

**Crocodile Specialist Group Steering Committee Meeting
Universidad Nacional del Litoral, Santa Fe, Argentina
(6 May 2018)**

Future Leaders Working Group

The mission of the FLWG is to ensure intergenerational transfer of CSG leadership skills between veteran and aspiring CSG leadership members, so that the CSG retains the flexibility it has applied to the conservation and management of crocodylians globally. Towards this end, the FLWG has been incredibly active starting with its inaugural leadership workshop at the 24th CSG Working Meeting, continuing with 3 different CITES events in 2016 and 2017, as well as several internal CSG functions.

Report of Activities during 24th CSG Working Meeting (18-19, 23 May 2016)

The Future Leaders Working Group (FLWG) of the CSG made its debut at the 2016 Working Meeting in Skukuza, South Africa. To best launch this initiative we held two main events. Prior to the working meeting, we held a two-day (18-19 May) leadership workshop that brought together 9 FLWG members with 9 senior CSG leaders to discuss the past, present and future of the CSG. We additionally held a side-event on the evening of 23 May open to all FLWG members, and any individual interested in participating in the FLWG. Here we summarize these events and discussions that took place on future directions of the FLWG.

The FLWG Leadership Workshop identified the need to understand the mechanics of the group and the past, present, and future of its operational goals to begin the process of taking leadership roles over time. Over the course of the workshop we broke out into small discussion groups to discuss the strengths of the CSG, the weaknesses of the CSG, and how to best implement FLWG. For the latter, two principal ideas were floated to ensure the transference of the capacity and biopolitical acumen. First, the FLWG would be used, where appropriate, to farm out tasks such as letter writing, communications, reporting, missions, etc., from the Executive Committee. This would serve dual purpose of reducing the Executive workload. Second, was the need to ensure aspiring leader presence at CITES Conferences of Parties, Animal Committee meetings, and Steering Committee meetings, as well as IUCN events like the World Conservation Congress that happens every 4 years. FLWG has successfully implemented both of these objectives over the past two years.

The core FLWG group had a joint meeting with its full membership and other interested parties as a side event during the Skukuza meeting. The principal points discussed included: 1) representation and funding allowing FLWG members to attend IUCN or CITES meetings, 2) continual mentorship and the need for future leaders to reach out to distinguished members and vice versa, 3) the search for continuous funding sources, and 4) encourage or emphasize work in non-commercial species among all CSG members. The FLWG is in the process of evaluating how to expand our membership and ensure that we successfully reach our goals for all levels of group membership. And, in addition, we are strategizing how to tackle the issue of FLWG participation for non-CSG members.

Report of FLWG Activities within CSG

Over the course of 2016 to 2018, FLWG was able to work with the Executive Committee to evaluate several potential issues.

- Several FLWG core members have moved into leadership positions within CSG, including on the Steering Committee. Notably, FLWG Chair Matt Shirley is also Chair for West and Central Africa. Core Member Pablo Siroski is now a Regional Chair for Latin America and the Caribbean, and FLWG Vice Chair Marisa Tellez and Core Members Sergio Balaguera-Reina and Laura Porrás Murillo are all Regional Vice Chairs. Core Members Matthew Brien and Rainier Manalo are Vice Chairs for Australia and Oceania and East and Southeast Asia, respectively. FLWG Core Member Sally Isberg is now co-Red List Authority.
- We evaluated the potential for CSG to adopt and support a crocodylian Wildlife Awareness Day - World Croc(odile) Day. The FLWG membership was in full support of the idea, and proposed evaluating existing proposals and initiatives to see how this could be best implemented. We worked as an intermediary between two interested groups and the Tomistoma Task Force to evaluate the potential for collaboration to expand World Tomistoma Day into a unified World Crocodile Day. A report was made to the CSG Chair.
- Several FLWG members have been actively facilitating updated Red List assessments for crocodylian species, including Sally Isberg, Matt Brien, Robbie McLeod, Subir Chowfin, Sergio Balaguera-Reina and Matthew Shirley.

- Marisa Tellez has taken leadership over organization of the Central American and Caribbean regional working meeting.
- Several FLWG members traveled to China to both attend the 8th World Congress of Herpetology (Hangzhou, China, 15-20 August 2016) and participate in review of the Chinese alligator conservation program, including visits to all captive-breeding facilities and reintroduction sites in Anhui Province. FLWG members Matthew Shirley, Marisa Tellez, Pablo Siroski and Alex Meurer accompanied senior members Charlie Manolis, Mark Merchant and Paolo Martelli during the review, and Hank Jenkins joined the group at the WCH. A report of the visit was provided (see CSG website).
- We were asked to assist in the evaluation of the SRAS, the results of which will be discussed during the Steering Committee meeting in Santa Fe (and an updated report will be provided).

Report of FLWG Activities Building Biopolitical Acumen

Over the course of 2016 to 2018, FLWG members were able to participate in several CITES events.

- A group of 5 FLWG members participated in CITES CoP17 (Johannesburg, September 2016), including Matthew Shirley, Sally Isberg and Sergio Balaguera-Reina on the IUCN delegation, and Rainier Manalo and Adrian Sugiarto on the Philippine and Indonesian Party delegations, respectively. Participation in this event allowed us to better see first-hand how CITES operates, the daily routine of the CoP itself, and the interaction between the Parties and observer organizations like IUCN. Matthew Shirley gave interventions on behalf of IUCN in support of crocodile proposals on the floor, and Sally Isberg drafted an opinion piece for publication in the SSC blog on her perspective as a newcomer to CITES. We had the opportunity to present the FLWG to incoming SSC Chair Jon Paul Rodriguez, and discuss our initiative with many SSC chairs. Our FLWG delegation was mentored by distinguished CSG members Grahame Webb, Charlie Manolis, Tom Dacey, Christine Lippai, and Hank Jenkins, among others.
- Matthew Shirley represented CSG on the IUCN delegation to Animals Committee (AC29, Geneva, July 2017) and Steering Committee (SC69, Geneva, November 2017). Following SC69, Matt is representing the IUCN in the inter-sessional working group on Captive-bred and Ranched Specimens.

On-going and Future Work of the FLWG

- Becoming more present in social media;
- Developing and FLWG page on the CSG website; and,
- Brainstorming CSGs bigger commitment as a group to the non-commercially exploited species and how we can play a bigger role in assuring sustainability of initiatives, interest, and funding.

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