

Pan American Leathers Inc., USA.
George Saputra, IRATA, Jakarta, Java, Indonesia.
Yosapong Temsiripong, Sriracha Moda and Crocodile
Management Association of Thailand.
The Marine Products Association, Hong Kong.
Yee Tai Leather Enterprise Ltd., Hong Kong.

Contributors (\$250 - \$1000)

Brevard Zoo Animal Keepers, Brevard Zoo, Melbourne, FL,
USA.
Simone Comparini, Pantera S.R.L., S. Croce s/Arno, Italy.
Peter Ebey, Ruth Skoug and Karin Ebey, New Mexico,
USA.
Indonesian Crocodile Farmers Association, Indonesia.
Vic Mercado, Microlab, Philippines.
J. Perran Ross, Gainesville, FL, USA.
San Antonio Zoological Society, USA.
Virginia Aquarium, Virginia Beach, VA, USA.

20th CSG Working Meeting

The 20th CSG Working Meeting was convened on 13-17 September in Manaus, Brazil, and was preceded by a CSG Steering Committee meeting on 12 September.

The CSG is extremely grateful to the State Government of Amazonas, SEPROR (Secretaria de Produção Rural) and IDAM (Institute for Sustainable Development of Agriculture and Forestry of the State of Amazonas) which hosted the meeting. The Organizing Committee, Sônia Canto (SEPROR), Bill Magnusson (INPA), Ronis da Silveira (UFAM), Sônia Alfaia (SEPROR), Paula Mafra (SEPROR), José Max Dias Figueira (IDAM), Leandro Lopes de Souza (IDAM), Bianca Abecassis (IDAM), Ana Paula Batista (SEPROR) and Bruno Pereira Regis, together with their support staff did a marvellous job in preparing and running a wonderful meeting. We are most grateful for the support of the Deputy Eron Bezerra and Dr. Edson Barcelos, who believed in the success of the event from the outset, and the current Secretary Dr. Ferdinando Barreto, who managed resources directly with Governor Omar Aziz.

None of this would have been possible without the generous financial support of the major sponsors; Bank of Amazonia (printing of certificates, badges, etc.), the Sustainable Amazon Foundation (simultaneous translation), and DueDesign, who created the logo of the 20th Working Meeting.



Photograph: Virginia Parachu.

Steering Committee Meeting (12 September) Minutes

1. Opening

The Chairman, Grahame Webb, opened the meeting at 0830 h. Agenda papers were available in advance online, 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, Charlie Manolis, Alvaro Velasco, Carlos Piña, Alfonso Llobet, Luis Bassetti, Samuel Martin, Allan Woodward, Jorge Saieh, John Caldwell, Paolo Martelli, Kent Vliet, Val Lance, Phil Wilkinson, Christine Lippai, Miryam Venegas-Anaya, Sergio Medrano-Bitar

Apologies were received from: Ralf Sommerlad, Bruce Shwedick, Enrico Chiesa, Kevin van Jaarsveldt, Ruth Elsey, Don Ashley, Jiang Hongxing, Toshinori Tsubouchi. Jerome Caraguel, Bernardo Ortiz, Jon Hutton, Hank Jenkins, Tomme Young, Yoichi Takehara, Janaki Lenin

Observers present were: Matt Shirley, Colin Stevenson, Eddy Even, Kevin Wallace, Rene Hedegaard, Simone Comparini, Hesiquio Benitez, Martin Vargas Prieto, Ricardo Francisco Freitas Filho, Luis Chilaule, Maria de la Paz Lopez, Manuel Muñoz, Gisela Poletta, Pablo Siroski, Melina Simoncini, Guillermo Principe, Maria Josefina Boned, Lucia Fernandez, Josefina Iungman, Marina Virginia Parachu Marco, Michael Martin, Rob Gandola, Ashley Holland, Anthony Roberts, Luis Sigler, Jonathan Perez, Juan Fernando Martinez, Luis Philippe Martinez, Jeffery Lang, Hideki Sakamoto, Mitsuko Takehara, Brian Jeffery, Patrick Delaney, Eric Langelet, Hernando Zambrano, Julian A. Mendrano.

1.1. Chairman's Report

The Chairman welcomed everyone and thanked the workshop organisers, including representatives of Government, academic institutions, industry and NGOs.

The meeting held one minutes' silence for two long-serving members who have passed away recently - John Thorbjarnarson and Jack Cox. Kent Vliet advised the meeting of the John Thorbjarnarson Memorial Fund for reptile projects, established through the Wildlife Conservation Society.

The Chairman drew attention to the activities of the CSG over the past two years and the forthcoming years, highlighting:

- CSG Executive Committee meeting, Darwin, 16-17 October 2009;
- 2nd West Africa Regional Meeting, Burkina Faso, 2-6 March 2010;
- CITES CoP15, Qatar, 13-25 March 2010;
- International Meeting on Human-Crocodile Conflict, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, 23-25 June 2010;

- CSG reviews in Madagascar and Cuba;
- Proposed *Crocodylus siamensis* workshop, Thailand, March 2011; and,
- 21st CSG Working Meeting, Manila, May 2012.

The Chairman informed the meeting of the following deliberations of the Executive Committee meeting held on 11 September 2010:

- Proposed Capacity Building Manual;
- Incorporation of the International Association of Crocodile Specialist (IACS) to handle the financial affairs of the CSG (see Agenda item SC.1.5);
- Reviewing and Broadening of the CSG membership;
- The effect of the Global Financial Crisis recession on the conservation and management of crocodilians and the results from the 83 responses to the CSG questionnaire;
- Results of the Colombia morphometric study, which will be presented at the Working Meeting;
- Current difficulties with the CSG website and the need to transfer it to an alternative service provider;
- Proposed utilization of the funding obtained by the Tomistoma Task Force to advance the proposal for declaration of the Lake Mesangat area, East Kalimantan, Indonesia, as a RAMSAR site; and,
- Review of the “Crocodila Journal”.

Actions:

- *Allan Woodward was requested to chair a working group on the Capacity Building Manual and report back to the Executive before the end of the Working Meeting.*
- *Charlie Manolis was requested to chair a working group on the proposal for “occasional papers” and report back to the Executive before the end of the Working Meeting.*
- *Executive Officer was requested to circulate the paper on Reviewing and Broadening of the CSG Membership to all Steering Committee members for their information.*

The Chairman thanked Perran Ross for taking over responsibility for the CSG Red List Authority, following the loss of John Thorbjarnarson.

The Chairman drew attention to the large agenda and indicated that agenda papers would be taken as read and opened for discussion and questions.

1.2. Minutes and Actions from CSG SC Meeting, Santa Cruz, Bolivia (2 June 2008)

All outstanding actions from the Bolivia meeting were reported in the minutes or addressed as separate agenda items in the papers of the meeting. Completion of actions from the last CSG SC meeting was noted.

1.3. Executive Officer’s Report

The EO highlighted:

- CSG membership of 434 (51 countries) in August 2010;

- Reviews and meetings;
- EO travel; and,
- SRAS (Agenda item SC.6.1)

1.4. Financial Report

The financial report highlighted the current balance of around \$US424,317. The Chairman thanked the CSG donors, particularly the industry members, some of whom were present at the meeting. He pointed out that a central goal of building CSG financial reserves was to ensure that the CSG could be sustained indefinitely from interest, rather than raising and spending all funds annually.

1.5. Incorporation of IACS

The Executive Officer gave an outline of the background and action taken to establish a separate legal entity, “International Association of Crocodile Specialists” (IACS), to be responsible for the financial affairs of the CSG, as agreed at the Working Meeting in Bolivia. The initial Board of Management of IACS consists of Grahame Webb, Dietrich Jelden, Alejandro Larriera, Charlie Manolis, Perran Ross, Yochi Takehara and Tom Dacey.

2. Regional Reports

2.1. South and East Africa

The Regional Chairman for South and East Africa, Rich Fergusson, presented his report and drew particular attention to the following:

- South Africa - continuing investigations of the pansteatitis deaths in the Olifants, Letaba and Sabie Rivers;
- Mozambique crocodile management plan has been approved, but not yet implemented;
- Recent surveys undertaken in Tanzania, Namibia and Uganda;
- Congo DR - some recent work has been undertaken by CSG member Joe Wasilewski; and,
- Egypt - Management of *C. niloticus*. Presentation was made by Mohamed Ezat, Nile Crocodile Management Unit, Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency. Egypt is seeking CSG advice and assistance on: development of an Action Plan for Crocodile Management Program in Egypt; and, development of regulations and controls for the involvement of the private sector in the future sustainable utilisation of crocodiles.

2.2. West Africa Regional Report

The report highlighted the 2nd West African Regional meeting held in Burkina Faso, 2-6 March 2010. A summary report of the meeting was published in CSG Newsletter [29(1): 5-7] and the proceedings of the meeting are now available in the CSG website. The Regional Chairman, Samuel Martin, requested that the

name for this and composition of the region be changed from “West Africa” to “West and Central Africa”. This request was approved.

2.3. East and Southeast Asia Regional Report

Neither of the Joint Regional Chairs was able to attend the meeting. Their report highlighted:

- Philippines - two significant reintroductions of *C. mindorensis* (Mindanao and Dicitian Lake, Isabela Province);
- Thailand - proposed *C. siamensis* meeting to be held at Mahidol University, Bangkok, May 2011;
- Indonesia - proposed listing of Lake Mesangat wetlands in East Kalimantan as a RAMSAR site; and,
- Malaysia - successful International Workshop on Human-Crocodile Conflict was held in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, 23-25 June 2010.

A report on *A. sinensis* (Agenda item SC.2.3.1) by Jiang Hongxing highlighted following progress:

- Reintroduction achievements in Gaojinmiao, Anhui, and Shanghai areas;
- Enhanced status of wild alligators in Anhui Province; and,
- Captive breeding status.

A detailed presentation (Agenda item SC.2.3.2) was made by representatives of Anhui Forestry Department, Anhui Province, China, highlighting:

- Status of habitat protection;
- Status of Chinese Alligator releases into the wild; and,
- Conservation findings.

A detailed report (Agenda item SC.2.3.3) was provided by Adam Starr, FFI Cambodia, highlighting:

- Conservation in community-managed crocodile sanctuaries;
- Baseline population surveys in other parts of Cambodia;
- Establishment of breeding facilities for reintroduction/supplementation projects;
- New emerging major threats - hydroelectric dam developments and economic land concessions; and,
- Development of a 5-year strategic plan for establishment of secure and viable populations of Siamese crocodiles.

2.4. North America regional Report

The report, provided by the Joint Regional Chairs, Ruth Elsey and Allan Woodward, highlighted:

- Deepwater Horizon oil spill;
- Skin production figures for 2008 and 2009;
- Various State reports;
- Reclassification issues under the US Endangered Species Act; and,
- CITES issues.

Clarification was sought on progress with the proposed reclassifications under the US Endangered Species Act for *Crocodylus moreletii* (Mexico) and *Caiman latirostris* (Argentina). However, as there were no representatives present from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, no further information was available.

2.5. South Asia and Iran Regional Report

The report provided by Janaki Lenin, who was unable to attend the meeting, highlighted:

- Nepal - “Lacoste” funding \$US500,000 to WWF Nepal for the Gharial project;
- India - the operation of the Gharial Conservation Alliance became untenable and has now been made a program of the Madras Crocodile Bank;
- India - proposed final Gharial SRP meeting, together with a CSG regional meeting proposed for early 2011;
- Sri Lanka - renewed efforts to undertake research and conservation activities; and,
- Bangladesh - appears to be little happening to further mugger and saltwater crocodile conservation.

Whilst it was noted that a final SRP meeting, together with a regional CSG meeting was proposed in early 2011, no further information was available.

Paolo Martelli, Vice Chair of the Veterinary Science group, advised that he had conducted a second follow up veterinary training course following the mass die-off of Gharials in the Chambal River in 2008.

The Chairman sought the views of members on the possibility of a CSG review of Gharial programs throughout the range. There was consensus on this suggestion and a working group was established, under chairmanship of Jeff Lang and Perran Ross, to consider this suggestion and report back to the Executive.

2.6. Australia and Oceania

The report provided by Regional Chairman Charlie Manolis, highlighted:

- Northern Territory - Management program for *C. porosus* was recently approved by Federal Minister, with exclusion of the “safari hunting” component;
- Analysis of long-term survey data from 12 major river systems indicates that the *C. porosus* population has increased 20+ fold in abundance and 100+ fold in biomass since protection in 1971;
- East Timor - a CSG fact-finding mission was undertaken in September 2009; and,
- Solomon Islands became a Party to CITES in 2007. HCC continues to be a major issue and additional funding is still required to carry out population surveys and develop a management program.

2.7. Europe

Deputy Chairman Dietrich Jelden presented the report,

highlighting that the African crocodile survey database developed by UNEP-WCMC is now available online at: www.crocsurveys.net.

This database contains information on more than 1000 surveys of crocodiles (*C. niloticus*, *C. cataphractus* and *O. tetrapsis*) in Africa undertaken since 1956. The surveys can be viewed in a list, or in a Google map of Africa, both of which are fully searchable by country, location, species, date and author. The summary data is, in most cases, accompanied by a downloadable PDF of the original source document.

Jon Hutton has requested that CSG members provide any additional information and feedback.

Action: Members were requested to provide their comments to the Executive Officer before the end of the Working Meeting.

2.8. Latin America and Caribbean Regional Report

The report was presented by Deputy Chairman, Alejandro Larriera, highlighting:

- Human-Crocodile Conflict has now become an issue in the LA&C region with the Black caiman;
- Bolivian Scientific Authority recently resigned from its responsibility as the CITES Scientific Authority;
- Joint CITES and CSG visit to Paraguay for inspection of skin stockpiles;
- Chairman received a letter from GECV (Crocodile Specialist Group of Venezuela), concerning the apparent demise of the Orinoco crocodile conservation program; and,
- Colombia - the impact of the global financial crisis has caused a 50% reduction in exports of *Caiman crocodilus fuscus* over the past two years.

Action: CSG Chairman to write to the Venezuelan Management Authority seeking clarification of what has happened with the Orinoco crocodile conservation program. (see Letter 1).

A presentation (Agenda item SC.2.8.1) was made by Hesiquio Benítez Díaz, Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad (CONABIO)-CITES Scientific Authority, Mexico, regarding the development of the *Crocodylus moreletii* Monitoring Program (MCMP) and Procedures Manual. Mexican authorities are looking for CSG guidance and support to progress both these issues.

3.1. Vietnam Review

The report from the Vietnam CITES Management Authority on the implementation of recommendations of the 2008 CSG review was included in the agenda papers, and it was noted that there had been some

progress to date.

3.2. Cambodia: Update on Implementation of Recommendations

The report from Fisheries Administration of Cambodia on implementation of the recommendations of the 2005 CSG review was included in the agenda papers, however, it was noted that there had been rather limited progress over the past two years.

Action: The proposed *C. siamensis* meeting, to be held in Bangkok, March 2011, should include a one and a half day workshop on how to manage the shared resource between the relevant range States. Such meeting must include the management and enforcement authorities from Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos and China. Executive Officer to note and include in draft agenda.

3.3. Madagascar Review

The report prepared by CSG Regional Vice Chair for West Africa, Christine Lippai, indicated that recent advice from the CITES Secretariat was that the Malagasy authorities have yet to provide a report to CITES Secretariat (due by 30 September 2010).

3.4. Cuba Review

The report provided by Roberto Soberon, Regional Vice Chairman LA&C Region, indicated the level of progress that Cuba has been able to achieve since the CSG review was undertaken in November 2008 with respect to:

- *Crocodylus acutus* (wild populations);
- *Crocodylus acutus* (farming);
- *Crocodylus rhombifer* (wild populations);
- *Crocodylus rhombifer* (farming); and,
- *Caiman crocodilus*.

A letter was sent to the Cuban authorities, congratulating them on the progress with the recommendations of the review, and urging them to continue their efforts with the conservation of *C. acutus* and *C. rhombifer* (see Letter 2).

3.5. Colombia Morphometric Project

The Chairman provided an overview of the situation that has developed with the crocodile captive breeding program in Colombia and the obvious laundering of wild skins through some of the farms. Wildlife Management International recently completed a morphometric study in Colombia which will provide the ability to identify the actual size of a caiman from applying a formula to a small piece of the skin, whether raw, wet blue, crust or tanned. A comprehensive draft report has been circulated for review, and should be finalized soon.

4. Thematic Vice Chair Reports

4.1. CITES

The report was briefly introduced by the Chairman, in the absence of “Hank” Jenkins, highlighting the outcomes of CoP15 held in Doha, Qatar, March 2010:

- Transfer of the Mexican and Belize populations of *C. moreletii* to Appendix II, with a zero export quota for commercial trade in wild specimens;
- Transfer of the Egyptian population of *C. niloticus* to Appendix II, with a zero export quota for commercial trade in wild specimens;
- Amendment of Resolution Conf. 12.3 in respect of Universal Tagging System and Trade in Small Crocodilian Leather Goods;
- Amendment of Resolution Conf. 11.12 on Universal tagging for the Identification of Crocodilian Skins;
- Extension of the Standing Committee Working Group on Personal and Household effects until CoP16; and,
- Amendment of Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15) on Ranching and Trade in Ranches Specimens.

4.2. IUCN

Vice Chair, Perran Ross, presented the report, highlighting:

- Quadrennium review of Specialists Group Chairs and members;
- Appointment of Simon Stuart as chairman of the Species Survival Commission; and,
- Establishment of SSC Steering Committee of 26 members.

4.3. Industry

The report provided by Vice Chair Don Ashley, highlighted:

- The market for all crocodilian skins remains difficult due to a combination of factors, including the global financial crisis, strict quality standards, declining manufacturing and customer bases;
- CITES issues: Universal Tagging and Small Leather goods; Personal Effects; CITES Appendix changes for *C. moreletii* and *C. niloticus*; Business roundtable; Streamlined permitting.
- California trade bans;
- Sustainable trade concerns;
- Future potential industry initiatives;
- Legal trade and illegal trade concerns; and,
- Louisiana - BP oil spill effects.

4.4. Trade Monitoring

John Caldwell presented the report, highlighting:

- 2009 trade data reports will not be available until after October 2010;
- Reports on trade in crocodile skins up to 2008 were completed (IACTS 2009 and 2010 refer) as were crocodilian meat exports up to 2009;

- 2008 reports from Brazil and Papua New Guinea are outstanding; and,
- The proposed crocodilian farming database is not proceeding.

4.5. Veterinary Science

Dr. Paolo Martelli presented the report, highlighting:

- Group reorganized - Dr. Fritz Huchzemeyer handed over the post of Vice Chair to Dr. Paolo Martelli;
- Ongoing problem of passive members;
- Mission of the Veterinary Science group has been revised and expanded;
- A postmortem guide and form were posted on the CSG website;
- Training provided for Indian veterinarians in postmortem techniques;
- Two Yahoo discussion groups established; and,
- Dr. Paolo Martelli was invited to accompany the Kruger Park Scientific Services team in their investigations of the mortality along the Olifants River - however resolution of the problem is not apparent.

4.6. Red List Authority

The report was presented by Vice Chair Perran Ross, highlighting:

- Perran Ross appointed to take over responsibility for the Red List Authority, following the unfortunate death of John Thorbjarnarson; and,
- Need to review and analyse Red List Assessments for crocodilians and have the information inputted into the SSC Species Information System database.

Action: Perran Ross to convene a small working group to meet during the course of the working meeting to undertake the review of RL Assessments.

4.7. Zoos and Community Education

Vice Chair Kent Vliet presented the report, highlighting:

- Continuing to build their listserv network through Google listserv;
- Identification and appointment of zoo professionals to the CSG;
- Several very active collaborators in North America, Europe, Australia and India;
- Involvement of zoos and other living institutions in successful fundraising and effective public education; and,
- Concern about the exportation of endangered crocodilian species to private and commercial institutions.

4.8. General Research

Vice Chair Val Lance presented the report, highlighting that the crocodile genome project is progressing and

that they have been very busy. A number of researchers continue to produce high quality papers and crocodilian science is healthy and continues to grow.

4.9. Legal Affairs

The report had been prepared by Tomme Young, who was unable to attend the meeting. Main issues highlighted:

- Charter for establishment of a legal entity to manage the financial affairs of the CSG (International Association of Crocodile Specialists) has been incorporated (Agenda item SC.1.5); and,
- IUCN's Congress met in Barcelona (October 2008), taking a number of decisions that might ultimately have impact on the CSG.

5. Task Force/Working Group Reports

5.1. Tomistoma Task Force

The report had been prepared by the TTF Chair, Bruce Shwedick, who was unable to attend the meeting. The Chairman advised that the TTF had been very good at fundraising, however, there needs to be a strategic approach taken for the implementation of effective conservation actions for Tomistoma (eg the proposal to have the Lake Mesangat wetlands in East Kalimantan declared a RAMSAR site). It was agreed that there was a need to set new goals for the TTF.

Action: *The Chairman to contact Bruce Shwedick and other TTF members for further discussions on the role of the TTF.*

5.2. Human-Crocodile Conflict

The report was presented by Richard Fergusson, who highlighted:

- The working group did not formally meet in Bolivia and hence the connection and motivation of members seem to have waned;
- There had been some good achievements: Completion of Nikhil Whitaker's work in India and the offshore islands; publication through FAO/IGF of a detailed set of guidelines on the prevention and management of HCC; successful International HCC workshop held in Kota Kinabalu (June 2010); and,
- The working group's activities show that some common principles exist: similarity in actual attacks, but management and mitigation strategies differ; HCC is a major factor in determining management approaches; numerous HCC mitigation options, but few implemented practically on a wide scale; the HCC database is a useful tool for identifying risk activities.

Action: *Richard Fergusson was requested to hold a working group meeting and report back to the Chairman on possible options to progress the activities of the HCC Working Group.*

6. General Business

6.1. Student Research Assistance Scheme

The report presented by the Executive Officer Tom Dacey, highlighted:

- 30 applications approved to date, one application under consideration.
- Preliminary report provided by e-mail to SRAS donors (Bergen Aquarium and Rene Hedegaard, Perran Ross), outlining the successful applicants, their photos and projects.
- Details of most successful applications are now on the CSG website.
- Most final reports received have also been posted on the website. Quality of reports varies greatly, and in retrospect more specific guidelines should have been provided.

6.2. CSG Website

The Executive Officer Tom Dacey provided an update on latest developments with the CSG website and the need to transfer the website to an alternative service provider/host.

Actions: *The current service provider is to be thanked for his efforts but advised that his inability to manage the website in a timely manner, in accordance with directions from the CSG Executive, is now constraining and delaying CSG activities. Such changed circumstances are to be expected when the circumstances of volunteers change, but the CSG itself must continue to move forward. Executive Officer and Charlie Manolis to talk with an alternative service provider with the intention of having the CSG website transferred from its current location to a CSG-controlled domain and website host/servers.*

6.3. Castillos Award

The Chairman advised that the Executive Committee had considered several nominations and the successful recipient would be announced at the farewell dinner on the evening of 16 September.

7. Outcomes from the CSG Executive Committee Meeting on 11 September 2010

See Agenda item SC.1.1 Chairman's Report.

8. Next CSG Working Meeting (2010)

The 21st CSG Working Meeting will be held in Manila, Philippines (tentative dates 7-11 May 2012).

The meeting closed at 1730 h.

[Minutes of the Steering Committee meeting are available from the CSG Executive Officer (csg@wmi.com.au), and will soon be available at "www.iucncsg.org/ph1/modules/Publications/reports.html"].

Letter 1

Ing. Alejandro Hitchert
Ministro para el Poder Popular del Ambiente
Caracas
Venezuela

El Grupo de Especialistas en Cocodrilos (CSG) de la Unión Mundial para la Naturaleza (IUCN), está conformado por más de 400 personas de 51 países, todos son voluntarios y reúne a investigadores, profesores universitarios, personalidades de gobierno, representantes del comercio, curtidores, ONGs, veterinarios y profesiones afines.

Hemos trabajado conjuntamente a manera de apoyo y asesoramiento a diferentes gobiernos latinoamericanos en los últimos años, a pedido de sus autoridades gubernamentales, a los fines de sugerir acciones en la conservación y uso sustentable de los cocodrilos, entre los cuales le podemos citar los siguientes casos: con Bolivia el programa de aprovechamiento comercial del Caiman yacare, con Cuba en el análisis de la información de campo, diseño y preparación de la solicitud del cambio de Apéndice CITES de la poblaciones del *Crocodylus acutus*, en Brasil con el diseño y preparación de la solicitud del cambio de Apéndice CITES del *Melanosuchus niger* y con el gobierno de Argentina en el diseño de la propuesta de cambio de Apéndice CITES para el *Caiman latirostris*.

En el caso de Venezuela, hemos seguido muy de cerca el programa de Aprovechamiento Comercial del *Caiman crocodilus* (Baba) y del programa de Conservación del *Crocodylus intermedius* (Caimán del Orinoco), participando en reuniones realizadas en los últimos 10 años en la planificación y evaluación de ambos programas.

Recientemente nos hemos reunido en la ciudad de Manaus, Brasil, en el marco de la 20a reunión del trabajo del CSG, donde uno de los temas que fueron discutidos fue la situación del programa de conservación del Caimán del Orinoco, donde se observa una disminución de las actividades que se venían realizando en conjunto con el Ministerio del Ambiente, en lo que se refiere a la coordinación de las reintroducciones de animales criados en cautiverio, apoyo financiero a las diferentes instituciones que crían al Caimán del Orinoco, lo que se traducirá en una reducción en la cantidad y calidad de los animales reintroducidos anualmente.

Se ha puesto de manifiesto, además, que la población de *C. intermedius* del río Cojedes, la más importante del país, ha declinado con respecto a los niveles que mantenía hace 20 años.

Estos programas que ha implementado Venezuela por más de 10 20 años, han sido tomados como ejemplo internacional en diversos países de Latinoamérica y del mundo, por lo que vemos con preocupación su ejecución en el tiempo y que se haya perdido un poco la productiva relación que existía entre el gobierno, las ONG y los entes privados que constituían una de las fortalezas del programa.

Es por esto, que deseamos ratificarle nuestro deseo de poder

colaborarles en la búsqueda de acciones que permitan el logro de los objetivos del Programa de Conservación del Caimán del Orinoco en Venezuela.

Quedo a sus órdenes y le saluda atentamente

Prof. Grahame Webb
Presidente del Grupo de Especialista en Cocodrilos IUCN/SSC

cc: Director de la Oficina Nacional de Diversidad Biológica
MPPA

Letter 2

Manaus, 14 de septiembre de 2010
Comandante de la Revolución Guillermo García Frías,
Director General Empresa Nacional Flora y Fauna

Estimado Comandante,

Me dirijo a usted en relación a la misión concretada por parte de nuestro Comité Ejecutivo en Noviembre de 2008, a partir de vuestra generosa invitación, en la que nuestro equipo tuvo la ocasión de conocerle y de discutir con usted las recomendaciones para el manejo en cautividad y en vida silvestre de los cocodrilos cubanos, lo que generó una importante lista de acciones a seguir. En el presente marco de la XX Reunión de Trabajo del Grupo, que se está celebrando en Manaus, Brasil, nos hemos puesto al tanto de la implementación por parte de Cuba de esas recomendaciones, lo que sabemos que en gran medida ha sido posible gracias a su esfuerzo y compromiso personal.

Por medio de esta queremos expresarle nuestro reconocimiento por todo lo que se ha podido avanzar en este sentido, y a la vez exhortarle a continuar trabajando por el perfeccionamiento del manejo para la conservación y el uso sustentable de los cocodrilos de Cuba.

Reviste especial interés para nosotros el trabajo por la preservación del cocodrilo cubano; y reconocemos como un hecho positivo a la mayor participación en este valioso esfuerzo que compete ahora a Flora y Fauna, con el traspaso a su administración del territorio y de la granja de cocodrilos de la Ciénaga de Zapata. En este contexto, resulta de vital importancia la implementación de las recomendaciones de los talleres sobre prioridades de conservación para el cocodrilo cubano realizados en 2006 y 2008 en Ciénaga de Zapata, así como la colaboración internacional. Por nuestra parte, estamos en la mejor disposición de cooperar en la identificación de fuentes de colaboración y aval a sus proyectos.

Sin otro particular, y agradecido por vuestra atención, le saludo con mi mayor consideración.

Yours sincerely,
Dr. Grahame Webb
Chairman, IUCN-SSC-Crocodile Specialist Group