodile management throughout southern Africa. For example, the continued operation of captive breeding in South Africa, under a ranching approval, was peculiar. Programs in many other countries, including Tanzania and Zimbabwe were thought to have drifted from their original goals, such that the conservation value may be compromised. The CITES significant trade process in Appendix II species (Res, Conf 8.9) may provide a mechanism for examining this under the umbrella of CITES. Richard and Jon Hutton undertook to review the situation and draft a proposal for a review of African programs, which could be submitted to CITES and perhaps other agencies.

Crocs and the Church: Lehr Brisbin summarized his activities over the last two years in regard to stimulating interest by the Presbyterian Church's African missionary program in crocodile management and conservation. In Sudan, the church contact is with Christian rebels in the south and they had expressed interest in sustainable crocodile exploitation as a means for advancing community welfare. In Nigeria, church contacts were developing through Nigerian academics in USA and some senior politicians to investigate the potential of croc ranching to meet demands for wild bushmeat. Dr. Doug Welch, senior administrator for Presbyterian Environmental funds was attending the CSG meeting on a factfinding mission. Discussion took place on both the potentially powerful influence of the church in Africa (and elsewhere) on human behavior with regard to wildlife and its use, and to linking wildlife use with community and human welfare. Bris was encouraged to continue this initiative and Welch was welcomed and offered full cooperation by the CSG Chairman.

REPORT FROM LATIN AMERICA. The Regional Vice Chair Alejandro Larrierra introduced Luciano Verdade, who reported on a survey he had conducted on crocodylian research and management programs in Latin America. He identified programs in 14 countries, involving over 60 individuals, with 60% of activity in three countries: Argentina, Venezuela and Brazil. Most Latin American countries had some activity, and a wide variety of research foci were apparent: population ecology, physiology, practical husbandry issues, etc.

Alejandro summarized the results of a recent *Caiman yacare* workshop held in Gainesville, 3 - 5 Oct., immediately prior to the 16th Working Meeting of the CSG (see report below, pp. 22-23). The concrete output was a request by *C. yacare* range states that an ad-hoc working group be formed, under the joint sponsorship of the CSG and Traffic - Sur America, where the range state representatives could meet and harmonize their regulations and research. After brief discussion the proposal was approved by the Chairman and cleared for activation.

The *C. latirostris* ranching program in Santa Fe, Argentina, continues to develop with its first production of commercial skins expected in 2002 (1,500 skins), followed by 3,500 skins in 2003 and continued increases over the next 3 years to a production target of 10,000 skins per year. The emphasis of the program continues to be landholder incentives for wetland habitat preservation.

A workshop on *Crocodylus intermedius* conservation was held in Venezuela in December 2001, with funding support from JLIA and Italhide. The final bilingual (English-Spanish) report of that workshop was presented by Alvaro Velasco and should serve as a guide to Orinoco crocodile conservation for the next several years.

Management of black caiman in Brazil: In 2000 a workshop was convened in Brazil to consider harvest potential and current uses of *Melanosuchus* within Brazil. It is estimated that illegal, although apparently sustainable use, may be in the order of 5,000 - 10,000 specimens per year for the largely domestic salted meat trade. Brazil has a national ban on wildlife use, but one strategy considered was for Brazil to seek a downlisting of its population to Appendix II of CITES, as a precursor to changing Brazilian regulations. Ronis da Silveira had subsequently requested an experimental harvest of 30 individuals, but Brazilian authorities refused permission because the previous requirement to seek an Appendix II listing had not been advanced. There is a potential difficulty in requiring a CITES downlisting as a prerequisite for domestic use and trade, when the proposed harvest for national rather than international trade), although other nations have used CITES as a tool for strengthening domestic issues in the past. After discussion of the political complexities, Alejandro and Luciano drafted a note to Ronis, clarifying CSG.s position that management of Brazil.s internal harvest and domestic trade is fundamentally a domestic legislative issue and should not be dependent on CITES.

CROCODILE TRADE STUDY. Jon Hutton reviewed the history and activities of the CSG Trade Task Force, that led to the Global Trade study funded by industry groups in

the USA. The main objective of the study was to identify activities that would improve the conservation benefits derived from commercial trade, including structure and distribution of economic benefits through the trade chain.

The first draft report of the Global Trade study was released in October 2001 and received mixed reviews. Some reviewers were very complimentary about the scope and content of the report but others were very critical of some factual aspects and of the general presentation. After spirited discussion and the submission of detailed critiques, the report was revised and the draft final version distributed for review. Detailed review comments submitted by Mr. C.H. Koh on behalf of the CSG Trade section were presented at the meeting and referred to Jon Hutton for consideration. The report will be presented for discussion at the 16th Working Meeting.

The extent to which the Global Trade study can be continued is dependent on funding. Some potential sources of support were identified. A major result of the study was that the growth of production from captive breeding, with its weak links to in-situ conservation, was far in excess of growth in production from ranching or wild harvest, that are directly linked to in-situ conservation. Concern was also expressed that funding from limited sources may bias the direction and results of the research, but this was easily refuted by the key researcher, Dr. James MacGregor. Further discussion was postponed to the trade workshop at the 16th Working Meeting of the CSG.

CITES ACTIONS. No proposals to amend the appendices of CITES with regard to crocodylian species were being considered at the 12th COP, to be held in Santiago, Chile (3-15 November 2002). However, several proposals were of direct interest to the CSG and CSG representatives attending the COP were urged to assist parties with their consideration of these issues.

A Venezuelan proposal to exempt crocodile personal effects from CITES controls was strongly supported by the CSG.

Some concerns over fine details of the proposal had been raised by some Parties, which would need to be resolved by the Parties in Chile. The CSG's role was one of supporting the resolution. [The proposal was subsequently presented, modified and expanded from crocodylians alone, and unanimously adopted at COP12].

A proposal to facilitate entry and re-export of trade samples, using the Customs carnet system, was reviewed by the CSG before being presented to CITES by Italy, on behalf of the EC. The CSG strongly supported the proposal. [The proposal was subsequently modified and adopted by at COP12].

A proposal to facilitate rapid permitting of time-sensitive scientific samples, such as blood and tissue for DNA analysis, had been developed over several CITES meeting and was supported by the CSG. The proposal was opposed by some countries concerned about control of trade in genetic material of commercial value [the proposal was modified and adopted at COP12 despite objections by 16 Parties.]

A request from CITES Secretariat for CSG to conduct a review and evaluation of CITES ranching programs for crocodylians had been received, but was later withdrawn. A further request was received for the CSG to report on the approaches taken to establishing non-detrimental trade with crocodylians, a requirement for trade in Appendix II species. It was decided to pursue the issue directly with the Secretariat in Chile.

REPORT FROM NORTH AMERICA. Deputy Vice Chair Allan Woodward introduced representatives from Mexico, who reported on activities with *C. moreletii*. Luis Sigler and Manuel Muniz reported that the Mexican proposal to downlist *C. moreletii* to CITES App. II at COP11 in Nairobi was withdrawn on CSG advice, following the CSG meeting in Cuba in 2000. Since then extensive additional survey information had been gathered by Mexican researchers, with the goal to downlist *moreletii* in both CITES and US Endangered Species Act. Binational discussions between Mexico and the US Fish and Wildlife Service had been held about this issue. The new results, which are being prepared for publication, confirm that in 2000-2002, *C. moreletii* were present at all 43 locations that they had previously been reported from in Mexico. Average densities from standard survey techniques ranged from 4-7 individuals/km, indicating widespread recovery and numerous robust populations throughout the species range. Mexico's researchers and government agencies were well coordinated through a national crocodile management council. An annual public relations program to promote appreciation of crocodiles was proposed for Mexico - National Crocodile Day. It is to be held on 23 August, which commemorates the birth date of Mexican crocodylian expert Miguel Alvarez del Toro. Professor Messel congratulated the Mexican delegation on their efforts. In recognition of the increasing prominence and activity of Mexico in crocodylian conservation, management and research, a proposal was made and accepted to include a Mexican representative on the Steering Committee.

NEXT MEETING OF THE CSG (2004). Tentative inquiries for holding the next CSG meeting were received from Nepal (Tirtha Maskey and Jack Cox) and Australia (Grahame Webb). After discussion about internal security, costs, facilities and current crocodylian conservation priorities, the Chairman instructed the Executive Officer to invite both groups to submit full invitations, detailing funding, facilities and other details, for consideration by the Steering Committee early in 2003. Subsequently a formal invitation and pledge of funding was received from the Northern Territory government and has been accepted by the CSG Chairman.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 5:30 pm.

Perran Ross, *Executive Officer and rapporteur*