

## **Crocodile Specialist Group Steering Committee Meeting**

**Skukuza, Kruger National Park, South Africa**

22 May 2016

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### **Minutes & Actions from Siem Reap, Cambodia, Meeting, 24 May 2015**

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**Present:**

**Steering Committee:** Grahame Webb, Alejandro Larriera, Tom Dacey, Charlie Manolis, John Caldwell, Mark Merchant, Simone Comparini, Yoichi Takehara, Choon Heong Koh, Christine Lippai, Lonnie McCaskill, Perran Ross, Paolo Martelli, Samuel Martin

**Others:** H.E. Eng Cheasan, Natascha Behler, Sukenao Iida, Olivia Plume, Srun Limsong, Ouk Vibol, Michael Meyerhoff, Rainier Manalo, Michael Cruz, Ricardo Alfonso Reina, Samson Samuel, Teri Aquino, Sally Isberg, Matthew Shirley, Akira Matsuda, Heng Sovannara, Jackson Frechette, Geoff McClure, Brian Wright, Han Sam, Sisaket Chin, Ratanapich Nhels, Agata Staniewicz, Hernando Zambrano, Jesse Davidson, Helen Crowley.

**Apologies:**

**Steering Committee:** Dietrich Jelden, Howard Kelly, Alison Leslie, Guy Apollinaire Mensah, Jiang Hongxing, Dr. Giam, Eric Langelet, Steve Peucker, Anslem de Silva, Ruchira Somaweera, Maheswar Dhakal, Raju Vyas, Abdul Aleem Choudhury, Asghar Mobaraki, S.M.A. Rashid, Alvaro Velasco, Alfonso Llobet, Carlos Piña, Hesiquio Benítez Dias, Marisa Tellez, Luis Bassetti, Sergio Medrano-Bitar, Manuel Tabet, Bernardo Ortiz, Jon Hutton, Ralf Sommerlad, Ruth Elsey, Allan Woodward, Noel Kinler, Frank Mazzotti, Thomas Rainwater, Yoshio Kaneko, Hank Jenkins, Don Ashley, Kevin van Jaarsveldt, Jorge Saieh, Thomas Kralle, Chris Plott, James McGregor, Steve Broad, Kent Vliet, Val Lance, Curt Harbsmeier, Bruce Shwedick.

**Other CSG members:** Chris Banks, Olivier Behra, John Brueggen.

## **1. Executive Reports**

### **1.1. Chairman's Report**

The CSG Chairman, Grahame Webb, opened the meeting at 9 am, welcomed participants and particularly thanked Cambodia for hosting the regional meeting. One minute's silence was held for the loss of two CSG members since the last Steering Committee meeting in Louisiana - Prof. Charles Santiapillai (Sri Lanka) and Rafael Crespo Jr. (USA).

Members were advised of the following future meetings:

- 30 August-3 September 2015: 28th Meeting of the CITES Animals Committee, Tel Aviv, Israel.

- 15-18 September 2015: 3rd SSC Specialist Group Leaders Meeting, Abu Dhabi, UAE.
- 11-15 January 2016: 66th Meeting of the CITES Standing Committee, Geneva, Switzerland.
- 23-26 May 2016: 24th Working Meeting of the Crocodile Specialist Group, Nombolo Ndhului Conference Centre, Skukuza Rest Camp, Kruger National Park, South Africa. The working meeting will be preceded by a meeting of the CSG Steering Committee on 22 May 2016.
- October 2016: 17th Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP17), Cape Town, South Africa.

Definite amendment proposals for crocodylians at CoP17 will be:

- Malaysia will be submitting a proposal for the transfer of the Malaysian population of *C. porosus* to Appendix II, with zero quotas for Sabah and Peninsular Malaysia, but which allows Sarawak to implement a program better linked to the increasing human-crocodile conflict they are experiencing.

Possible amendment proponents that CSG members are aware of may include:

- Mexico has been considering a proposal to lift the zero quota in order to implement a ranching program with *C. moreletii*.
- Madagascar is considering submission of a proposal to transfer its population of *C. niloticus* from Appendix II (ranching) to Appendix II (unqualified).
- Colombia may put forward another proposal for the Cispatá Bay population of *C. acutus*.
- Cambodia has been considering whether a proposal to amend the Appendices of CITES is a mechanism through which the extensive captive breeding of *C. siamensis* could be better regulated.

The Chair advised that the CSG was always prepared to assist proponents, through the review of proposals, if requested to do so.

#### Country Reviews

Two CSG reviews were completed within the last year: Ethiopia (see SC.3.1) and Indonesia (see SC.3.2).

#### Steering Committee

Dr. Mark Merchant was added as Joint Vice Chairman for General Research following the Louisiana meeting (May 2014).

The report was noted.

## **1.2. Minutes and actions from SC Meeting, Lake Charles, Louisiana**

The agreed Minutes and Actions from the previous meeting were noted with the opportunity of participants to comment on any issues.

### **1.3. Executive Officer's Report**

The Executive Officer presented his report, highlighting:

- Current CSG Steering Committee membership is 67 people
- CSG membership is 541 people in 63 countries
- Regional Offices are currently maintained in Latin America and the Caribbean (Argentina), South Asia & Iran (Sri Lanka) and East and Southern Africa (South Africa)
- The CSG Student Research Assistance Scheme has seen 84 applications approved since its inception (2009), and two further applications are currently under consideration. An additional application was approved under the Fritz Huchzermeyer Veterinary Science Student Research Assistance Scheme.

The report was noted.

### **1.4. CSG/IACS Financial Report**

The IACS bank balance at 31 March 2015 was \$AUD806,360 (approximately \$US547,000). The IACS Annual General Meeting was held on 31 October 2014, noting the Audit report and approving the re-election of office bearers.

The Conservation Education Fund (CEF) initiated in Louisiana with a \$US5000 donation from Ashley & Associates had now been supplemented by a recent \$US20,000 donation from Golden Ranch Farms (USA). The strategy and protocols for the CEF are still being developed with Don Ashley.

The Financial reports, IACS annual report and IACS audit statement were noted.

## **2. Regional Reports**

### **2.1. Cambodia**

Fisheries Administration, the Cambodian CITES Scientific Authority (CITES Management Authority in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries), aims to promote the conservation of wild populations and the development of sustainable crocodile farming which can contribute to wild crocodile conservation, people's livelihood and national economic growth. To achieve this a National Strategic Plan for crocodile management and development is being formulated with all internal stakeholders, including the CSG Siamese Crocodile Task Force.

Cambodia would like to propose a down-listing of *C. siamensis* from CITES Appendix I to Appendix II. Given the unique situation with large numbers of village level farms with a satellite-farm system, that do not rest easily with the CITES captive-breeding resolutions, it was recommended that early consultation be undertaken with the CITES Secretariat, the European Union and some Parties, particularly the United States of America, to seek technical advice.

### 3. Review Updates

#### 3.1. Ethiopia Review

Matthew Shirley provided an overview of the Ethiopia Review report and highlighted the report recommendations:

- “1. We consider the development of a formal *Ethiopian Nile Crocodile Management Plan* to provide a united operational framework for crocodile conservation and management a priority.

Issues that need to be addressed in the process of deriving this plan include:

- a. The biological and economic sustainability of both the ranching and trophy hunting programs;
  - b. The implementation of a formal, preferably annual, population monitoring program;
  - c. Significant improvement of reporting internally and internationally;
  - d. A clear and transparent protocol for setting hatchling harvest quotas.
2. We identified several administrative and practical problems of compliance with CITES Article IV (non-detriment) and the specific requirements of the CITES “Ranching Resolution” [Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15)].
  3. EWCA activities with and trade of Nile crocodiles would be improved if a clear focal point for Nile crocodile issues is identified within the CITES Scientific Authority. Ideally this focal point will work collaboratively with SNNPRS.
  4. The commercial viability of AMCR could be improved if a business plan were developed that fully integrates all potential aspects of the operation.”

The full report by Matthew Shirley, Ludwig Siege and Meseret Ademasu is available on the CSG website at: <http://www.iucncsg.org/pages/Publications.html>

The Chairman congratulated Matt and his co-authors for an excellent review report.

The report was noted.

#### 3.2. Indonesia Review

The Chair reported on the review mission to Indonesia and outlined the issues addressed:

1. Ranching and Compliance with CITES. The extent to which Indonesia’s current ranching program and skin exports were compliant with CITES.
2. Options for conservation of crocodiles in Lake Mesangat, East Kalimantan. This has been a long standing issue for the CSG, as:

- a. The area represents one of the last global strongholds for wild *C. siamensis*;
  - b. Effect of habitat modification and destruction at Lake Mesangat for oil palm plantations. Since the review visit took place, more water diversion activities appear to have taken place, lowering the water levels in the lake and threatening the survival of the crocodiles and their habitats, and the use of the lake to support local livelihoods through fishing. It appears that a UK corporation owns the leases but plantation work is being undertaken by a Malaysian company.
  - c. The issue is politically complex and there does not appear to be an immediate solution.
3. Increasing Human-Crocodile Conflict, particularly in the West Timor region was an issue raised by Indonesia. The frequency of reported incidents are understated in the media.
  4. General farm productivity issues.

The full report by Matthew Brien, Bruce Shwedick, Lonnie McCaskill, Widodo Ramono and Grahame Webb is available on the CSG website at: <http://www.iucncsg.org/pages/Publications.html>

NOTE: Grahame Webb reported that despite the mission to Indonesia being very successful, there was increasing evidence that Lake Mesangat was still in real danger of being drained in the dry season by water diversion levees, and if so, the future of *C. siamensis* could not be guaranteed. The ability of Lake Mesangat to support local livelihoods, though fishing, was also now being questioned.

An extensive side-meeting was held to discuss the status of Lake Mesangat during the meeting and it was resolved to write to the Minister of Forestry (Jakarta) about the concerns. The first step is to conduct an analysis of aerial/satellite images, and perhaps to gain current images allowing the full extent of habitat modification to be quantified. It appears that the parent company operating the palm oil plantations has subsidiaries, including a Malaysian company, doing the actual planting. Concern was raised over funds donated for crocodile work in Lake Mesangat not being used for that purpose.

The report was noted.

#### **4. Thematic Group Reports**

Paolo Martelli, Vice Chair of the Veterinary Science group, indicated that although only one year had passed since the last meeting it had been a densely packed year.

1. The Fritz Huchzermeyer Veterinary Science Student Research Assistance Scheme was established to honour and remember Dr. Fritz Huchzermeyer (1930-2014), founder of the Veterinary Science group, and whose contribution to crocodylian veterinary

science was substantial and inspiring. The first recipient of the grant is Dr. Jose Fernando Aguilera Gonzales, who is studying the health of the American crocodile population in the Tempisque River, Costa Rica.

2. CSG Veterinary Science group mailing list and CSG Newsletter. The veterinary list had seen a surge in activity and interest last year and a bit of a dip this year. However a number of interesting cases have been shared between crocodylian veterinary professionals globally. We have contributed to the CSG Newsletter in the form of a section summarizing recent group events.
3. Workshops at the CSG meetings. The Veterinary Science group continues to be active at every CSG meeting. In 2014 the group was able to act on the commitment made in Sri Lanka in 2012 to hold workshops. This year we are holding a veterinary and husbandry workshop at a local farm, intended to help Cambodian farmers but attended by numerous other participants across the CSG membership.
4. Website updates. Resources provided by the group on the CSG website were updated with additional material, including guidelines on the humane euthanasia of crocodylians.
5. Meeting on comparative crocodile health management: the experience of Thailand and Australia. This meeting was organized by Dr. Parntep Ratanakorn on 20-21 June 2014 at Mahidol University. Dr. Cathy Shilton and Dr. Paolo Martelli, co-vice chairs of the CSG Veterinary Science group, were invited to compare and discuss the Thai and Australian experiences with crocodile diseases. The meeting was productive and the tour of some crocodile farms was very instructive.

The report was noted.

## **5. IUCN Red List Authority**

Perran Ross highlighted species that still need to be completed, in order of priority: *Crocodylus intermedius* - CR; *Alligator sinensis* - CR; *Melanosuchus niger* - EN; *C. niloticus* - eastern clade; western clade *C. suchus*; *Osteolaemus tetraspis* - VU; *C. johnstoni* - LR.

Constraints on CSG's capacity to conduct assessments are primarily identifying teams and team leaders to collect and format the required information. The Chairman requested members to assist Perran with the assessment work and agreed with Perran's suggestion that he should select some suitable understudies from the CSG Future Leader's Group to assist with the work.

The report was noted.

## **6. Task Force/Working Group Reports**

### **6.1. Tomistoma Task Force**

The TTF Chair, Bruce Shwedick was unable to attend the meeting, but provided a report on recent activities. Grahame Webb provided an overview of the success of the CSG-TTF and its ability to raise funding to support various Tomistoma projects, under the umbrella of the CSG. Perhaps this is a model that could be adopted by other existing and future Task Forces.

The report was noted.

## **6.2. Human Crocodile Conflict Working Group**

Charlie Manolis provided a verbal report on the activities of the HCC Working Group, advising that the Working Group had previously agreed to focus on developing case studies. This had been completed and there is no further need for the Working Group at this stage. HCC remains a serious problem when conservation of large predatory crocodiles has been successful and the wild populations increase, and is clearly a serious constraint on sustaining the recovered wild populations.

It was suggested that the CSG compile everything that we have on HCC and add it to the CSG website for information. Such information does not need to be of a technical nature.

## **6.3. Siamese Crocodile Task Force**

A report had been provided by the Chair of the Siamese Crocodile Task Force, Dr. Parntep Ratanakorn. However, as the Siamese Crocodile Task Force was meeting later the same day, it was suggested that discussion be deferred to that meeting and the outcomes reported back during the meeting.

### **Minutes of the Siamese Crocodile Task Force Meeting**

1. Cambodia update by Heng Sovannara. Papers describing the restocking and release programs are being presented within the meeting sessions:
  - a. WCS Program - including releases
  - b. FFI Program - including releases
  - c. Plans to release crocodiles every year
  - d. Cambodia considers that a proposal to CITES to downlist *C. siamensis* from Appendix I to Appendix II at CITES CoP17 would be beneficial as it would allow conservation efforts to be better integrated with the large number of farms producing *C. siamensis* more as domestic animals.
  - e. Update on crocodile farmers association: currently some 1000 farms, mostly small village level, producing 500,000 hatchlings annually.
2. Thailand update by Yosapong Temsiripong:
  - a. Update from Department of Fisheries:
    - i. Initiated the Smart Farmer Program in 2014 to standardize crocodile farmers with Good Aquaculture Practice (GAP) standard for crocodile growers and breeders.

- ii. On 23 July 2014 Department of Fisheries together with reporters paid a visit a crocodile farm and manufacturer in Ayutthaya Province.
  - iii. On 25 July 2014 Department of Fisheries ran a whole day program at Bueng Boraphet Wildlife Reserve to raise awareness for crocodile conservation with the following activities:
    - 1. Siamese crocodile education, re-introduction and conservation exhibition
    - 2. Siamese crocodile health examination demonstration and blood collection.
    - 3. Siamese crocodile egg hatching demonstration.
    - 4. Siamese crocodile handling demonstration.
  - iv. Improve community program to protect natural habitat for crocodile conservation at two study sites:
    - 1. Bueng Boraphet Wildlife Reserve, Nakornsawan Province
    - 2. Nam Oun Reservoir, Sakol Nakorn Province.
- b. A further release project is underway and well advanced at Yod Dome Wildlife Sanctuary, Ubon Ratchathani Province. The goal is to release 10 adults already on site. Details of this challenging program are contained in a presentation within the main meeting. As expected at any potential release site in Thailand, there has been some villager resistance, based on fear that the crocodiles will spread outside the sanctuary. This is being addressed through ongoing consultation with local people. The experiment will hopefully provide more guidance on how to engineer or create incentives for local people to support releases of different sized animals, emphasizing the importance of public consultation and education, and the socio-economic context that will ultimately dictate success or failure.
- c. Development Agency (ARDA), a Public Organisation, verbally agrees with the Department of Fisheries to support funding for conservation and husbandry research projects. In March 2013, Dr. Wimol Jantrarotai, DG, Department of Fisheries, signed an MOU with CMAT to continue a re-introduction program with private funding, which is still being sourced. CMAT has submitted 12 potential research projects; 2 conservation projects; 9 health and husbandry projects; and, a genome project.
3. Discussion of CITES downlisting in Thailand and Cambodia:
- a. Thailand's proposals at CoP16 to downlist *C. siamensis* and *C. siamensis* were not reviewed by the CSG until after submission, and they relied too heavily on "intended" rather than "implemented" conservation actions - they did not win support from the Parties.
  - b. The CSG considers the situation in Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam to be quite unique and not one envisaged by CITES when it was drafted. Namely, some 3000 village level farms in the region, which commercially raise what are essentially domestic animals, when the remnant wild populations are seriously depleted and in Thailand and Vietnam, close to extinction. Furthermore, the satellite farming situation is the only one that seems to be able to work (versus registering 3000 farms), yet satellite



farming is not really sanctioned by Resolution Conf. 12.10 (Rev. CoP15) nor forewarned in the Convention text. Hence it may require the Parties to fully consider this production system and make some determination or resolution. Advice from a range of Parties and from the CITES Secretariat on this exceptional case may be needed.

- c. The issue of a regional versus national approach may need to be considered, along with the implications of any future general trade agreement allowing free trade between the Range States.
  - d. High-end fashion companies are increasingly required to ensure the supply chains of raw products (crocodile skins) are legal, sustainable and verifiable and ideally assist the livelihoods of local people involved in production.
  - e. Multi-national/regional approach through ASEAN-WEN for enforcement of Wildlife Act.
4. Still a need to strengthen networking of the SCTF in the region through:
    - a. Technical visits and gap analysis;
    - b. Convening meetings to examine specific issues;
    - c. Fostering cooperation between all people involved in release and restocking.
  5. Crocodile Health Research Centre (CHRC) established at Faculty of Veterinary Science, Mahidol University, Thailand:
    - a. Diagnosis of crocodile diseases for farmers in the region.
    - b. Research in crocodile health management.
    - c. Capacity building for crocodile veterinarians and farmers in the region.
    - d. Networking with other crocodile veterinarians in the world.

#### **6.4. Crocodilian Capacity Building Manual**

Perran Ross presented his report advising that the CCBM was to be an online living “Wikipedia” style living document. Contents of the CCMB are introductory accounts for major topics and links to key literature and other resources. To date 27 out of 40 sections had been completed. The next step will be to release the available material for open review and “crowd source” updating and revision.

It was agreed that CCBM be incorporated into the CSG website as soon as possible and updated as further information becomes available. Although not publically released at this stage the draft material can viewed at: <http://www.iucncsg.org/pages/CCBM.html>.

The report was noted.

**Follow up action:** Available material, provided by Perran Ross, has been added to the CSG website by Colin Stevenson and the CCBM was launched in ????

## 7. General Business

### 7.1. Management of *Caiman crocodilus fuscus* in Colombia

By way of background, the CSG has a long history of acknowledging the technological sophistication of the crocodilian farming industry in Colombia, which is based on captive breeding, but the CSG has an equally long history of expressing concerns about the laundering of wild skins (or skins derived from ranched juveniles grown on farms) by farms and traders. Very extensive discussions about this illegal trade, which has been ongoing, were undertaken most recently at the last CSG Working Meeting (Louisiana, May 2014), as documented in the Minutes, accepted unanimously as a true and accurate record at this meeting (see SC.1.2 above).

CSG Deputy Chairman, Alejandro Larriera, introduced Mr. Ricardo Reina from the Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible (MADS) which is the National Ministry and CITES Management Authority of Colombia. We are most grateful to Mr. Reina for attending and updating the CSG Steering Committee on the considerable progress that has been made since the 2014 meeting.

Mr. Reina circulated a brochure entitled “Sustainable use of *Caiman crocodilus* in Colombia”, as a further resource associated with his verbal report.

Since the CSG Meeting in Louisiana the National Ministry (MADS) has carried out on-site reviews of 44 farms, confirming irregularities in 7 (16%) which had been receiving annual CITES Export Certificates. These farms have been banned from receiving any further CITES Export Certificates.

During 2015, jurisdiction for controlling and regulating farms will be returned to MADS (national level) after a long period in which it had been the responsibility of the Autonomous Regional Corporations (State or Provincial level).

Various other changes have been self-imposed by Colombia. For example the cutting of the 10th scute on the tail of captive-bred hatchlings has now been mandatory for 7 years, so that all exported skins should now have the “scar button”.

MADS now has inspectors checking skins at the point of export for both the correct tags and to ensure the tail with the 10th scute removed and healed, is included. It was recognized that it will be necessary to improve surveillance instruments and controls within the schemes that already exist, and an agreement with the National University of Colombia, to apply genetic techniques to traceability issues, is under consideration.

Experiments with mixed model farming (production through captive breeding and sustainable ranching) will be boosted in 2015-2016. The first step is to obtain cultural, social, economic and ecological knowledge of both *C. crocodilus* and the human communities associated with their use. In 2015 an agreement was signed between the Colombian CITES Management Authority and the Institute of Natural Sciences of the National University of Colombia (CITES Scientific Authority), to

apply this strategy on four pilot sites during 2015-2016. Generating agreements between local communities and captive breeding farms will be part of this process.

Colombia considers that it may take another 5 years (2010) before any final program incorporating captive breeding and wild harvest, through ranching or direct harvest, will be finalized and fully implemented.

A new “National Plan for the Sustainable Use of *Caiman crocodilus* is being developed. The primary objective is to increase the efficiency of *C. crocodilus* controls and tracking patterns of use.

It remains the intention of MADS to assess farms with regard to production capacity in 2015, using a series of theoretical criteria and indicators, as a basis for issuing CITES Export Quotas in the immediate future.

**NOTE:** The CSG Chair congratulated Colombia for ceasing to issue CITES permits to the 16% of farms that the Ministry discovered had no capacity to fulfill production through captive breeding, yet had been exporting skins against those permits. Increased controls and inspections were considered a proactive intervention against illegal trade. Increasing investigations into ways legal ranching and perhaps wild harvest could be integrated into the Colombian production systems, currently restricted to captive breeding, is welcomed.

That it may take a further 5 years before a legal ranching system is fully integrated with production from captive breeding could be problematic to Colombia. It suggests the Parties to CITES, including the EU, will be prepared to continue accepting skin shipments with a captive breeding source code, despite various routes through those shipments may continue to include ranched animals. This is an issue which should be discussed with the CITES Standing Committee Working Group looking at the misuse of source codes.

In the Colombian CITES notification (Notification 2014/033) exports of skins without the hatchling scar on the tail tip is wisely prohibited, which excludes flanks (unless paired with the tail tip and scar). This prevents the ongoing harvest of wild skins for flanks (without the hatchling scar).

A possible option for Colombia to consider would be to pass domestic legislation permitting an experimental ranching program, while the ranching program was being developed, and perhaps marking them with a different cut tail scute, so a ranching source code could be used for them.

Given the complexities of the issues the Chair undertook to have further discussions with the Colombians present at the meeting. An informal but extensive meeting was held with Grahame Webb (CSG Chair), Alejandro Larriera (CSG Deputy Chair), Hernando Zambrano (Kaiser Farms, Colombia) and Ricardo Reina (MADS, Colombia), in which consensus was reached about the need to address the source code issue expediently, with discussion of various options and constraints for doing so, in the hope that it may assist the current efforts by MADS to meet its long-term goals.

**Follow up action:** 6-6-15 GW emailed to Ricardo Alfonso Reina copy of discussions in Siem Reap, together with CITES trade database figures, 1990 to 2013, and suggestions of possible courses of actions.

**Agenda Item SC 2.2 (Skukuza meeting) refers.**

## **7.2. CITES Animals and Plants Committees Working Group on Captive Breeding**

A report had been provided by the Deputy Chairman Dietrich Jelden, who unfortunately was unable to attend the meeting.

Deputy Chairman, Alejandro Larriera, who participated in the deliberations of the Working Group on Captive Breeding, provided a verbal update, highlighting the two major problems involved: the incorrect misuse of source codes; and, the deliberate misuse of source codes.

The report was noted.

## **7.3. Madagascar Crocodile Conservation and Sustainable Use Program**

Grahame Webb introduced the item and gave a broad overview of the diversity and complexity of the issues in Madagascar. Charlie Manolis (CM) introduced a brief background to the Madagascar Crocodile Conservation and Sustainable Use Program (MSSCUP), which was established in late 2014 with financial support from Kering, to assist Madagascar to improve its management based on sustainable use and improvement of benefits to livelihoods.

MCCSUP was officially launched in October 2014, and a Crocodile Management Unit (CMU) was established within the Direction General des Forets (DGF) to act as the focal point for all crocodile issues. In April 2015 CM and Christine Lippai (CL) visited Madagascar to assist CMU/DGF to develop a workplan for 2015, using a novel Report Card Format, developed for this purpose.

A draft workplan has now been developed and is about to be finalized, which will enable the commencement of some key activities, including regulation of the artisanal crocodile leather industry, wild harvest, problem crocodile program, egg harvest, ranches, etc. The wild skin and egg harvests provide indices of the wild population, and together with population surveys should provide Government with a mechanism to monitor the impact of harvesting.

It is clear that the current Appendix-II listing based on ranching is not appropriate for Madagascar, and it has long been suggested that Madagascar seek an unqualified Appendix-II listing, that would cover the wild skin harvest as well.

The CSG's Student Research Assistance Scheme is an avenue through which the MCCSUP can invest specifically to encourage Malagasy students to research crocodiles, and thus contribute to capacity building. This has generated a good deal of interest at the University.

Helen Crowley (HC) advised that Kering, a key supporter of the MCCSUP, wants companies associated with it to engage in sustainable sourcing of raw products, to improve traceability, sustainability and where possible, assistance to livelihoods. HC gave a brief outline of their cooperation and collaboration with the International Trade Centre and the IUCN-SSC Boa and Python Specialist Group, to achieve the same goals with python skins, which is meeting with considerable success. Hence their interest and support to achieve more robust management of the crocodile skin industry in Madagascar.

**NOTE:** The two key CSG Members involved with MCCSUP to date have been Christine Lippai and Charlie Manolis who will be conducting a further capacity building mission to Madagascar in June 2015.

### **Agenda Item 2.1 (Skukuza meeting) refers**

#### **7.4. Junior CSG Program**

The report prepared by CSG member, Kelly Silvano, was elaborated by Mark Merchant, highlighting:

##### Overall Management of the Program

Kelly Silvano - Director of an NGO Collective ConSERVation (CC) has implemented a program in the USA, which is endorsed by the CSG and IACS, but managed completely by CC with assistance from some key people. Memberships, programs, events and financials discussed. Others involved include:

Shawn Heflick - Director at Crocodile Manor and Crocodile University. A major sponsor and assists with Junior CSG Program in many ways: coordinates sponsorships, develops working concepts, provides marketing strategies and promotional venues.

Jennifer Andringa - Animal Keeper at Disney Animal Kingdom. Responsible for the continuing education for members; manages the Twitter and Instagram feeds; corresponds with members, keeping them involved with activities.

##### Support from other CSG Members

Mark Merchant, CSG advisor and overall program guidance. Flavio Morrissiey, major sponsor of the Junior CSG Program and provides animals for use at events. Rob Carmichael, promotional and fundraising; speaker at TAG meetings on behalf of Junior CSG Program. Matt Shirley, provided updated range maps for the poster. Soham Mukherjee, provided numerous photos for the Junior CSG poster.

##### Activities

- Through social media we reach out to children, providing them with educational and entertaining information regarding alligators and crocodiles
- Attend events to bring awareness to children about crocodilians and how they can become members of a group of people dedicated to maintaining the species.
  - EcoAdventures with Mei Len and Brady Barr - Millersville, MD
  - Exotic Pet Amnesty Day - Kissimmee FL

- 5K Run for Gharials - Clemont, FL
- Canadian Reptile Breeders' Expo - Toronto, ON
- North American Reptile Breeders' Conference - Tinley, IL
- Croctoberfest – Wildlife Discovery Center - Lake Forrest IL
- As memberships increase, so will the activity level. We have television personalities lined up to record interactive videos for the members and future members will be encouraged to:
  - get involved with a species via a blog from a research project;
  - take or draw pictures of their favorite species and send it to us; and
  - seek out information, articles, etc. regarding the conservation of a species.

#### Partnerships and sponsors

- Mazuri, a division of Purina and is responsible for their exotic pet foods
- 4% of all sales of their crocodilian diets will be donated each quarter
- Promotional items such as water bottles, notepads, lunchbags, etc., are being shipped to us for giveaways at our events.
- Updates on the Junior CSG program will appear in their quarterly newsletter.

Sponsors who have committed to \$US2500 or more:

- Shawn Heflick, Crocodile University
- Flavio Morrissiey, Gator Adventure Productions
- Grant Crossman, Canadian Reptile Breeders' Expo

The report and update were noted.

**NOTE:** The Chairman congratulated Kelly Silvano, Shawn Heflick, Jennifer Andringa and Mark Merchant for implementing this important new initiative. The ground roots experience being gained was invaluable for assessing options for expanding the concept as a global network. The Chairman later met and discussed future options and concepts with Shawn Heflick.

### **7.5. Future Leadership Working Group**

A late paper provided by Matthew Shirley was added to the agenda so people had not had an opportunity to review the document. (Copy attached to these minutes).

Matthew Shirley addressed the meeting outlining the background to the establishment of a Future Leader's Task Force/Future Leadership Working Group. At this point in time Matthew and Marisa Tellez were the chief liaison officers for the group.

Grahame Webb reiterated the need for the CSG to begin selecting suitable younger members for development as future leaders in the CSG. He stated that the science side of things is not a problem, however, the important issue is the diversity of skills required for a wider range of complex issues associated with ground roots conservation, particularly bio-politics.

**Action:** Recommended that the paper provided by Matthew Shirley be submitted to the CSG Executive for consideration, discussion and decision.

**NOTE:** The Executive Members discussed the paper and in consultation with Matt Shirley and Sally Isberg from the Future Leaders Working Group decided that efforts should be made to give a more intensive leadership course to at least four members of the group selected by Matt Shirley, supported by donors or CSG core funds, and to maximize their representation at CITES CoP17.

**Agenda Item 4.3 (Skukuza meeting) refers**

**8. 24<sup>th</sup> CSG Working Meeting – Kruger National Park, South Africa, 23-26 May 2016**

Christine Lippai updated the meeting on progress with the next proposed CSG Working Meeting in South Africa (May 2016). Accommodation at the Skukuza Rest Camp has been block-booked for the event and a special code will be developed - most likely CSG2016SouthAfrica - that will have to be presented to the SANParks booking office to benefit from a special discounted accommodation rate for CSG delegates. The ME Tourism has waived the daily Conservation Fee, which could amount to quite a substantial amount for foreign visitors (\$US25 per day).

The meeting website is about to be completed and will be up and running by the end of the month. The Logo has been designed and the theme will be “CROCODILES, COMMUNITIES & LIVELIHOODS”.

A veterinary workshop will be organised for Saturday 21 May - details will be posted onto the website. The CSG Steering Committee will hold its meeting on Sunday 22 May 2016.

The 4-day event will include the following themes, which will be refined over the next couple of months, but are in general: Trade; Husbandry; Veterinary & Research; and Conservation & Ecology.

Social events will be organised each evening; Welcome Banquet on Monday; Braai at a Boma in the Bush on Tuesday; Poster Cheese & Wine on Wednesday; and closing Banquet and Auction on Thursday.

Golf Tournament: Some people may recall that a golf tournament was held at the Victoria Falls meeting in 1992. Some CSG members have suggested that it might be good to host another golf tournament. A notification will be included onto the website to have an idea of the level of interest in organising such an event. A golf course is available at the Skukuza Rest Camp and golf equipment can be arranged.

The report was noted.

**9. Other Business**

**9.1. 3rd West & Central Africa Sub-Regional Meeting**

Matt Shirley reported that the 3rd West & Central Africa Sub-Regional Meeting that was scheduled to be held in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, in November 2014, but had

to be cancelled because of the Ebola outbreak in the West African region was again being reconsidered for early December 2015.

Grahame Webb commented that the proposed December 2015 date was close to the May 2016 date for the 24th CSG Working Meeting in South Africa and it may be better to combine both meetings in South Africa, and use the funds allocated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> West & Central African Sub-Regional Meeting to assist key delegates which would require it to attend the South African meeting where they could participate in the whole working meeting as well as advance sub-regional issues. This matter should be discussed and considered by Matt Shirley in consultation with potential participants and advise the Executive accordingly.

Tom Dacey, CSG Executive Officer

**The 3rd West & Central Africa Sub-Regional Meeting was held at the University of Nangui Abrogoura, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, 8-10 December 2015. Report on the meeting is at Agenda Item 2.2. (Skukuza meeting).**