Meetings of the CITES Animals and Plants Committees

The Africa Regional Bureau of the Species Survival Network (SSN) is once again preparing to participate in the upcoming meetings of the CITES Animals and Plants Committees, which will occur in April in Geneva. In this issue of CITES Afrique, you will find an overview of some of the issues on the Committee agendas that are important to the region. As always, SSN has prepared a document containing analysis and in-depth recommendations for each document to be discussed which will be made available to Parties very soon in order to help you prepare in advance for the meetings.

SSN is also using this edition of CITES Afrique to congratulate the governments of Madagascar and Malawi for the strong enforcement actions they have taken recently which have led to a temporary suspension of exports from Madagascar and to the arrest of poachers in Malawi. SSN also wishes to acknowledge and thank Interpol for its useful donation of a patrol plane to Kenya.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Warmest greetings,
Will Travers, Shelley Welander and Alice Stroud,
SSN Africa Regional Bureau

Latest CITES Postings and Notifications

- The CITES Secretariat withdrew the recommendation to suspend trade with Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, and Swaziland but confirmed the recommendation to suspend trade with Gabon, Nepal, Rwanda, Somalia, and the Sudan for failure to submit the questionnaire seeking information regarding the control of ivory trade by 31 December 2007 (CITES Notification Nos.2008/026/025/023/022/020/019/018/017/013/012).

- The CITES Secretariat has informed Parties that the interactive training course for enforcement officers and the information module for prosecutors and the judiciary are now available on CD-Rom upon request in English, French and Spanish (CITES Notification No. 2008/014).

- The CITES Secretariat has informed Parties about the stricter domestic measures adopted by the Philippines regarding the prohibition of the export of wild-caught specimens and the prohibition of fishing, harvesting, possession, sale and export of specimens of aquatic species (CITES Notification No. 2008/015).

- The CITES Secretariat requested that range States submit their reports to the Standing Committee on their progress in implementing Resolution Conf.12.5 on Conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix-I Asian big cat species, by 31 March 2008 (CITES Notification 2008/003).

- The CITES Secretariat has informed Parties that it has been requested to include a captive breeding facility for Nile crocodiles (Crocodylus niloticus) located in Mali in the CITES register of operations that breed Appendix I animals species. The Secretariat noted that the owner of the breeding stock could not prove its legal acquisition and that the marking of specimens does not follow the universal tagging system for the identification of crocodilians skins described in Resolution Conf.11.12 which meant that the Secretariat could not recommend acceptance of specimens from this facility, if consulted by importing countries.

- The CITES Secretariat has posted information about registration for the Standing Committee meeting (CITES Notifications 2007/047 and 2007/048). The deadline for Parties to register is 30 June 2008.

- The CITES Secretariat has posted information about registration to attend AC and PC meetings (CITES Notifications 2007/047 and 2007/048). The deadline for Parties to register is 1 April for the AC meeting and 5 April for the PC meeting.

Inside this issue:

| Highlights for AC and PC Meetings | 2 |
| Interpol Donates Plane for Anti-Poaching work | 3 |
| Local Highlights: Malawi | 3 |
| Suspension of Exports in Madagascar | 3 |
| Capacity building corner | 3 |
| SSN member of the month | 4 |
| CITES protected species of the month | 4 |

Important CITES Dates

- 31 March 2008: deadline for report on progress in implementing Resolution Conf.12.5 on trade in tigers (CITES Notification No. 2008/003)
- 1 and 5 April: registration deadlines for meetings of the Plants and Animals Committees respectively
- 14-26 April 2008 and 14-18 July 2008: meetings of the Plants and Animals Committees and of the Standing Committee in Geneva, Switzerland
- 30 June 2008: deadline for registration to attend the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee
The 17th meeting of the Plants Committee (PC) will be held in Geneva, from 15 to 19 April 2008. On 19 April, the PC will meet jointly with the Animals Committee (AC) whose 23rd meeting will take place from 19 to 24 April 2008. Parties wishing to attend either the PC or the AC meetings have to register by April 1 and April 5 respectively. Information on registration, as well as the agenda and discussion documents, are available on the CITES website.

SSN has prepared a document containing analysis and recommendations for each document to be discussed at the AC and PC meetings. This document will be published and distributed to delegates in French and in English very soon. Below we offer a brief overview of some of the issues on the agenda of the AC and PC meetings that are important to capacity-building in the region.

Regional Report to the AC for Africa: In AC23 Doc.5.1., Mr. Khaled Zahzah, the AC representative of French-speaking African countries, reports on CITES activities in Tunisia, Mali and Togo, the only three countries that submitted reports to him for inclusion in the regional report for the AC meeting. Issues covered include progress on legislation, CITES activities (such as participation in training and CITES-related meetings) and the control of illegal trade. The report includes two recommendations to the AC regarding the need for assistance with the undertaking of scientific studies in Mali, and for technical and logistical assistance in Togo. SSN supports these recommendations and encourages the AC, with the CITES Secretariat, to initiate a process to identify CITES-related difficulties encountered in the African region, and to suggest possible short-term or long-term responses to these problems. SSN recommends that this process should involve representatives from the African region, the AC, the CITES Secretariat and the broader CITES community (as well as Parties from other regions and interested NGOs). SSN encourages CITES authorities from the African region to report their difficulties to the AC and to contact their AC representatives with relevant statements and information (the two AC representatives for the African region are Mr. Khaled Zahzah from Tunisia and Mr. Richard Kione Bugiine from Kenya who can be contacted at khaledzahzah2000@yahoo.fr and rkiomen@yahoo.com respectively).

Secretariat Progress Report on the CITES Identification Manual: In AC23 Doc. 17, the Secretariat proposes to turn the CITES Identification Manual into a web-based database. SSN supports this initiative but encourages the CITES Secretariat to make sure that paper copies of the identification manual are available and distributed in sufficient number to developing countries where availability of computers and Internet access are problematic. SSN encourages CITES authorities from the African region in need of assistance with the identification of CITES-listed species to contact the CITES Secretariat and to request paper copies of the Identification Manuals and other relevant resources. Please feel free to contact SSN if you have any questions (according to the CITES website, for issues of CITES capacity-building, you can contact Stephen Nash, Head of the Capacity-building Unit of the CITES Secretariat at stephen.nash@cites.org).

CITES Rules on Transport of Live Animals: As noted in AC23 Doc.16, CITES Articles III, IV and V require that living specimens be prepared and shipped so as to minimize the risk of injury, damage to health or cruel treatment. RC 10.21 (Rev. CoP14) directs the AC to: “a) participate in meetings of the Live Animals and Perishables Board of IATA; b) examine additional references for transport of live specimens for incorporation into RC10.21 (Rev. CoP14); and d) examine regularly high mortality shipments of live specimens and make recommendations to relevant Parties, exporters, importers and transport companies on how to avoid this in the future.” Decision 14.59 directs the AC to examine new or additional references for transport of live animals in RC 10.21 (Rev. CoP14) and to report to CITES CoP15. SSN believes that many countries, particularly developing countries, do not have sufficient access to training and documentation regarding transport of live animals (such as the IATA Live Animals Regulations) and that this remains a serious impediment to their ability to implement the Convention. SSN recommends that the AC request the Secretariat to report on how live animal transport issues are incorporated into capacity-building and training programs organized by the Secretariat. SSN also recommends that the AC, with the CITES Secretariat, assess the Parties’ needs and undertake follow-up actions. SSN encourages CITES authorities from the African region to report the difficulties they encounter with having access to the rules on transport of live animals by contacting the CITES Secretariat (according to the CITES website, for issues of CITES capacity-building you can contact Stephen Nash, Head of the Capacity-building Unit of the CITES Secretariat at stephen.nash@cites.org).

International Expert Workshop on Non-detriment Findings (NDFs): at CoP14, Parties agreed to an international workshop on non-detriment findings “the main goal of which is to enhance CITES Scientific Authorities’ capacities, particularly those related to the methodologies, tools, information, expertise and other resources needed to formulate NDFs” (CITES Decision 14.49). The Steering Committee in charge of the organization of this workshop includes four Party representatives from the African region: Tony Mudakikwa for Rwanda, Sonja Meintjes for South Africa, Beatrice Khayota and Soloman Kyalo for Kenya. In AC23 Doc.10, Parties are invited to contribute to this workshop by sending the following information to their AC and PC representatives for transmission to the Steering Committee and co-chairmen of the Working Group:

1. Information related to the application by exporting countries of the IUCN Checklist (Guidance for CITES Scientific Authorities: Checklist to assist in making NDFs for Appendix II exports) during the process of making NDFs; the problems, challenges or difficulties in using the Checklist; and the application of general methodologies or procedures (checklists, guidelines, etc.) to formulate NDFs; and
2. Suggestions on experts and case studies to be considered for discussion in the different WGs (…) [see AC23 Doc.10 for guidance on the selection of case studies].

Parties attending the AC and PC are also invited to contact the Steering Committee and/or the Co-chair to provide information for the workshop. SSN, as a member of the Steering Committee, strongly supports the organization of this workshop and its potentially positive impact on capacity-building related to the making of detriment findings in the African region. SSN encourages CITES authorities from the African region to contribute by contacting the workshop organizers to describe the difficulties they encounter in the preparation of NDFs. For more information, please contact Jorge Alvarez Romero, Chair of the Steering Committee at jalvarez@conabio.gob.mx or contact the SSN Africa Regional Bureau.

Page 2
Interpol Donates an Airplane for Anti-Poaching Work in Kenya

In March, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) was the proud recipient of a new PA-18 Piper Super Cub airplane donated by Interpol. The plane will be invaluable to KWS in their operations, including anti-poaching patrols and undertaking animal census and monitoring work. Facilitated by the Chairman of the Interpol Working Group on Wildlife Crime, Mr Bill Clark, the donation of this and other enforcement equipment was inspired following the tragic death of three KWS rangers in 2007, in Garsen (in Kenya’s Tana River District), following a fierce gun battle in which 4 suspected poachers were also killed. Recovered at the scene were two AK47 rifles, along with 440 rounds of live ammunition and 300 rounds of used ammunition. Facing such well-armed and organised groups, it is clear that rangers in Kenya and other countries, can benefit greatly from donations such as this.

SSN congratulates Bill Clark and Interpol for this initiative. This donation will undoubtedly make an enormous difference to the lives of those KWS rangers working hard to protect wildlife in Kenya.

Arrests of Poachers in Malawi

Eighteen individuals were arrested in Malawi for killing a rare antelope in the Kasungu National Park in a raid which led to the confiscation of two rifles and an elephant tusk. Two of those arrested were charged with entering a protected area without permission, being found in possession of game meat and killing of protected animals. They were ordered to pay a fine of MWK 60,000 (about US$ 428) each or, in default, to serve three years imprisonment. The other sixteen people arrested are awaiting trial (The Daily Times, March 2007).

Covering an estimated 2,316 km², the Kasungu National Park is Malawi’s second largest national park after Nyika. Kasungu is situated in the Central Region, approximately 165km north of the capital city, Lilongwe, and 289km south of Mzuzu. The western side of the Park borders Zambia and the two countries have developed trans-boundary conservation areas to reinforce conservation of wildlife.

Kasungu National Park shelters numerous CITES-listed species such as lions (Panthera leo), leopards (Panthera pardus), vervet monkeys ( Chlorocebus pygerythrus), African elephants (Loxodonta africana), and hippopotamuses (Hippopotamus amphibius). Poaching is a major threat to species present in Kasungu National Park where the population of elephants is reported to have dwindled from 2000 in the 1980s to 200 or fewer today (Dr. Bhima 2007).

SSN congratulates Malawi for this raid and encourages the government to continue its efforts toward stronger enforcement of anti-poaching laws in the Park.

Suspension of Export Authorizations in Madagascar

More than one thousand reptiles and amphibians from Madagascar were seized at Johannesburg Airport in South Africa as they were headed to the Czech Republic. The illegal shipment, which included protected species of snakes, chameleons and frogs, left the Ivato International Airport early in March and was discovered at the Johannesburg Airport by South African customs officers who were alerted by a strong smell stemming from the boxes. About 1,594 animals were carelessly piled in three boxes weighing 95 kg. Due to the unsustainable transport conditions, and because the buyer of the shipment did not pick up the boxes in a timely fashion, some of the animals had died and started to decompose. Between 600 and 700 surviving animals were transferred to the Johannesburg Zoo to receive proper care pending their repatriation.

The Honorable Harison Randriarimanana, Minister for the Environment, Water and Forests in Madagascar, took a strong stand in response to the seizure of this shipment by suspending export authorizations and by stating that approval will be reconsidered following newly established process. Madagascar presently has seventeen approved exporters and all are affected by this governmental measure. The exporter involved in the shipment to South Africa, if convicted, faces a penalty of 2 to 10 years imprisonment and a fine of MGA 100 to 200 millions (US$ 59,875 to US$ 119,750) (L’Express de Madagascar, March 2008).

SSN congratulates the government of Madagascar for its commitment to strong enforcement and hopes that pending investigations of this case will be successful. Please do not hesitate to contact the SSN Africa Regional Bureau if you need more information about international trade in reptiles and amphibians.

Capacity-building Corner

Useful publications:

♦ Born Free Fact Sheet on vervet monkeys ( Chlorocebus pygerythrus) available in English at <http://www.bornfree.org.uk/animals/vervet-monkeys/facts>

Useful websites:

SSN Member of the Month: Care for the Wild International (CWI)

Organization Profile:
President: Dr. Barbara Maas
Date of creation: 1984
Mission Statement: Protecting wildlife from cruelty and exploitation around the world.
Projects in Africa located in: Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Sudan, Zimbabwe
Website: http://www.careforthwild.com

Local Project: Construction of a Ranger Station to Strengthen Anti-poaching Work in the Serengeti’s Western Corridor.

The Serengeti’s Western Corridor is a forested area of approximately 350 km² which is an important stopover for two million migrating animals including wildebeests, zebras and gazelles. In order to strengthen local efforts against poaching, CWI raised funds for the construction of a new ranger station in the area and for the purchase of a Land Rover to enable rangers to make anti-poaching patrols. Construction of the Ndabaka Ranger Station was completed in September 2006. One of the key challenges for anti-poaching patrols in the area is the protection of the 14 remaining black rhinoceroses, a species listed as Critically Endangered by IUCN that has been decimated by poachers. About 1000 poachers are arrested by local rangers in the Serengeti National Park each year. Additional information about CWI’s anti-poaching work is available online.

Contact Information:
Care for the Wild
Dr. Barbara Maas, President
The Granary
Tickfold Farm
Kingsfold
West Sussex
RH12 3SE
United Kingdom
Telephone: +44 (0) 1306 627900
Fax: +44 (0) 1306 627901
Email: bmaas@careforthwild.com

CITES Protected Species of the Month

**Name:** Orchid; orchidée (no common name) (*Aerangis ellisi*)
**CITES listing:** Appendix I
**CITES Trade levels (WCMC trade database 2007):** Between 2000 and 2007, exports of *Aerangis ellisi* amounted to 106 cultured and 295 live specimens. Main exporters were France and Madagascar. Main importers were the United States, the Netherlands and Australia.

**IUCN Category:** Endangered

**Threats:** Severe destruction of habitat; chief pollinators on the verge of extinction; collection for international trade

**Range States:** Madagascar

**Useful Resources:** <http://www.orchidconservation.org/osg>
(IUCN/SSC Orchids Specialist Group (in French, Spanish and English); *The role of CITES in orchid conservation*, Roddy Gabel, Chief of the Division of Scientific Authority in the Service’s International Affairs Program in Arlington, Virginia (Michigan, School of Natural Resources and Environment, January-March 2006)

**Name:** Radiated Tortoise; Tortue Rayonnée (*Astrochelys radiata*)
**CITES listing:** Appendix I
**CITES Trade levels (WCMC trade database 2007):** Between 2000 and 2007, exports of radiated tortoises amounted to 101 bodies, 6 carapaces, 1112 live animals, and 600 specimens. Main exporting countries were Madagascar and France. Main importing countries were Germany, Madagascar, the United States and Switzerland.

**IUCN category:** Vulnerable (IUCN 1996) - status is being reviewed for 2008 Red List Assessment

**Threats:** Habitat loss/degradation; collection for consumption and the wildlife trade

**Range States:** Madagascar, Mauritius (introduced), Réunion (introduced)

**Useful Websites:** Fact Sheet on Radiated Tortoise <http://www.cheloniophiles.com/Fiches/Astrochelys>; IUCN/SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group <http://www.iucn-tftsg.org/red-list>

**Editorial Note:** An error was inadvertently included in the February issue of the newsletter - rhinoceroses (*Diceros bicornis*) are not present in the Bafing Fauna Reservation of Mali. We apologize for any inconvenience this error might have caused.