

22nd CSG Working Meeting

Colombo, Sri Lanka, 20-23 May 2013

The 22nd CSG Working Meeting will be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 20-23 May 2013. This represents a slight deviation from normal CSG practice, in that this meeting will take place 12 months after the 21st Working Meeting (see below).

With a “Living with Crocodylians” theme, we encourage people to participate in what will be the first CSG Working Meeting in the South Asia and Iran region since 1978.

Details on the meeting will be available soon.

21st CSG Working Meeting

Steering Committee Meeting (21 May 2012)

1. Opening

Dr. Ana Labrador, Deputy Director, National Museum of the Philippines, welcomed participants to the meeting.

Steering Committee members present: Grahame Webb, Dietrich Jelden, Alejandro, Larriera, Tom Dacey, Perran Ross, Charlie Manolis, Alvaro Velasco, Samuel Martin, Allan Woodward, John Caldwell, Paolo Martelli, Val Lance, Dr. Giam, Yosapong Temsiripong, Hesiquio Benitez Diaz

Observers present: Heng Sovannara, Luon Nam, Adam Britton, Mark Bezuijen, Thongsavath Oudomxay, Chanthone Phothitay, Cayetano Pomares, Giovanna Webb, Margaret Tierney, Frederick Webb, Roberto P. Puentespina, Bjorn Limketkai, Robby McLeod, Leo Lapie, Gregory Lacoste, Marcos Coutinho, Steve Connors, Antonio Castro, James Chan, Vicente Mercado, Michael Vincent Cruz, Yusuke Fukuda, Maria de la Paz Lopez, Manuel Muñiz, M.M. Imran, Anslem De Silva, Godfrid Solmu, Matt Plummer, Geoff McClure, Guillermo Principe, Pablo Siroski, Csaba Geczy, Kristian Robert Pahl, Arvin Diesmos, James Alifang, Matthew Brian, Brian Jeffery, Rebecca Muscher, Mark Merchant, Marissa Tellez, Alex Meurer, Joe Wasilewski, Oswald Bracken Tisen, Christopher Kri Ubang, Rambli Bin Ahmad, Simone Comparini, Terry Cullen, Heintje Limketkai, Daniel Barlis, Buddy Chan, Choomjet Karnjanakesorn, Smith Thummachua, Bundit Kullavanijaya, Kumthon Suaroon, Yosapong Temsiripong

Apologies from Steering Committee members: Janaki Lenin, Rom Whitaker, Harry Messel, Ralf Sommerlad, Carlos Piña, James MacGregor, Richard Fergusson, Ruth Elsey, Don Ashley, Yoichi Takehara, Hank Jenkins, Alison Leslie, C.H. Koh, Fritz Huchzermeyer, Thomas Rainwater, Bernardo Ortiz-von Halle, Alfonso Llobet, Christine Lippai, Kent Vliet, Tomme Young, Asghar

Mobaraki, Luís Bassetti, Phil Wilkinson, Jiang Hongxing, Frank Mazzotti

Apologies from other CSG members: Phil Steel, Ricky Taylor, Iqbal Zuberi, Rob Stuebing, Christopher Tracy, Zilca Campos, Paul Bodnar, Patrick Aust, Obdulio Menghi, Peter Brazaitis, Craig Franklin, Christopher Moran, John and Lillian Lever, Pushpa Palaniappan, Juan Rafael Bolaños Montero, Ernesto O. Boede, Ruchira Somaweera, Hannes Botha, Rafael Antelo, Pedro G. Vasquez Ruesta, Agata Staniewicz, Chris Kofron, A.M. Riyas Ahamed, Joe Abene, Keith Christian, Chris Peberdy, Paul Weldon, Craig Franklin, Roldán de Sola, Manori Gunawardena, R.J. Rao, Sally Isberg, Massimo De Luca, Rakotondrazafy Andry Malalan’Ny Aina, Frank Brandstätter, Subir Chowfin, Attaullah Pandrani, Timothy P. Scott, Gisela Poletta, Alba Imhof, Gordon Grigg, Rob Gandola, Melina Simoncini, Parntep Ratanakorn, Pierre Charruau, Virginia Parachú Marcó, Juan F. Dueñas-Serrano, Patrica Amavet, Iván Palacios, Somkiat Wannawatanapong, Harry Dutton, Dwayne Carbonneau, Sergio Alejandro Balaguera-Reina, Robert Godshalk, Samuel Furrer, Samir Whitaker, Engkamat Lading, Patrick Delaney, Gonzalo Fernández Hoyo, Tomas Waller, Abdul Aleem Chaudhry, Francisco Villamarín, Arnold Brunell, Mitch Eaton, Ian Games, Laura Brandt, Cathy Shilton, Wang Choalin, Wu Xiaobing, Ana Maria Trelancia, Sonia Canto, Fabian Schmidt, Boyd Simpson, Christy Wilkinson, David Wilken, Blair Hayman, Xander Combrink, Mushtaq Ahmed

1.1. Chairman’s Report

The Chairman welcomed everyone and thanked the workshop organisers, including representatives of Government, academic institutions, industry and NGOs. He drew attention to the large agenda and indicated that agenda papers would be taken as read and opened for discussion and questions. He also drew attention to the activities of the CSG over the past two years and the forthcoming years, highlighting:

- Nine CSG members who had passed away since the last Working Meeting. A minutes silence was held in remembrance.
- Various meetings in which the CSG had been involved over the past 2 years.
- The situation in Madagascar, which necessitated a trade suspension recommended by the CITES Standing Committee.
- Deliberations of the Executive Committee meeting held on 20 May 2012, which are included in the agenda for this meeting.

1.2. Minutes and Actions from CSG SC Meeting, Manaus, Brazil (2010)

All outstanding actions from the Manaus meeting were reported in the minutes or addressed as separate agenda items in the papers of the meeting. Some

discussion was held on:

- Proceedings of the Manaus Working Meeting have now been collated and will be published as an electronic document on the CSG website.
- Membership of the CSG and the Steering Committee will be reviewed following the IUCN World Conservation Congress in September 2012.
- The need to encourage new and younger member into the CSG. Terry Cullen suggested that we could establish a mentoring program.

Action 1. The Chairman requested Terry Cullen to provide the Executive Officer with some notes on his idea for a mentoring program.

Completion of actions from the last CSG SC meeting was noted.

1.3. Executive Officer's Report

The Executive Officer highlighted:

- CSG membership of 450 (60 countries)
- Only a 50% response to the CSG questionnaire
- Reviews and meetings
- SRAS (Agenda item SC.7.1) - since 2009, there had been 51 applications; 48 approved, 3 under consideration; and 26 reports received. Details are now available on the CSG website

The report was noted.

1.4. Financial Report

The financial report highlighted the current balance of around \$US539,998.

TTF Funds - the Chairman outlined the issues involved with the Lake Mesangat proposal in East Kalimantan. The CSG is proposing to send a high level delegation (G. Webb and D. Jelden) to East Kalimantan to meet with the appropriate people in the local government and industry.

Chinese alligator Funds - the Executive Officer advised that there had been no transactions for over 7 years. It was suggested that anyone with ideas on what might be done with the funds should pass them on to Perran Ross to collate for the CSG Executive's consideration. One idea which evolved from the discussion was to use the funds to revise the Chinese Alligator section of the CSG's Action Plan.

The Chairman thanked Charlie Manolis and Tom Dacey for their efforts in controlling the CSG finances and providing the regular financial reports to members.

The reports were noted.

1.5. International Association of Crocodile Specialists

Inc.

The Chairman gave an outline of the establishment of IACS as a separate legal identity to manage the finances of the CSG. The report was noted.

2. Regional Reports

2.1. South and East Africa

The Regional Chairman for South and East Africa, Rich Fergusson, was unable to attend the meeting. His report highlighted recent activities in:

- South Africa - decline in Loskop Dam population still being monitored
- Botswana - increase in Human-Crocodile Conflict with the increased annual floods
- Mozambique - crocodile management plan has been approved, but still not effectively implemented. Current CITES export quota for wild skins should be re-examined
- Namibia - management plan due to be finalised by July 2012
- Zimbabwe - only 19 active producers remaining
- Malawi - Agenda item 8.2 refers
- Tanzania - Protected populations remain healthy
- Kenya - No major changes recently
- Democratic Republic of Congo - Joe Wasilewski provided an overview of his recent activities
- Sudan - with the advent of South Sudan as a separate identity, surveys of the Nile and Sudd could eventuate
- Egypt - situation on hold due to internal difficulties

Action 2. Joe Wasilewski will prepare a proposal for CSG consideration on assisting the Congo project.

The report was noted.

2.2. West and Central Africa

Samuel Martin addressed the report, highlighting:

- Difficulties of being able to operate in some countries due to civil unrest
- Strategic document, prepared by Dietrich Jelden, Samuel Martin and Christine Lippai, had been distributed to various wildlife ministries in the West African region by the Ministry of Environment of Burkina Faso
- NGO, SOS Crocodiles of La Ferme aux Crocodiles (France), continues to be involved in several projects in Burkina Faso, Benin and Niger

Matt Shirley gave a brief overview of the work he has been doing in Ivory Coast and Gabon.

The report was noted.

2.3. East and Southeast Asia

Neither of the Regional Chairs was able to attend the meeting. The report collated by CSG Executive Officer from various sources highlighted:

- International Crocodile Conference held in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia (October 2011)
- CSG Regional Species meeting held in Bangkok, Thailand (April 2011)
- East Kalimantan reports on *C. porosus*, *Tomistoma schlegelii* and *C. siamensis*
- Cambodian Crocodile Conservation Programme reports by FFI
- China sub-regional report on Chinese Alligator
- Recent update compiled by Mark Bezuijen

Yosapong Tempsrirpong outlined the activities included in the report from Thailand Fisheries Department (SC.3.5 Attachment “D” refers).

Heng Sovannara provided an overview report on some recent Cambodian activities:

- Siamese crocodile conservation requires an inter-agency approach as there are many national government agencies with overlapping jurisdictions
- National biological Strategies and Action Plans (being prepared under the national obligation of signatories to CBD) are only the first step - species conservation needs to be embedded in annual government work plans and budgets down to local level (country/district/village levels).

Chanthone Phothitay provided an overview report on some recent activities in Lao PDR:

- Government and WCS have commenced a Community-based Management Project, funded by the Mining Metro Group (MMG), which builds upon previous efforts
- In 2011 one wild nest, with 27 eggs, was found. Eggs incubated by Ban Kuen Zoo and 20 hatchlings produced. These animals have been scute-clipped and will be released in a head-start program in 2012/2013
- Through community workshops, community regulations for crocodile conservation developed in 9 villages in the Xe Champone and Xe Xangxoy Rivers. Crocodile conservation committees have been created, with representatives who coordinate village involvement. Appropriate public awareness signs have also been erected in the various crocodile conservation areas.

Oswald Bracken Tisen provided an overview of the recent International Crocodile Conference held in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia (October 2011), where the possible downlisting of *C. porosus* in Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei was discussed.

2.4. North America

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

- Status of American Crocodile
- Skin production figures
- Various State reports
- Reclassification Issues: *Caiman latirostris* - comments period closed 5 March 2012. USFWS announced its finding to remove *C. moreletii* from the US list of Endangered and Threatened Species and the final rule is expected to be published soon.

The Chairman thanked Ruth Elsey and Allan Woodward for the excellent report presented. The report was noted.

2.5. South Asia and Iran

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

- India
 - Gharial; establishment of National Tri-State Chambal Sanctuary Management and Coordination Committee (NTRIS-CASMACC)
 - Saltwater crocodile survey undertaken in Indian part of Sundarban
- Sri Lanka - Ruchira Somaweera and Anslem de Silva received a CBOT grant to study “Usage of traditional knowledge to minimize human-crocodile conflict and conserve crocodiles in Sri Lanka”. Two new crocodile facilities have been established
- Nepal - satellite telemetry study being undertaken
- Iran - first captive breeding and rearing facility established for Muggers
- Pakistan - are working in conjunction with Iran
- Bangladesh
 - Gharial surveys undertaken in the Padma and Jamuna Rivers, November 2009-October 2010 and again November 2010-October 2011.
 - Mugger - HCC incidents
 - Saltwater crocodile population appears to be declining
 - Commercial activities - three farms now operating

The report was noted.

2.6. Australia and Oceania

The report provided by Charlie Manolis highlighted:

- Northern Territory
 - Cane toads are having a major impact and causing declines in some *C. johnstoni* populations (eg Victoria and Daly Rivers);
 - Review of management program for *C. porosus* to be completed by end of 2012
 - Management program for *C. johnstoni* was

approved on 23 December 2010

- Queensland - a collaborative research project is exploring the “science” behind harvesting crocodile eggs in Cape York
- Western Australia - arrival of cane toads does not appear to have caused the high mortalities of *C. johnstoni* that have been reported elsewhere in the Northern Territory
- Papua New Guinea - crocodile farming industry continues to focus on *C. porosus*, although wild harvesting involves both *C. porosus* and *C. novaeguineae*. Population monitoring shows increasing breeding populations of both species
- East Timor - The East Timorese Government recently formed a Crocodile Task Force to improve knowledge and experience in managing crocodile populations. HCC continues to be an issue
- Solomon Islands - HCC continues to be a major issue and creating negative attitudes towards crocodiles

The report was noted.

2.7. Europe

Samuel Martin presented the report, highlighting:

- *Ex-situ* conservation through zoos
- Europe is active in supporting several crocodile conservation initiatives both logistically and financially overseas
- French company, Lacoste, are now supporting significantly 5 major separate projects around the world

The Chairman gave an overview of the involvement of the Lacoste Foundation in crocodile conservation in the framework of their ‘Save our Logo’ initiative, operating through French NGO, FDB.

2.8. Latin America and Caribbean

The report was presented by Alejandro Larriera, who thanked all representatives from the region for their input into the regional report and offered an apology for all those who were unable to attend the meeting. The report was noted.

2.8.1. Crocodile conservation in Jamaica

Perran Ross presented the paper and the issues discussed included:

- Although that contact had been made with new people in Jamaica, the situation has not changed in 30 years. Byron Wilson is the main contact person;
- Habitat is being lost and there has been an increase in the killing of *C. acutus* and there is real fear that the population may be lost; Need to encourage locals to increase the pressure on government to protect at least a

couple of core areas; and,

- Need for a better public education program.

Action 3. The Chairman requested Perran Ross, Allan Woodward and Joe Wasilewski to review the situation and advise who will be able to advance the situation.

2. Reviews

3.1. Vietnam

There was no specific report from Vietnam and no representative from Vietnam present at the meeting. However, a report (Agenda item SC.3.5 - Attachment “B”) addressed some of the general issues.

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. The Chairman advised that of the 31 Recommendations, 6 have been completed, 4 require some further clarification and the rest have not been satisfactorily resolved to date. Heng Sovannara advised that the lack of resources is a major problem in the implementation of the Recommendations.

Action 4. CSG will review the report and achievements, with the view of writing to Cambodian Director General of Fisheries, Dr. Nao Thuok, seeking advice and clarification on several of the issues.

3.3. Madagascar

Refer to SC.4.1 - CITES Report. The Chairman advised that Madagascar had become a very complicated issue in the context of CITES. Based on the recommendations of the CITES Standing Committee, a trade suspension had been imposed until such time that Madagascar can comply with 9 recommendations. To date, Madagascar has not met these requirements completely, and such trade bans, as for example by the EU, remain in place. Madagascar has begun to import raw *C. niloticus* skins from other Range States, manufacture them into finished products, and then re-export them. Although this would appear to be contrary to the trade suspension, the CITES Secretariat has advised that such is not the case. Dietrich Jelden advised that this is a CITES compliance issue which will be discussed further at the 62nd meeting of the CITES Standing Committee in July 2012.

Action 5. CSG to write to CITES Secretariat, expressing its views on the import and re-export of imported skins and products respectively through Madagascar. The letter should

request that it be electronically available on the CITES website as a SC62 'Information document'.

3.4. Cuba

Whilst the report provided by Roberto Soberon indicated that some progress is being achieved, it was noted that most of the important recommendations are yet to be implemented. As Roberto Soberon has now moved to Spain, the CSG Executive appointed Manuel Tabet as the LA&C Vice Chair. The report was noted.

3.5. First Species (*C. siamensis*) Meeting, Bangkok - Progress Report

The Executive Officer gave a brief overview of the recommendations from the *C. siamensis* meeting held in Bangkok (April 20110), indicating that the relevant recommendations had been forwarded to the respective Range States for their consideration and advice. Responses had been received from Cambodia, Vietnam, Dietrich Jelden and Thailand. Yosapong Temsrirpong gave an overview of the response provided by Thailand's Fisheries Department. It was noted that there had been made some progress on the compliance and enhanced co-operation issues between China and its neighbouring Range States. Similarly Cambodia and Vietnam were now discussing illegal cross-border trade.

Action 6. The Chairman indicated that the CSG would seek updated reports from the outstanding respondents (Indonesia, Cambodia, Lao PDR) and attempt to progress the recommended actions from the Bangkok meeting.

Action 7. Yosapong Temsrirpong was requested to convene a *C. siamensis* Working Group to discuss what might be possible in respect of the common recommendations on compliance, capacity building, etc., and report back to the meeting.

The report was noted.

4. Thematic Group Reports

4.1. CITES

The report was briefly introduced by the Chairman, in the absence of "Hank" Jenkins, highlighting:

- Ranching and trade in ranched specimens of species transferred from Appendix I to Appendix II (Decision 15.51), and the history behind the various CITES Resolutions - Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP15), Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15) and Resolution Conf. 9.20 (Rev.). The issue is quite complicated and was referred back to the Animals Committee (AC) for consideration and recommendation. CSG provided an information document (AC 25 Inf. 9 on 'Ranching and trade in ranched specimens of species transferred from

Appendix I to Appendix II (<http://www.cites.org/eng/com/ac/25/index.php>) to recommending that the two systems should remain totally separate and this was accepted by the AC

- Madagascar - Discussed previously under Agenda Item SC.3.3
- *C. johnstoni* - the correct nomenclature has been formally accepted by CITES
- *C. niloticus* - awaiting the outcome of the process for species recognition
- Malawi - Refer Agenda Item SC.8.2
- Compliance with CITES

4.2. Industry

Charlie Manolis addressed the report provided by Vice Chair Don Ashley.

Action 8. Establish a Working Group (with Charlie Manolis as Chair) to review the issues raised in the report and report back at the end of the Working Meeting.

4.3. Trade Monitoring

John Caldwell presented the report, highlighting: the source of the trade data; outstanding CITES reports and preparation of IACTS reports. The report was noted.

4.4. Veterinary Science

Dr. Paolo Martelli presented the report, highlighting:

- The purpose of the Group
- Ongoing problem of passive members
- Ongoing communications within the Group
- Membership is now 13 members
- Vet Science documents available to go onto the new CSG website
- Concern over the animal welfare issue, particularly stunning and individual pens

The animal welfare issue was referred to a Working Group to report back before the end of the meeting.

4.5. Zoos and Community Education

Vice Chair Kent Vliet was unable to attend the meeting, however the Executive gave an overview of the report highlighting:

- Need for increased communication and liaison within the group
- Activities of the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA)
- Active groups in Europe, Australia and North America
- Space and husbandry standards for captive crocodylians. This issue was also discussed at the CSG Executive meeting the previous day
- Identification of community education programs in USA and Costa Rica

Action 9. Establish a Working Group (comprising Kent Vliet, Ralf Sommerlad and Rene Hedegaard) to look at the issue of “Space and husbandry standards for captive crocodylians” and report back to the CSG Executive.

Action 10. Establish a separate CSG Community Education Group, under the chairmanship of Clara Lucia Sierra Diaz (Colombia).

4.6. General Research

Val Lance gave a verbal report highlighting that science is flourishing in the crocodylian world. A recent internet search reveals some 1500 articles available online. On a sadder note, Val reported that the proposed Symposium on Crocodylia had been turned down twice, so he would no longer pursue this issue.

The report was noted.

4.7. Legal Affairs

The report from Vice Chair, Tomme Young, was noted.

5. IUCN Red List Authority

Perran Ross advised that Red List Assessments had been completed for *Crocodylus acutus*, *C. moreletii*, *C. palustris* and *C. siamensis* and these were now ready for circulation to CSG members for comment prior endorsement by the Chairman and inclusion on the website. *Crocodylus mindorensis* would be completed during the course of this Working Meeting, only leaving *Tomistoma schlegelii* and *Osteolaemus tetraspis* to be completed later. It was agreed that the assessment of *C. niloticus* could be deferred.

Action 11. Completed Red List Assessments to be circulated to CSG members for comments prior to endorsement by CSG Chair and inclusion on the CSG website.

6. Task Force/Working Group Reports

6.1. Tomistoma Task Force

The report was prepared by the TTF Chair, Bruce Shwedick, who was unable to attend the meeting, so Colin Stevenson reported on his behalf, highlighting:

- Funding support received from Virginia Aquarium and Miami Metro Zoo
- Activities and reports from Agata Staniewicz on her research in the Mesangat Lake area of East Kalimantan
- Deferral of the proposed TTF Workshop
- Work continuing on the Tomistoma Husbandry Manual

The report was noted.

6.2. Human-Crocodylian Conflict

Richard Fergusson was unable to attend the meeting but provided a written report. A working group was established under Chairmanship of Charlie Manolis to discuss progress being made by the group. The report was noted.

7. General Business

7.1. Student Research Assistance Scheme

The report presented by the Executive Officer Tom Dacey highlighted:

- 51 applications received since 2009; 47 approved, 1 withdrawn, 3 applications under consideration and 26 reports received
- Details of successful applications are now on the CSG website, and final reports are posted as they are received

The report was noted.

7.2. CSG Website

Charlie Manolis advised that the new CSG website is up and running. The report was noted.

7.3. Castillo Award

The Chairman advised that the CSG Executive had considered several nominations and the successful recipient would be announced at the closing dinner on the evening of 25 May 2012.

8. Other

8.1. Crocodylian Capacity Building Manual

The following issues were discussed:

- CITES Secretariat has advised that they are not in a position to support this proposal
- Need to take similar approach as was done for the Action Plans - allocate tasks to various members with set deadlines and appoint someone to be the co-ordinator
- It might be necessary to employ a co-ordinator to progress and finalise the Manual

Action 12. Allan “Woody” Woodward to reconvene the Crocodylian Capacity Building Working Group to review the previous Working Group report and report back on how it might be developed into a working document.

Action 13. Depending on outcomes of Action 12, advertise for expressions of interest for a CSG Communications

Officer, who could co-ordinate the finalisation of the proposed Crocodylian Capacity Building Manual.

8.2. Malawi - Implementation of CITES Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15) on ranching

Dietrich Jelden addressed the issue, highlighting the problem of Malawi increasing their annual quota from 3000 to 10,000 without any explanation and their failure to submit annual returns.

Action 14. Dietrich Jelden to draft a letter to CITES Secretariat, with a copy to Malawi.

9. Next CSG Working Meeting

Sri Lanka (Anslem de Silva) and Louisiana (Mark Merchant) made their respective presentations. After due consideration of the proposals the Executive decided that:

- The 22nd CSG Working Meeting will be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka (May 2013); and,
- The 23rd CSG Working Meeting will be held at McNeese University, Louisiana, USA (May 2014).

The meeting closed at 1730 h.

Tom Dacey, *CSG Executive Officer*, csg@wmi.com.au.
