

## STEERING COMMITTEE

CROCODILE SPECIALIST GROUP STEERING  
COMMITTEE MEETING 27 NOVEMBER 1990  
PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Present: H. Messel, N. Ishii, R. Luxmoore, K. van Jaarsveldt, B. Vernon, G. Webb, P. Ross; J. Berney (CITES observer); S. Edwards (IUCN Observer); J. Bache, J. Cox, J. Genolagani, J. Hannon, R. Jenkins, V. Onions, Widodo Ramono (CSG members); H. Butler, P. Munton, M. Rabb (observers).

Professor Messel opened the meeting at 09.05 AM and recognized Mr. N. Ishii as the delegate of absent Vice Chairman for trade, Mr. T. Yamanaka. Prof. Messel noted that it was not unusual for the Steering Committee to convene without all its members.

**Matters arising from previous meetings.**  
Cooperation with FAO. Dr. Gil Child of FAO responded to our earlier letter saying he is aware of and sympathetic to the need for improved cooperation with CSG but that FAO is constrained by its own operating procedures and the instructions of its member countries and cannot always consult with CSG. It was hoped

that FAO would recognize the value of consulting with the CSG.

Relationship with CITES Secretariat. Advisory committees on *Caiman*, Nile Crocodiles and *C. porosus* were proposed at the previous Steering Committee meeting. A letter constituting these advisory committees would be sent by Dr. O. Menghi to the CSG Chairman by 15 December 1990. J. Berney noted that the *Caiman* committee was the most urgently needed. He further noted that the occasional lack of consultation between CSG and CITES was the responsibility of both parties, for example, CITES was not advised of a recent initiative between G. Hemley of TRAFFIC USA and Dr. J. Hutton for technical assistance in Africa. There was agreement that both CITES and CSG should continue to strive for full notification and coordination of each other's activities with crocodiles.

11th Working Meeting of the CSG. P. Ross reported that an exchange of letters, faxes and telephone calls had failed to elicit confirmation that the Proexpo Bank in Colombia would support the next Working Meeting. Enquiries had been initiated on behalf of the CSG by member R. Haller in Kenya to investigate the possibility of holding the meeting in East Africa. Mr. Haller had reported that he might solicit an invitation from the Kenyan Government, financial support was thought to be unlikely. Kevin van Jaarsveldt offered on behalf of the Crocodile Farmers Association of Zimbabwe to host the meeting at Victoria Falls. After discussion it was decided to decline the Colombian invitation and to inform Mr. Haller that the CSG would plan a meeting for late July or August 1992 in Zimbabwe. The Chairman expressed thanks to Mr. Haller for making enquiries about the meeting in Kenya on our behalf.

Five working days of meetings with Steering Committee meetings before and after were recommended. The format of presentations would be tightened up along the lines described in minutes of the last meeting and a balance maintained between reports on science, trade and status. Prof. Messel drew the Group's attention to the new terms of reference of all SSC specialist groups requiring them to report regularly on the status of species. It was proposed that each regional Vice Chairman

would be responsible for coordinating the status reports from their region.

Workshop on Caiman. Prof. Messel reported that he had successfully solicited an offer of support from the Japanese Leather Industries Association for a workshop on *Caiman* in South America. Initially \$80,000 had been offered by sources in Japan and Singapore although there is now some uncertainty whether this funding will be available. A planning meeting was held in Sydney, Australia, on 8 November 1990 between Dr. O. Menghi, Ginette Hemley, Juan Villalba and Prof. Messel. A general agreement on the venue, timing and format of the meeting had been obtained focussing on bringing together the senior government and management authority figures from all the South and Central American countries concerned. A small scientific advisory contingent and representatives of trading and consumer nations would also participate. It is proposed to hold the workshop in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, sometime in mid-1991. The CITES Secretariat will set up the meeting, and exact details of dates and other arrangements will be forthcoming once the funding is confirmed. A draft list of participants was reviewed and suggestions made that representatives from trade in Spain and regional TRAFFIC offices should be included.

Resolutions approved at the last CSG Meeting. Dr. Robert (Hank) Jenkins asked whether the resolutions on crocodilian trade and marking issues (CSG NEWSLETTER vol. 9, April - June 1990 pp. 11-12) had been presented at the SSC meeting and was informed that publication of the resolutions in the CSG NEWSLETTER constituted the public presentation of them. Hank reported that the resolutions had been considered by the Animals Committee of CITES at their recent meeting in Darwin. The Animals Committee had combined the two resolutions, endorsed them in principle, and passed them on to the CITES Secretariat for further consideration and eventual presentation at the next meeting of the Parties in 1992. A clause proposing the extension of marking requirements to all products manufactured from crocodilian skins had been included in draft resolution prepared by the USA but was deleted and referred to a working group. Prof. Messel expressed satisfaction on behalf of the CSG Steering Committee that the resolutions generated by

CSG were in fact working their way through the system and would eventually have some beneficial influence on CITES trade issues.

**SSC Steering Committee.** Prof. Messel reported that the SSC Steering Committee had finalized the procedures, structure and terms of reference for SSC Specialist Groups for the coming 1991-93 triennium. The structure approved was fundamentally that described in CSG NEWSLETTER 1990 April-June and July-September issues. Members of Specialist Groups will receive a member's guide with their letter of appointment that will fully describe these new procedures.

IUCN's new initiative on Sustainable Use of Wildlife was described and discussed. Initially great concern had been expressed by many Specialist Group members that this new structure in IUCN would divert support away from Specialist Groups and cut them out of the consultation on issues and projects. Responding to these concerns the SSC Steering Committee had reviewed the initiative and proposed a structure that would allay these concerns. Prof. Messel reported that a Task Force would be formed within SSC with strong representation and participation of SSC Specialist Group chairmen to ensure that the new initiative would enhance and support Specialist Group activities rather than diminish them.

Dr. Stephen Edwards agreed with Prof. Messel's description and made a brief statement describing his perception of the work of the Task Force. The underlying driving force for the initiative was the urgent need to develop sustainable use programs for conservation in poorer countries. The CSG was a pioneer in this development but there was also a strong counter pressure from some elements of the conservation community to prevent sustainable use programs in spite of the IUCN commitment to this policy. Dr. Edwards stressed that the sustainable use issue needed participation of elements in IUCN in addition to the biological expertise of the Specialist Groups and that the new Task Force was designed to coordinate and support integrated sustainable wildlife use projects. Dr. Edwards expressed his expectation that Task Force on Sustainable Use would become an instrument to assist SSC and its Specialist Groups by providing access to international funding and cited as an example the

recent development of a program in Nicaragua with funding from NORAD (that involves crocodile use but about which CSG had not been consulted). In discussion the CSG members expressed the conviction that if the new initiative recognized and utilized the expertise of the Specialist Groups, that mutually beneficial activities in conservation could be generated.

**Triennial Report.** Prof. Messel reported that a Triennial Report for 1988-90 had been prepared and submitted to SSC and briefly summarized at the SSC meeting on 25 November 1990. The report will appear in the SSC newsletter SPECIES.

**Finances:** The CSG Executive Officer presented a report on the financial activities and status of the group since the last meeting.

Financial management of the 10th Working Meeting of the CSG in April was done for the CSG by the American Alligator Farmers Association, co-sponsors of the meeting. Accounts of the Meeting were presented showing revenues of \$37,232 and expenses of \$28,646.05 resulting in a net revenue of \$8,929 that had been placed into the CSG general accounts. This revenue would support other activities associated with the meeting, such as producing the PROCEEDINGS. In response to a question about an expense reimbursement of \$26,469.81 to F. Wayne King, it was explained that Prof. King had paid many of the major expenses for the meeting from his personal funds and credit card and was therefore reimbursed these expenses. A detailed account of all transactions, receipts and checks was attached to the accounts.

In the CSG's general account, held with the University of Florida Foundation, a balance of \$14,877.94 was reported at the last Steering Committee meeting. This balance reflected expenses incurred prior to the 10th Meeting that were reimbursed to our account by the American Alligator Farmers Association bringing the balance to \$22,593.96 at 22 April. Between then and 15 November, income of \$36,369 and expenses of \$47,788.87 were reported leaving a current balance at 15 November 1990 of \$11,174.09. Again a detailed record of transactions was presented for scrutiny.

The Chairman thanked the Executive Officer and Dr. King for a clear and complete accounting and emphasized that the CSG finances must be transparently clear and correct.

However, he expressed great concern that funds were spent faster than they were being generated. The new SSC guidelines will require Specialist Groups to make quarterly statements of income and expense to SSC and provides for an annual audit of funds held.

The Executive Officer presented a planning budget for expenses in the period 1 July 1990 to 30 June 1991 as requested at the last meeting. Total expenses for the CSG in this period were estimated to be \$64,660 with major items being salary for the executive officer (54%), publications (28%), Action Plan and other projects (13%), and travel (6%). These estimates were presented for planning and fundraising purposes and were based on the assumption that activities and costs would be more or less as presently experienced. This estimate did not include amounts for several expenses such as mail, telephone and office costs that the Group receives gratis from several supporting institutions.

This is the first time the CSG has been able to estimate what its operations actually cost but it is a serious underestimate of the real costs of operation. Members of the Steering Committee with commercial experience suggested that a figure in the region of \$100,000 per year was more realistic to plan for and that this was a surprisingly low amount considering the numerous and diverse activities undertaken.

The need for fundraising based on the planning budget was discussed at length. An appeal to current patrons accompanied by the Triennial Report and THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 10TH WORKING MEETING had been sent out but the total contributions from current Patrons is only about \$50,000 per year. Many mechanisms by which the CSG could raise operating funds were discussed. It is clear that most funds will come from commercial sources and it was desirable to have donations channelled through the various associations of commercial interests in crocodiles to avoid any taint of special influence of individuals. The various associations of farmers, traders, tanners and manufacturers were also in the best position to appreciate and publicize the very real benefits that they obtain from the CSG's operations in the form of conservation of the wild resource on which they rely, technical assistance, and stabilization of legal trade. Mechanisms to raise and disburse funds from the associations to the CSG were discussed including direct donations, levies on

members, 'taxes' on skins produced or traded, selling skin tags and licensing product logos. Considerable problems were envisaged with endorsement from CSG to particular nations or producers as the IUCN does not allow endorsement that implies IUCN support. No clear conclusion was reached except that a variety of methods could be considered and adapted to the needs of each association and that the initiative to develop support for CSG lay with the associations.

CSG needs to enhance its presentation to potential donors to adequately inform them about the professionalism, activity, stability and effectiveness of the Group. The development of a certificate acknowledging support from Patrons was discussed and it was agreed that certificates would express that the donor concerned supported the aims, conservation philosophy and activities of the CSG, rather than the CSG expressing any endorsement of programs, institutions or companies. Kevin van Jaarsveldt, Brian Vernon, Noboru Ishii and John Bache were asked to draft a statement for consideration by the Chairman.

After the meeting, the following draft wording for CSG support of national management policies was placed before the Chairman for consideration:

Upon written representation by the appropriate official management authorities, the CSG will consider supporting the authorization by the authority for the issue of tags incorporating a CSG logo with wording approved by the CSG.

#### **Publications:**

Crocodile Action Plan. The Action Plan draft has been completed by John Thorbjarnarson incorporating reviews and comments received at the 10th Working Meeting. The draft has been reviewed internally and is now in its 'nearly final' form. The preparation of maps and assembly of photographs is underway and discussions with SSC on the process for producing and printing it have been held. The CSG Chairman said that he would now take the draft for a final review and then pass it to SSC for approval and production.

Proceedings of the 10th Working Meeting, Gainesville 1990. The PROCEEDINGS are printed

and sample copies were presented. Sale of the PROCEEDINGS at \$25.00 for the 2 volume set (includes postage) will enable CSG to recoup about 85% of the costs incurred in production. Mary Rabb of the Chicago Zoo kindly offered to advertise the PROCEEDINGS through her library distribution network and it was suggested that a notice should also be put in SPECIES, the SSC newsletter.

Model Crocodile Management Plan. A progress report from Dennis David was presented. Funding is being sought to assist further development of the Model Program document and progress on the draft is continuing.

Directory of Crocodile Farmers. Richard Luxmoore reported that he has now assembled the data on active crocodile farms worldwide although there were some remaining gaps including Louisiana, Mexico and Malaysia from which he had still received no response. He expressed concern that it was not always possible for him to verify the accuracy and status of each farm and cited as an example that his information on the farms in Singapore was different from the CITES registration information. In response Jaques Berney discussed his recent visit to Singapore and suggested there was substantial agreement between reported and actual farm status and that Singapore was undergoing a period of 're-adjustment' to bring its farms into compliance with CITES following the withdrawal of their reservation on *C. porosus*. Prof. Messel expressed the view that Singapore had embarked on a new era of active cooperation and his confidence that the situation there would continue to improve. In response to Richard's concerns about verification it was suggested that he indicate in the text which information was verified.

Farming Manual. Jon Hutton had reported to the Chairman that the manual was complete except for one chapter that Mark Ferguson was writing and this was expected imminently. The manual would then go to press and distribution.

Spanish Language Manual. No change in status of this project was reported.

CITES. Jaques Berney reported on current events at CITES. No replacement for the

outgoing Secretary General, Eugene LaPointe, has been appointed yet. No timetable for the resolution of this issue can be estimated but in the meantime the Secretariat will continue to work closely with the CSG and no changes in CITES policy are expected in this interim period. Other staff changes within the Secretariat are being contemplated, particularly in the area of staffing for special projects, that are of special interest to the CSG.

Voluntary declaration of vested interests. The Chairman of the CSG presented his proposal that members of the Steering Committee might wish to voluntarily inform him, confidentially, of commercial activities they have pertaining to crocodiles. The intent of this suggestion was that it would allow the Chairman to protect the CSG, and individuals within it, from accusations of bias. From time to time concern was raised that individuals commenting or advising in the CSG have special interests and their advice was not without prejudice. Voluntary, confidential disclosure of any such interests would assist the Chairman to allay such concerns and enhance the credibility of the CSG.

Activities and regional reports. Written reports had been received from Vice Chairmen for Africa, South America, North America, Europe and Commercial Trade. These were briefly reviewed and are summarized here.

Africa. [From a written report submitted by Dr. Jon Hutton, Vice Chairman for Africa.] Jon visited Guyana to advise on caiman management for CITES, and went to the Paris Leather Fair with Brian Vernon and Kevin van Jaarsveldt. Brian Vernon and Ginette Hemley made visits to Zimbabwe and WWF-USA has made a small grant to allow Dr. Hutton to offer advice to the east and central African countries included in his previous CITES consultancy.

The efficiency of the Africa office has been materially improved by the secretarial assistance donated two days a week by the Zimbabwe Crocodile Farmers Association. Reports from countries in the region follow:

Ethiopia has a CITES quota to export 2500 *C. niloticus* hatchlings. The farm at Arba Minch handles 2000-3000 animals from any cohort, but the wild population is supporting additional hatchling harvests for export. The hatchlings

were put up for tender in September and initially a London based company sought them for removal to Zimbabwe. However, this deal seems to have fallen through and at present the hatchlings are destined for Thailand. Concern has been expressed by NGO's due to the problems of movement of exotic species. [Recent correspondence indicates that in response to this concern and the recent CSG resolution on exotic species (see below), this transfer of exotic species may not proceed.-- *Eds*]. It is becoming unlikely that Ethiopia will be successful with a ranching proposal at the next CITES meeting if hatchling exports are included.

Somalia was visited by Dr. B.C. Choudhury on behalf of FAO to advise on management of Nile crocodiles for the Somali quota of 5500 skins.

Kenya. The Vice Chairman visited Dr. R. Leakey, Director of Wildlife Management, who requested CSG help with a workshop to be arranged in the future. There is considerable interest in farming in Kenya but most proponents have little idea of the amount (or even type) of food crocodiles require. Dr. Chris Foggin from Zimbabwe recently visited Mambo Village farm in Mombasa to assist with a severe veterinary problem there.

Uganda. The new National Geographic Society documentary film "Here be Dragons" by Marl Deeble and Vikki Stone has amazing footage of Nile crocs filmed at Kabalega (formerly Murchison Falls) National Park. The film makers have become keen 'crocos' and have collected census and other data in their film work on the Gumeti river in the Serengeti in Tanzania. The film has promoted great interest in croc ranching in Uganda. Uganda is not a CITES member but no doubt ranching will take place eventually. As an ardent promoter of conservation through sustainable use even I feel sad that this thriving wild population will be commercialized.

Sudan requested a special quota of 5000 at the last CITES meeting for use in 1990 to clear stocks of crocodile skins. Now the stocks have increased to 12,000 skins and Dr. Hutton expressed concern about what future requests will be forthcoming to deal with this large stockpile.

Tanzania has a new Director of Wildlife and is working steadily toward good crocodile management. The reduced quota of 1000 per year is allocated only to businesses that invest in ranching. Two Tanzanians have started ranching with the backing of a French tanner and Zimbabwean expertise. Ian Games is currently surveying wild populations supported by funds from Europe organized by Dietrich Jelden. A ranching proposal is expected well before the 330 day CITES deadline and things generally look good for crocs.

Zambia Things are not good in Zambia. There are consistent reports of wild skins being exported from a ranch and some ranches are suffering very high mortality, apparently from starvation. Recommendations of the CSG that a self regulating crocodile farmers association be formed are not yet, or likely to be, implemented. Complaints have been made to the CITES Secretariat by WWF-USA and the USA government may ask for a CITES mission to visit Zambia under the terms of resolution Conf. 6.22. A proposal could be presented for the return of Zambia's crocodiles to Appendix I, which would close the crocodile industry there.

Malawi submitted a successful ranching proposal to CITES in Lausanne but problems remain with the division of responsibility for crocodiles between the Department of Wildlife and the Department of Fisheries that results in conflicting and inefficient management. The ranch at Dwanga controlled by Wildlife continues to operate well but a new ranch run by Fisheries is reported to be doing poorly.

Mozambique has two well-established ranches on the islands of Bazaruto and Bengweula using eggs collected on the mainland, and two new ranches are likely to start this year. Interestingly Bazaruto, 40km offshore, has a unique population of crocs occupying a series of tiny freshwater lakes at the foothills of a dune system. It seems inevitable that this stock will be polluted by mainland farm stock and it would be valuable to collect tissue samples before this occurs.

Botswana. Responsibility for crocodile management is not clearly defined since Dr. Simbotwe returned to Zambia but the Botswana Government is reported to have prohibited the

export of live animals, most of which went to South Africa.

Zimbabwe adopted a policy of unlimited egg collection outside protected areas in 1987. Since then over 10,000 wild eggs have been collected each year by ranchers and an additional 15,000 eggs produced from captive breeding. The wild egg collection program is used to monitor the number of laying females, which appears to be constant or increasing slightly.

Increased tourism on Lake Kariba and the Zambesi River has resulted in increasing human-crocodile conflicts. Last year a canoeist lost an arm and an angler was killed. In general however, conflicts have decreased from 20 fatalities in 1986 to just 2 in 1989. This is largely due to an efficient problem animal control program that removes problem crocodiles to breeding enclosures.

South Africa has some of the most efficient crocodile farms in Africa but there is a problem with the fragmentation of the industry into different groups and Associations. Most farms are supported by captive breeding with stock obtained originally from Botswana, Zimbabwe or Mozambique. There is some scope for ranching in Natal and a proposal is being considered for the next CITES meeting. South Africa produces relatively few hides, relying on tourism and internal trade in live animals.

Mauritius has one well established farm based on stock obtained from Madagascar some years ago. The emphasis is on tourism but a modest number of skins should be produced soon.

Namibia had at least one crocodile farm but the stock has now been moved to South Africa.

Madagascar. Olivier Behra, deputy Vice Chairman for Africa, is still in Madagascar for FAO and is doing an excellent job of establishing a management and ranching system. Funding was eventually found to allow him to continue operations over the breeding season and help with egg collection and incubation.

Following this report the Steering Committee held discussions on the situation regarding exports of crocodiles from Zambia following concerns expressed by the Vice Chairman for Trade Monitoring, Ginette Hemley, in a letter to

H. Messel. Advisement to CITES of this issue had apparently gone astray, but after listening to the discussion Jaques Berney undertook to follow up at CITES. The possibility was expressed that if crocodile management in Zambia is really not adequate that those populations should be moved back to Appendix I at the next conference of the parties to CITES.

Kevin van Jaarsveldt drew attention to Jon Hutton's report that large numbers of small crocodiles were being exported from Mozambique using tags provided for a ranching quota in apparent violation of CITES. Jaques Berney reported that Mozambique was intending to export 1000 breeding crocodiles. Doubts were expressed that this harvest was sustainable or within the management plan and Kevin and Jaques undertook to make enquiries in Mozambique to clarify the issue. Direct enquiry to representatives from Mozambique indicated that no harvest or export of adults is planned but ranched hatchlings may be exported.

Europe. [From a written report by Dietrich Jelden.] The activities on which I concentrated in 1990 were training European CITES enforcement officials, seeking funding for field projects and coordinating the European Community (EC) policy on crocodylian conservation. I attended two CITES seminars on reptile skins in Paris and Milan at the request of the CITES Secretariat. Government officials from 14 European countries, including the USSR, attended the seminars and visits to major tanneries.

Dr. Jelden was able to respond to a request from Dr. Jon Hutton, CSG Vice Chairman for Africa and coordinated financing of a Nile crocodile survey in Tanzania conducted by Ian Games in early October. Funding of 10,000 DM was obtained from a French skin trading company and a similar amount from 'Internationaler Reptillederverband' in Offenbach, Germany.

On my initiative the EC member states discussed the great illegal traffic of *Caiman* skins through South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand and agreed on a temporary import ban into the EC of any reexported skins of *Caiman crocodylus* from those four countries. I have also forwarded for discussion in Brussels, the general marking of all crocodylian skins in trade to obtain EC support in time for the 8th meeting of CITES parties. All EC member states expressed their

support for the pending CITES resolution on marking at their last meeting in November.

Finally, I will distribute the members questionnaire to CSG correspondents in Europe by the year's end and have submitted the names of active members for nomination to the CSG for the next triennium.

South America. [From a written report submitted by Juan S. Villaba-Macias.] I was unable to attend the CSG Meeting in Perth but met with Prof. Messel in Sydney in November. In May 1990 a memorandum was sent to South American CSG members requesting nominations for membership for the next three years. Various difficulties, including a postal strike in Uruguay, have limited the response of the membership. A preliminary list of nominees has been proposed and additional nominations received in the future will be forwarded for consideration. Note: Individuals in the region who wish themselves or others to be considered for nomination should respond immediately, directly to the Vice Chairman for Latin America.

Argentina. An investigation of the status of *Caiman c. yacare* and *C. latirostris* has already begun with support from CITES and the National Directorate of Wildlife. Argentina recently seized and burnt 74,000 illegal *Caiman* skins from Paraguay. An investigation of *Caiman* ranching in the Pantanal of Brazil has been planned in conjunction with TRAFFIC in response to a recent Brazilian Government decree promoting *Caiman* ranching. As previously reported, countries in the region continue to respond to the concerns about exotic crocodilian introductions.

Uruguay. Skins of 750 *C. latirostris* from Brazil were seized.

Paraguay. Following the action of the Vice Chairman protesting irregularities in the trade, seizure and subsequent release of *Caiman* skins (CSG NEWSLETTER vol. 9 July-September 1990, p. 16) two army generals have been dismissed for involvement in illegal trade and the Minister of Agriculture has resigned.

Eastern Asia, Australasia and Oceania. Grahame Webb reported his efforts to provide a comprehensive list of nominees for CSG membership and expressed concern that some selection process was required to ensure the best

people were selected. He reported a series of contacts in recent months from entrepreneurs involved in crocodile farms in Asia. Consistent reports indicate that crocodiles were moving from Cambodia, Burma and Laos into farms in Thailand. Richard Luxmoore confirmed extensive small scale trade in crocodilians *C. porosus* and *C. siamensis* into Thailand where they were held in small holding operations for resale to larger farms. Grahame will be visiting Thailand to examine a crocodile farm there.

Western Australia. Dr. Webb reported that recent surveys confirmed that recovery rates of crocodile populations in this area were slow relative to tidal habitats in the N.T. The W.A. Government has established a crocodile farm at Wyndham and conducted surveys in the Cambridge Gulf area but no widespread survey of the Kimberly region had been done recently. He considered that high temperatures reduced nest success of *C. porosus*, and the very heavy impact of feral stock along watercourses was keeping reproductive rates of 'salties' low in some areas. The artificial impoundment of Lake Argyl was a huge new habitat for freshwater crocodiles with abundant food resources of catfish and a very large population of perhaps 30,000 *C. johnsoni* occurred there.

Northern Territory. The harvest of crocodiles last year had been successful but mortality on the farms was higher than desired. Good surveys of the wild populations showed total population recovery was continuing at predicted rates. No detrimental effect of the harvest is apparent. It has been extremely dry in N.T. this year and much of the Arafura swamp is completely dry causing some crocodiles to concentrate in areas with permanent water. It was also reported that the McKinlay river station, a significant habitat for freshwater crocodiles and site of some long term studies, had been returned to conservation status.

Queensland. No replacement for Laurie Taplin had been located. There were no urgent problems Dr. Webb was aware of, but it would be desirable to fill the position soon to ensure continuity of the survey programs there.

Hank Jenkins reported that the Australian Federal Government had approved Harry Freeman's Hartley Creek farm as a captive



breeding facility. Jaques Berney pointed out that as all Australian crocodiles were on Appendix II that this was no longer strictly necessary for CITES but Hank replied that it was still a requirement of Australian Law. Hank further reported that the Australian authorities had approved the management program in PNG and that trade to Australia in products could now be done under permit. Trade will be permitted in skins and heads but meat imports still require federal health and quarantine standards that were not yet met.

Philippines. The crocodylian situation in the Philippines has become of concern. The area remains poorly surveyed and the status of *C. mindorensis* is uncertain. The Japan - RP Crocodile Research Institute at Palawan continues to function and issues a newsletter. The number of crocodiles in the facility is small considering the huge capitalization of the facility. The large area, communications difficulties and political strife in some regions made evaluation of the status of crocodiles in the Philippines difficult. After discussion it was agreed that Dr. Webb would collect the available information, enter into dialog with the appropriate sources and report back to the Steering Committee with recommendations for action. Prof. Messel stated that the CSG could not afford to sit idly by while the Philippine crocodile disappears.

Indonesia. A report was presented on recent developments in the FAO crocodile program in Indonesia. The nesting density of *C. novaeguineae* in the Mamberano region of Irian Jaya showed a slight increase in nest density during the most recent survey, continuing a three year trend for those areas where management activities are effective. However, populations of *C. porosus* are low and continue to decline. Surveys have been conducted in Sumatra and Kalimantan with very effective participation of Indonesian counterparts trained in the project. Densities of *C. porosus* were very low but some extensive areas of undisturbed habitat were located on Sumatra which could potentially support a substantial population of crocodiles. These surveys gave indications that *Tomistoma* are not uncommon where suitable habitat remains although their numbers are low. Small numbers of *Tomistoma* are found in crocodile farms. Low water levels in the dry season

restricted access to the upstream habitats preferred by *Tomistoma* and further surveys would be useful.

The survey reported a distinctive morph of crocodile from a single river in Kalimantan. The crocodile is similar to *C. siamensis* but has distinctive characteristics of scalation, color and proportion and is alleged to interbreed with *C. porosus* in captive situations. Evaluation of the taxonomic and biological status of this form is needed and indicated the urgent need for surveys in areas where our knowledge of the crocodylian fauna remains incomplete. [ Readers are referred to Ross C.A. 1990, Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington 103(4):955-961 where the resurrection of the name *Crocodylus raninus* for a freshwater crocodile from Borneo is discussed - Eds.]

Observers from Papua New Guinea and CITES reported that despite the lifting of the Singaporean reservation on *C. porosus* and the general progress in controlling trade from Indonesia, there was some evidence of continued illegal export of skins. It was concluded that strongest possible support for the continuation of the project was justified and the CSG Chairman was encouraging the continued funding of the project by the Japanese Government. Discussion with representatives from the Ministry of Forestry would help clarify the current situation and the needs for future action with regard to Indonesia's export quotas under CITES that will be discussed at the next meeting of the parties in 1992. The Australian Government has offered funds for the preparation of a ranching proposal for Indonesia. After the meeting representatives of CSG, CITES and the Indonesia Ministry of Forestry met for frank discussion of these issues.

Papua New Guinea. John Mark Genolagani reported that recent enforcement efforts had resulted in the conviction of two illegal traders and a recent seizure of a shipment of skins. Crocodile surveys have been slowed by recent financial constraints but the harvesting and ranching programs continue under careful management. Appreciation was expressed to Brian Vernon for the assistance of Mainland Holdings in funding surveys and for technical assistance from Jack Cox. Preliminary results of this year's surveys show reduced nest counts of both *C. porosus* and *C. novaeguineae* in the Sepik River system. While caution is required, these slight fluctuations of numerical indices of

crocodile abundance are within the usual year to year variation and suggest that numbers in PNG are generally stable.

North America. [From a written report submitted by Dr. Ted Joanen.] The Vice Chairman, with help from the Deputy, conducted a membership drive in the USA. About 120 letters were sent to nominees with the membership questionnaire and 55 completed responses were received. A good cross section of people from science, trade and industry, farmers and ranchers, and management and enforcement is represented and these nominations have been forwarded to the CSG Chairman for approval.

Louisiana completed its wild harvest program for 1990 in September. Approximately 25,000 tags were issued for 3.5 million acres of alligator habitat. Approximately 24,000 alligators were taken. The average size of the wild harvest catch was approximately 7 feet, similar to previous years. Statewide population surveys conducted prior to the harvest indicate a slight increase (5%) in the overall population. Market interest remains very strong. The 1990 Louisiana wild harvest average price was about \$56.00 per foot of length although several lots sold as high as \$70.00 per foot of length.

Louisiana farm expansion continues, bringing the number of farms in Louisiana to 140. Last year's production of farm raised skins (4' size class) was slightly over 70,000. The 1990 wild egg collection program permitted by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries yielded approximately 385,000 eggs. Egg harvest figures and hatch rates are still incomplete.

A complete revision of Louisiana farming/ranching regulations was conducted by the Rockefeller Refuge technical staff in the past year. A number of changes were made that increase the administrative efficiency of the statewide program. For example, under the new regulations maximum penalties extend to Class 7 violations which are punishable by up to one year in jail and a \$5,000 fine.

Civil penalties can also be handed down for wildlife violations that impose additional fines in the amount of the value of the animal and this penalty is paid directly to the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. The concept of returning fines directly to management authorities to support their programs is used by several states and has proven to be an effective law enforcement tool.

Trade. [From a written report by Kevin van Jaarsveldt.] A list of 21 nominees for membership was forwarded for consideration. The Trade Group has been active in fundraising in conjunction with the CSG Chairman and Executive Officer, and a number of commitments for continued funding for the Group have been solicited. It has been suggested that a certificate recognizing significant contributions should be developed. The Trade Group has assisted Natal and Transvaal crocodile farmers in understanding their complex situation regarding trading appendices for their mixed *niloticus* populations. In consultation with Ginette Hemley, Richard Luxmoore (Trade Monitoring), and Jon Hutton (Africa) a recommendation for downlisting South African populations is being prepared for the South African Wildlife authorities for presentation to this Group and eventual consideration at CITES.

Kevin visited the Paris Leather Fair and discussed crocodilian marketing matters with many Group members present. There is concern about the increased number of small sized (20 - 29 cm width) classic skins of all species on the market. A large proportion of these small skins are alligator skins from the USA and significant reductions in the prices of these small skins were contracted during the Fair. Prices for skins under 30 cm width are lower for all species and markedly so for alligators. Skins of 30 - 34 cm appear steady and skins above 35 cm width are increasing in price, with the largest skins showing the largest increase. It is evident that some farmers have recognized this problem and have begun to grow out skins to a larger size (up to 35 - 40 cm width). This response is still at an early stage and problems of hide quality and increased costs of grow out still need to be determined.

It is apparent that most tanners and manufacturers are more aware of the total crocodilian skin market now than they were 2-3 years ago. This is in large part directly due to the activities and communication developed by the CSG.

An issue that requires the attention of the Group is the position of the US Fish and Wildlife Service with respect to imports of *C. niloticus* skins. [See US Fish & Wildlife Service announcements p.20]

Trade Monitoring. Richard Luxmoore reported that a major initiative to survey the reptile trade worldwide has begun with coordination between

the TRAFFIC network and WCMC focusing on the European Trade but also considering Japan, Oceania, the USA and South America. Richard requested the support of the CSG. Prof. Messel responded that the CSG strongly supports and encourages this work as the information obtained would be immensely valuable to the Group. He encouraged all Group members to cooperate with the study and communicate information directly to their regional TRAFFIC offices. Richard asked that copies of information also be sent to TRAFFIC International.

**Membership.** Three hundred and twenty five nominations for membership in the CSG for the triennium 1991-93 were forwarded from the regional Vice Chairmen to the Chairman. The Chairman has approved all nominations, calling on the Vice Chairmen to exert any necessary selection to ensure that the Group's effectiveness is maintained. The criteria for Group membership follow those stated by the SSC that members must willing to commit the time and effort, and able to provide expertise to assist the conservation mission of the SSC. After a final review of correct addresses this list will be forwarded to SSC and letters of appointment sent to all nominees. Nominees will have to respond indicating their acceptance of the invitation after which members will receive final endorsement by the SSC council. All members will receive a member's guide clearly stating the terms of reference and procedures of governance of the SSC and the Specialist Groups.

**Introduction of exotic species of crocodilian.** At its last meeting the Steering Committee considered this issue without resolution. Since then a request was received from the Director General of IUCN to reconsider this topic and provide guidance to IUCN. A discussion paper prepared by Brian Vernon outlining the essential elements of the problem was circulated to the Steering Committee and written comments were received from 11 members. Brian opened the discussion by summarizing the responses received. Vigorous discussion followed. The central concepts that emerged were that the CSG must be primarily concerned with conservation issues but whatever policy we developed should not impede the legitimate use of ranches and international trade as a component of management and conservation of wild populations. Captive breeding is a valuable

conservation activity in some circumstances, but the probability of escape of crocodilians from any facility was high. The effect of establishing feral populations of crocodiles within the range of other species had numerous detrimental effects for conservation, and the CSG was clearly breaking new ground for IUCN and the precedent we established was important. The consequences of mixing genetic stock from different drainages within a country was addressed and it was concluded that this would be a matter for individual countries to address with local regulation. Finally the following resolution was drafted and approved for immediate distribution to the Director General of IUCN and other interested parties:

**Recognizing** the benefits to conservation that have resulted from the captive rearing of crocodilians;

**Acknowledging** that countries supporting indigenous populations of wild crocodilians should be allowed to benefit from managing this resource on a sustainable basis;

**Aware** of the potentially serious ecological consequences of establishing feral populations of exotic species of crocodilian, including competition with native species, impact on prey species, interbreeding with native crocodilians and introduction of diseases;

**Noting** that these consequences are most serious within the range of other species of crocodilian where there are habitats most likely to support successful feral populations of crocodilians;

**Believing** that it is not possible to guarantee indefinitely that captive crocodilians will not escape;

**Concerned** that feral populations, once established, are difficult or impossible to eradicate;

**Recalling** the IUCN position statement on the translocation of living

organisms and the particular concerns associated with aquatic species.

The Crocodile Specialist Group of the SCC/IUCN **RECOMMENDS** that crocodile species should not be used for commercial farming operations outside their historical range where those operations are located within the range of other native species of crocodilians.

**Opposition to Sustainable Wildlife use.** Several indications of organized opposition to sustainable use of crocodilians have been drawn to the Group's attention in recent months. A brochure distributed by the New York Zoological Society and reprinted in the NYZS magazine *WILDLIFE CONSERVATION* urged readers to eschew all wildlife products. Similar advice was contained in a Canadian customs advice to incoming travellers, which is surprising given the strong support in Canada for sustainable use. The CSG Chairman read a letter he has sent to the editor of *WILDLIFE CONSERVATION* Magazine detailing the extensive conservation benefits of carefully managed sustainable use programs. The letter provides a comprehensive argument in favour of sustainable use for conservation and the disservice to conservation caused by ill advised and uninformed comments against all trade. The letter was submitted as a letter to the editor or a short article for publication and if it is rejected by the magazine the CSG will offer it to *SPECIES*, the *IUCN BULLETIN* and other outlets for publication. The Steering Committee endorsed the letter and the need for CSG to actively carry the sustainable use for conservation message to the public.

**Next Steering Committee Meeting.** The Steering Committee will plan to meet once during 1991. The exact date remains to be determined. The first choice was to meet in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, immediately before or after the proposed *Caiman* workshop. If the workshop fails to eventuate an alternative venue will be Jayapura, West Irian, Indonesia.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 21.05 PM.

