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TO: Directors- Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Directors- Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
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FROM: Chuck Pils- MAFWA CITES Representative
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SUBJECT: Results of CITES Animals Committee Meeting- April 8-12, 2002

Introduction: Wayne Regelin (Alaska Fish and Game), Bruce Taubert (Arizona Game and Fish Department), Don MacLauchlan (International Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies International Affairs Specialist), and Chuck Pils (Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources) attended the 18th Annual CITES Animals Committee meeting held in San Jose, Costa Rica from April 8-12, 2002.

The meeting was attended by about 200 people, including official delegates for various countries, 3 Intergovernmental Organizations (European Commission, IUCN-The World Conservation Union, and UNEP-WCMC), as well as 35 NGO's, who represented a variety of associations, ranging from caviar importers to animal welfare groups. Official delegates and NGO's were able to comment on various proposals that were introduced by Animals Committee Chairman Marinus Hoogemooed (Netherlands). The Secretariat was Tom de Meulenaer from Namibia. Spanish, French, and English translators were located in the back of the room.

All meeting participants received a thick notebook of all the proposals along with supporting documents. The process for the meeting was to have the Chairman introduce various documents, then have various countries comment on the proposals. Then the Secretariat, Intergovernmental and NGO's were given the opportunity to make their comments. If an issue was not resolved, a working group of voluntary meeting participants approved by the Chairman was organized to resolve issues within the proposals. Later the working group chairs reported back to the main meeting for acceptance of issues.

The underlying premise of The Animals Committee meeting was to discuss and clarify various animal proposals that will be presented for final resolution at the 12th Conference of the Parties (COP 12) in Santiago, Chile, from November 3-15, 2002.

Our state team spent considerable time on the sideline conferring with the U.S delegation and various NGO's in an effort to best represent the interests of the state Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Only proposals concerning issues of importance to the states will be discussed in this report.

Bobcat Delisting Proposal- The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department submitted a March 8, 2002 proposal to delist bobcats from Appendix II. Texas asked the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to formally introduce the delisting proposal at COP 12. This proposal was reviewed and supported by several state agencies. Our team informally discussed the proposal with the U.S. delegation outside the main meeting. Bruce Taubert also discussed the proposal as a member of a Working Group on The Review of The Appendices

The bobcat was listed on Appendix II of CITES because it looks so much like the other more rare spotted cats that there is the potential for "laundering". The bobcat was only one of the many look-alike listings that were made in the early days of CITES. Many listings were fostered by protectionists with the ultimate goal of eliminating trade in otherwise secure populations. Many species of tortoises, birds of prey, monitor lizards, etc. have joined the spotted cats as having many look-alike listings. The quandary at the Animals

Committee meeting was whether to go for a delisting of just the bobcat or deal with the real problem, the look-alike listings themselves. We decided that delisting the bobcat had a very small chance of success. Most countries will take the precautionary approach when it comes to delisting a species. If in doubt, leave it on the list is a common attitude. In addition, it was evident that the Animals Committee would not support a single species delisting when it came to the look-alike issue. The best way to approach the goal of delisting the bobcat appears to be to evaluate it in light of determining the appropriateness of all of the look-alike species. To this end, the state fish and wildlife agencies were able to assist the U.S. delegation in adding a section to the “priorities for appendix evaluations” that deal with the “multiple listings”. Now the U.S. and the states are free to work together with the rest of the Animals Committee to look at the bobcat issue under the guise of looking at multiple listings. Although success is not guaranteed with the support of the Animals Committee, there is a glimmer of hope.

Orange Throated Whiptail Lizards- The orange throated whiptail lizard is currently listed under CITES Appendix II. Why it was listed is a mystery to many. There is very little international trade. What trade there is occurs between Mexico and the U.S. Both Mexico and the U.S. are range countries for this species. In reviewing the appendices, the state representatives are attempting to get rid of those listings that have no value to the species. The whiptail appears to be in this position. The lizard appears to be secure in Mexico and the issues in California (the only U.S. range state) have to do with habitat. The lizard has adequate protection through the laws of Mexico and California. Mexico supports the delisting proposal and California does not oppose delisting. California still needs to know that there will not be a negative effect with the delisting of the species. We were successful in getting the Animals Committee to agree to take an orange throated whiptail delisting package to COP 12 in November.

Sturgeon Conservation and Labeling of Caviar- According to recommendations of the 10th Conference of The Parties (CITES) which took place in 1997, sturgeons were listed in APP II, which controls international trade of the sturgeons, including caviar, meat, and specimens. There was considerable discussion during the main Animals Committee meeting about the following 4 species of sturgeon:

1. *Acipenser oxyrhincus* (Atlantic Sturgeon)- U.S.
2. *Acipenser persicus* (Persian Sturgeon)-Eurasia
3. *Acipenser transmontanus* (White Sturgeon)-U.S.
4. *Scaphirhynchus platyrhynchus* (Shovel-nosed Sturgeon)-U.S.

Chuck Pils joined a Working Group concerned with a Universal Labeling System for the Identification of Caviar and Conservation of Acipenseriformes, which included members from Europe, Oceania, China, France, Germany, Islamic Republic of Iran, Russian Federation, United States of America, European Commission, International Caviar Importer’s Association, IWMC Switzerland, and Midwestern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. This group further resolved questions and concerns discussed at the main session of the Animals Committee. Chuck Pils also was part of a Working Group (with many of the same organizations as the other 2 sturgeon working groups) called Significant Trade Reviews of Sturgeon, Musk Deer, and *Naja*.

Results of the Universal Labeling System For the Identification of Caviar Working Group included methods to clarify identification of repackaged caviar, defining caviar terms more clearly, extending the universal labeling system implemented for exports of caviar from countries of origin, to also cover its re-export and other procedural recommendations. The group also concluded that it was not appropriate to extend the labeling requirements to sturgeon and paddlefish meat at this stage.

Results of the Conservation of Sturgeons Working Group included the recognition of work already being done to improve the population structure and genetic variation of stocks, to contact FAO to request assistance with the long-term management and monitoring of shared sturgeon stocks and in recommended that the Animals Committee, together with the relevant commission of IUCN, The Sturgeon Specialist Committee, and other relevant organizations, establish a working group to deal with the socio-economic aspects of sturgeon conservation and trade.

Results of The Working Group on Significant Trade: Sturgeons recommended that:

1. For Atlantic Sturgeon, that the U.S. population be put in Category 3 (level of trade is evidently not a problem) and that the Canadian population be included in Category 2 (not Clear whether Article II is being implemented) until Canada provides documentation addressing the discrepancy in the trade data. If the documentation is satisfactory, then the Canadian population may be included in Category 3.
2. For Persian Sturgeon, the species in Azerbaijan should be included in Category 2. Azerbaijan should be sent a letter asking for clarification on whether the export quota includes *A. persicus* and if so, how Azerbaijan distinguishes between the 2 species. Also, that if any other range states in the future issue export quotas, then recommendations should be made at that time.
3. For White and Shovelnose Sturgeons, both species should be included in Category 3.

Implementation of Decision 11.165 on trade in traditional medicines- Our team had discussions concerning this issue with the U.S. Delegation. Decision 11.165 was a result of input primarily by The International Fund For Animal Welfare (IFAW) to The Secretariat and contained a provisional list of species known to be used for medicinal purposes. The Secretariat noted that the existence of records of the use of a species for medicinal purposes does not necessarily imply that specimens of those species are traded internationally. Our team discussed this issue with the U.S. delegation and had strong concerns with the inclusion of many common species on this list such as coyotes, red foxes, white-tailed deer, Norway rats, and bears. There was no discussion at the main Animals Committee meeting of the utility of this list or where use of this list might proceed in further CITES listings.

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