

WORLD TRADE IN CROCODILIAN SKINS, 1999-2001

Prepared as part of the International
Alligator and Crocodile Trade Study

by

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Introduction

UNEP-WCMC has previously produced nine reports for the International Alligator and Crocodile Trade Study (IACCTS) that have examined the international trade in crocodilian skins from 1980 to 2000. As in the previous reports, the data used in this report have been obtained from the *CITES Trade Database* that UNEP-WCMC maintains on behalf of the CITES Secretariat, with additional information provided by the Crocodile Farmers Association of Zimbabwe. The present report is intended to update these reports by detailed analysis of information for the years up to 2001. It also attempts to identify problem areas and to recommend, where possible, workable solutions.

As in the IACCTS report for 2002, this report presents information on trade levels in both classic skins (alligators and true crocodiles) and caimans and also trade in other products such as live animals and meat.

Methods

This report is based on an analysis of the annual reports submitted by the Parties to CITES for all years up to 2001. A list of annual reports for 1999-2001 that had been received at UNEP-WCMC at the time of writing is given in Table 1. In order to be comparable with previous IACCTS reports, all trade in whole skins and sides of crocodilian species has been analysed. Two sides are considered to be equivalent to one skin. Trade in skins reported in units of weight, area, length or sub-units such as 'tails' has been mainly excluded. Wherever possible, data reported by the producer countries have been used in preference to that reported by importing countries because small differences in the manner of reporting, or the time lag between export and import, may lead to double-counting and thus to an overestimation of trade volume. However where producer countries have failed to submit annual report data on exports of crocodilians, importers' data have been used. Many of the transactions have been analysed at the export permit level. As with the previous reports covering the years 1995-2000, re-export trade has not been included in the estimation of annual production.

Limitations of data

Late submission, or complete failure to submit CITES annual reports continues to be the biggest problem in conducting trade studies using CITES annual report data. As a result of measures taken by the CITES Standing Committee (see IACCTS 2002 report), several Parties have provided their missing annual reports and in addition, UNEP-WCMC now has access to export permits sent by Parties to the CITES Secretariat for confirmation of their validity. However several major trading countries, notably Japan and Thailand, have failed to report trade occurring later than 1999.

As noted in previous IACCTS reports, a further problem with annual reports is the basis on which they are compiled. CITES Notification to the Parties No. 2002/022 of 9 April 2002 states that "As far as possible, the data in the report should record the actual trade that took place, i.e. the quantity of specimens that entered or left the country. If it is not possible to report the actual exports and re-exports, the data on such trade should come from each permit and certificate issued. The report should state clearly whether the data used for the records of imports and exports/re-exports are based on permits/certificates issued or on actual trade." However, reporting simply on the basis of permits issued may lead to considerable overestimates of trade volume as permits are frequently issued for quantities in excess of those actually traded and indeed, some of the permits may not even be used. The majority of Parties still fail to provide any details concerning the basis on which their annual reports are compiled.

A further problem concerns the way in which annual reports are compiled. The guidelines attached to CITES Notification to the Parties No. 2002/022 recommend in paragraph g) of Section 2 that "The report should include a record of each shipment of each species". Reporting in this manner, particularly if details of export permit numbers are provided, allows very accurate cross-checking of data and the tracking of potential errors in reporting. In recent years, only Switzerland has failed to report in this way, however for the year 2000 only, France also reported compiled data. It should be noted that these two countries are significant importers of crocodilian skins.

All annual reports for the years up to 2001 should have been submitted by 31 October 2002 but, at the time of writing (May 2003), several reports that might contain important crocodilian trade data have still not been submitted. These include Argentina (2001), Guatemala (2001), Malawi (2000), Nicaragua (2001), Paraguay (2001), Thailand (2000 and 2001), Venezuela (2001), Viet Nam (2001) and Zambia (2000) amongst the producer countries, and Canada (2000 and 2001), Japan (2000 and 2001) and Thailand (2000 and 2001) amongst the major consumers. The potential effect of such omissions has been commented upon during the analysis.

Table 1. CITES annual reports for 1999-2001 available for analysis

Country	1999	2000	2001
Algeria	*	-	-
Antigua and Barbuda	*	*	*
Argentina	*	*	-
Australia	*	*	*
Austria	*	*	*
Bahamas	*	*	*
Bangladesh	*	*	*
Barbados	*	*	*
Belarus	*	-	-
Belgium	*	*	*
Belize	*	-	-
Benin	*	-	-
Bolivia	*	*	*
Botswana	*	*	*
Brazil	*	*	*
Brunei Darussalam	*	*	*
Bulgaria	*	*	*
Burkina Faso	*	*	*
Cambodia	*	*	*
Cameroon	*	*	*
Canada	*	-	-
Central African Republic	*	-	-
Chad	*	*	*
Chile	*	*	*
China	*	*	*
Colombia	*	*	*
Comores	*	*	*
Congo	*	*	*
Costa Rica	*	*	*
Côte d'Ivoire	*	*	*
Croatia	-	*	-
Cuba	*	*	*
Cyprus	*	-	-

Country	1999	2000	2001
Czech Republic	*	*	*
Democratic Republic of the Congo	*	*	-
Denmark	*	*	*
Dominica	*	*	*
Dominican Republic	*	*	*
Ecuador	*	part	*
Egypt	*	*	-
El Salvador	*	*	*
Equatorial Guinea	*	*	-
Eritrea	*	*	-
Estonia	*	*	*
Ethiopia	*	*	*
Finland	*	*	*
France	*	*	*
Gabon	-	*	*
Gambia	*	*	-
Georgia	*	*	*
Germany	*	*	*
Ghana	*	*	*
Greece	*	*	*
Guatemala	*	*	-
Guinea	*	*	*
Guyana	*	*	*
Honduras	*	*	*
Hong Kong	*	*	*
Hungary	*	*	*
India	*	*	*
Indonesia	*	*	*
Iran	*	*	*
Ireland (non-Party)	*	*	*
Israel	*	*	*
Italy	*	*	*
Jamaica	*	*	*
Japan	*	-	-
Jordan	*	*	*
Kazakhstan	-	*	part
Kenya	*	*	*
Latvia	*	*	*
Liechtenstein	*	*	*
Luxembourg	*	*	*
Macao	*	*	*
Madagascar	*	*	*
Malawi	*	-	*
Malaysia	*	*	*
Mali	*	*	*
Malta	*	*	*
Mauritius	*	*	-
Mexico	*	*	*
Monaco	*	-	*
Mongolia	*	*	*
Morocco	*	*	*
Mozambique	*	*	*

Country	1999	2000	2001
Myanmar	*	*	*
Namibia	*	*	*
Nepal	*	*	*
Netherlands	*	*	*
New Zealand	*	*	*
Nicaragua	*	*	-
Niger	*	-	-
Nigeria	*	-	-
Norway	*	*	*
Pakistan	*	*	*
Panama	*	*	*
Papua New Guinea	*	*	*
Paraguay	*	*	-
Peru	*	*	*
Philippines	*	*	
Poland	*	*	*
Portugal	*	*	*
Qatar	-	-	*
Republic of Korea	*	*	-
Romania	*	*	-
Russian Federation	*	*	*
Rwanda	-	*	*
Saint Kitts and Nevis	*	*	*
Saint Lucia	*	*	*
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	*	*	-
Saudi Arabia	*	*	-
Senegal	*	*	*
Seychelles	*	-	-
Sierra Leone	*	*	
Singapore	*	*	*
Slovakia	*	*	*
Slovenia		*	
South Africa	*	*	*
Spain	*	*	*
Sri Lanka	*	-	-
Sudan	*	-	-
Suriname	*	*	*
Swaziland		*	*
Sweden	*	*	*
Switzerland	*	*	*

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