

CITES Sustainable Users Group (CSUG) Meeting

10.30am-12.30pm, Tues 12 April 2016, 2 Rivergate, Bristol

MINUTES

Attendees:

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| 1. Jim Collins (SUN) | 13. Chris Newman (REPTA) |
| 2. Keith Davenport (OATA) | 14. Henriette Okafor Wright (Burberry) |
| 3. Mark Dodgson (BADA) | 15. Russ Sear (APHA) |
| 4. Keith Fletcher (Vertu) | 16. Noeleen Smyth (RBG, Kew) |
| 5. Mike Gates (Owl Society) | 17. Michael Sigsworth (Defra) |
| 6. Simon Hewitt (APHA) | 18. Rose Simpson (RBG, Kew) |
| 7. Stacey Hughes (Defra) | 19. Martin Sims (NWCUC) |
| 8. Graham Irving (Hawk Board) | 20. Chris Smith (NCA) |
| 9. Alison Littlewood (JNCC) | 21. Gabriela Solano (OATA) |
| 10. Kim McDonald (Guild of Taxidermists) | 22. Mike Warren (Yorkshire Falconry) |
| 11. Grant Miller (UKBF) | 23. Dominic Whitmee (Defra – chair) |
| 12. Barbara Minnikin (APHA) | |

Apologies:

Peter Beare (EILA), Martyn Denney (Cyclamen Society), Laurence Jessup (UKBF), Martin Jones (Falconry Online), Mike Moser (BFTA), Conor O’Gorman (BASC), Jemima Parry-Jones (ICBP)

Update on actions from last meeting on 26 November 2015:

1. The minutes of the last meeting were agreed. The majority of action points had been completed. Updates provided were as follows:

Action point 3: Trevor Salmon will provide information to CSUG updating on the [invasive alien species (IAS) Executive Committee] meeting in December.

Update: CSUG (Keith Davenport) had already spoken to Trevor Salmon and been advised that publication of a second list of species of concern had been delayed because of objections. Defra has no more information on when the list will be published. Once the list has been adopted, Trevor’s non-native species team will produce FAQs and hold a stakeholder meeting. CSUG agreed to keep open lines of communication with Defra’s non-native species team.

New Action Point 1: Defra (Stacey Hughes) to pass on CSUG’s recommendation for Trevor to touch base with Adrian Jowitt, NE, about releasing listed IAS into the wild after rehabilitation.

New Action Point 2: Defra to include an update on the Law Commission’s review of wildlife law as a standing agenda item for future meetings.

Action point 5: Defra to keep CSUG updated with progress on the Scottish Government review on the keeping of exotic pets.

Update: The Scottish Government plans to hold a stakeholder meeting in early June to discuss the breeding and sale of exotic pets. They have received a number of useful comments which will feed into the overall review. They noted a difference between the mortality rate statistics (mostly related to the first year of ownership) provided by the pet trade and animal welfare organisations.

Action point 6: CSUG to provide details, including estimated numbers, of species commonly captive bred in the UK which may be impacted by an Appendix I listing at CoP17, and provide comments on other proposals of interest.

Update: Defra would still welcome details, particularly estimated numbers. CSUG agreed that focus should be on species subject to CoP17 proposals.

New Action Point 3: CSUG to provide Defra with details, particularly estimated numbers, of species commonly captive bred in the UK and subject to an Appendix I listing proposal at CoP17.

Action Point 9: APHA (Barbara Minnikin) and CSUG (Derek Stotton) to speak offline about providing parents' ring numbers when applying for Art 10s for chicks.

Update: No discussion has yet taken place but the offer remains open for Derek to contact APHA.

Action Point 10: JEM to find information on the consultation [on the review of keeping captive birds in show training cages] for circulation to CSUG.

Update: Natural England's 2014 consultation can be found [here](#): (p29 of the consultation doc refers). This was discussed later in the meeting – see para 20.

Corporate Updates:

2. Jane Elliot-Malpass and Jeremy Eppel left Defra in March as part of Defra's voluntary exit scheme. Cheryl Case has succeeded Jeremy as Deputy Director; Stacey Hughes has taken on Jane's CITES role. The Directorate merged with Marine in January to form the EU, Marine and International Directorate. Defra has moved to a new internet-based telephone system and all telephone numbers have changed as follows:

Cheryl Case 0208 026 2888

Mark Baxter 0208 026 6794

Dominic Whitmee 0208 026 6656

Stacey Hughes 0208 026 6911

Michael Sigsworth 0208 026 3704

In response to a query from CSUG about staff leaving from the Wildlife Crime, Zoos and Birds policy team, Defra advised that John Kilner, Jane Withey, Dave Wootton and Margaret Finn had also left through Defra's voluntary exit scheme.

EU and International Meetings – review and forward look:

(a) 66th CITES Standing Committee, 11-15 January 2016

(i) Snake trade and conservation management –

3. CSUG requested information about the Thai prohibition of trade in *python reticulatus*. Neither APHA nor JNCC were aware of such a ban but it was thought to be a domestic stricter measure. If this was formally notified to CITES Parties, APHA would no longer issue permits to export reticulated pythons to Thailand. However, no such notification had been received.

Action Point 4: CSUG (Henriette Okafor Wright) to contact APHA (Russ Sear/Barbara Minnikin) after the meeting to discuss the position in respect of trade in *python reticulatus* with Thailand. **Completed.** This is a matter for the Thai MA and it is the responsibility of an applicant to check requirements in importing/exporting countries.

(ii) Traceability –

4. The UK is not a member of the CITES Working Group on Traceability. [RESP](#) (the Responsible Ecosystems Sourcing Platform) is working with the CITES Authorities of Mexico and Italy to develop a global traceability information system for reptile skins. An update is available at: <http://resp.ch/news/italy-and-mexico-unveil-blueprint-global-traceability-system-reptile-skins-2015-07-08>. CSUG members wanting an update on progress should [contact RESP](#) directly.

(iii) Co-operation with other organisations –

5. CSUG noted a lack of opportunity to voice concerns within CITES about how the Convention was affecting trade and the difficulty in obtaining country-specific requirements. This CSUG forum affords the opportunity to feed in comments to the UK Management Authority (UKMA), members can also request bilateral discussions with Defra or APHA. CSUG can contact the Secretariat directly but should note that the Secretariat has limited time and resources. It is for each CITES permit applicant to contact the relevant country of import/export to find out whether country-specific restrictions apply. The Group accepted that this was not always easy.

(b) 75th Meeting of the Scientific Review Group, 7 March 2015

6. There were no comments.

(c) 74th Management Committee & 3rd Expert Group Meetings, 20 April 2016

7. CSUG queried why the Expert Group's agenda included the importation of salamanders infected with the Bsal fungus. Dutch populations of the fire salamander have suffered a 99.9% decline due to Bsal and so the Netherlands were asking MSs to consider listing Asiatic salamanders and newts on Annex B under Article 4, para 6(d) of Council Regulation 338/97 to enable an import suspension for the species. The UK does not generally support the use of the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations as a mechanism for addressing animal health-related problems but other international mechanisms do not seem equipped to deal with emergency situations quickly. **[Update: UNEP-WCMC is carrying out a preliminary assessment of the impact of Bsal on European species and the potential impact of possible trade restrictions. The analysis will be presented at the next SRG meeting. Any SRG recommendation will be presented to the Expert Group to consider follow-up action.]**

Action Point 5: CSUG (Chris Newman) to provide Defra with information on what temperatures to hold salamanders and newts in quarantine to minimise/prevent the spread of the Bsal pathogen.

8. The UK-led EU Working Group had revised the worked specimen guidance which was agreed by the Management Committee. However Commission Services have proposed further amendments following its internal checks. The UK will continue to press for finalisation of the guidance and its publication as soon as possible.

(d) 17th Conference of the Parties (CoP17), 24 Sept to 5 October 2016

(i) update on EU and 3rd Country proposals, and UK priorities -

9. South Africa will be holding a Ministerial-level meeting on sustainable use immediately prior to CoP. **[Update: The proposed date of the meeting is 23 September. Current plans are for the meeting to discuss the link between the Sustainable Development Goals, CITES and the challenges posed by illegal wildlife trade.]** CoP17 is likely to be a controversial and divisive meeting so we need to consider careful handling. Items for discussion will include amending the Rules of Procedure and EU voting rights. Defra wants to know what CoP17 proposals are important to CSUG members.

10. The EU and Member States (EU+MS) were considering putting forward 7 listing proposals **[Update: now 5, the EU is co-sponsoring the other 2]** and 7 proposals in relation to Resolutions/Decisions. Defra ran through the draft proposals currently under consideration, including those that the EU+MS have been asked to co-sponsor, and possible Third Country proposals.

Action Point 6: Defra to find out about Vietnam's support for the proposal to include the Psychedelic rock lizard on Appendix I, and the Masobe gecko proposal. **[Update: Vietnam is co-sponsoring the Psychedelic rock lizard proposal with the EU+MSs. The EU+MSs and Madagascar are co-sponsoring a proposal to include the Masobe gecko on Appendix II].**

Action Point 7: Defra to provide a list of EU proposals, with co-proponents, to CSUG as soon as it is available. [**Update:** *EU proposals submitted to CoP17 are available on the European Commission's website at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/events_en.htm. All listing proposals are now available on the [CITES website](#).]*

11. In view of the difficulties in proving legal acquisition of species listed straight on Appendix I breeders and keepers of legally held specimens should consider their current record keeping. APHA will consider how to ensure that legally held specimens are not inappropriately impacted by any such listings and advise traders.

12. UK priorities are likely to be focussed around elephants, rhino, tigers and lions, subject to Ministerial agreement. The deadline for submitting proposals is 27 April.

(ii) ivory –

13. Defra advised that the African Elephant Coalition were considering CoP17 proposals on (i) uplisting the remaining four Appendix II populations of southern African elephants to Appendix I, (ii) postponing/halting further discussion on the ivory Decision Making Mechanism, (iii) destroying ivory stockpiles, (iv) closing domestic ivory markets, and (v) live elephant trade.

14. The UK Government is continuing to refine options for implementation of its manifesto commitment and Defra has had cross-Whitehall discussions (with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Home Office, Cabinet Office, Foreign Office and Number 10) and with affected stakeholders, including the antique sector. A number of options are under consideration but we need to gather more evidence on the situation in the UK. We are looking forward to a Chinese-Government-funded TRAFFIC survey on the UK ivory market and what it might tell us. We are also looking to learn from the US experience. CSUG noted China's announcement of its stricter measures on trade in ivory in CITES [Notification 2016/034](#).

(iii) logistics, planning and NGO engagement -

15. CoP17 proposals will be published from early to mid-May [**Update:** *As mentioned earlier, listing proposals are available on the CITES website.*] The European Commission will be holding a stakeholder meeting on 23 May. Defra plans to arrange NGO consultation meetings (CSUG/CLG) at the end of May/early June and ask for written comments on proposals by mid-June. These will feed into the development of UK positions for the meeting of the Working Party on International Environmental Issues (WPIEI) on 27 June and 75th meeting of the EU Management Committee on 28 June. [**Update:** *Defra is reconsidering the timeline for stakeholder engagement/input and will be in contact about this shortly.*]

16. The registration deadline for observers at CoP17 is 10 August and, to register, national NGOs must provide approval from the CITES Management Authority (MA) of the country in which they are located.

Action Point 8: CSUG members wishing to attend CoP17 should submit requests for UK MA accreditation to Stacey Hughes (Stacey.Hughes@defra.gsi.gov.uk) by 29 July at the latest.

Effect on UK CITES legislation of leaving the EU:

17. Defra advised that Government policy is that the UK should remain as a member of a reformed EU. There is no 'Plan B' preparing for exit from the European Union. If the UK votes to leave the EU, there would be no change to CITES implementation in the short-term. It is expected to take at least 2 years, and possibly much longer, to fully exit from the EU. Replacing EU Regulations (where it was considered appropriate) could take up to a decade. Likely advice would be to continue with business as usual until then.

Sustainable Use principle:

18. Agenda item postponed until the next meeting.

Captive-bred bird consultation:

19. CSUG requested an update on when UK Government would implement the changes to UK legislation on trade in European bird species following Defra's public consultation, "[Captive-bred birds: changing how we regulate trading in England, Scotland and Wales](#)". Defra summarised UK Government's proposals (these can be found in the consultation document) and timeline: interim measures were agreed in 2012 for the sale of EU birds bred in England and new legislation is expected to enter into force by the end of 2016. CSUG members expressed frustration at the delay.

20. Natural England's (NE) [consultation on General and Class Licences](#) in 2014 sought views on amending the period of time birds could be confined in a show cage. An update on this was not available in time for the meeting. **[Update:** *After the consultation, NE decided not to amend the condition relating to the period of time birds could be confined in a show cage. NE currently has no plans to review or revise licences in the near future.*]

COTES:

21. Defra has a final draft of the COTES Statutory Instrument (SI). This is currently going through cross-Whitehall gateway processes. Ports of entry and exit will be aligned and the Regulations will allow the designation of additional ports with appropriate facilities. With CoP17 fast approaching, any problems could derail the COTES timetable.

Process and Implementation issues:

(a) Specimen-Specific Certificates (SSCs) and Transaction-Specific Certificates (TSCs) -

22. CSUG considered that the UK's approach of issuing a TSC for an Annex A specimen at the time of acquisition and then a SSC if the specimen is later sold was confusing to other EU MSs.

Action Point 9: CSUG (Kim McDonald) to discuss this directly with APHA outside this meeting.

23. CSUG also wanted to know whether the UK MA would accept SSCs issued by other MSs as a result of domestic stricter measures. APHA confirmed that SSCs from other MSs are acceptable.

Administrative issues:

(a) Update on changes to Art 10/ import licence charging regime -

24. APHA informed CSUG that a proposal had recently been submitted to the Minister on the introduction of new charges for tasks not currently subject to fees, and a review of existing fees. This has been put on hold because of the Scottish and Welsh Governments' purdah.

Action Point 10: APHA (Simon Hewitt) to provide information to Defra (Dominic Whitmee/Stacey) on the planned timeline of this review of CITES charges for circulation to CSUG members. Any questions on this should be directed to Simon. **Completed:** *The revision of CITES fees looks unlikely to happen before October 2017.*

(b) Update on e-permitting –

25. APHA has been looking to replace UNICORN for several years and permitting in general is being considered Defra-wide. Defra is considering the introduction of an all-encompassing system – the project is at an early stage but funding is available to take this forward. The 'discovery' phase is about to start which will involve understanding the needs of end users.

Action Point 11: APHA (Simon Hewitt) to provide a more detailed update at the next meeting.

(c) EU Guidelines on Worked Specimens -

26. This item was discussed earlier. Please see para 8.

Date of the next meeting:

27. The next meeting will be held late May-early June. [**Update:** *As mentioned previously, Defra is reconsidering the timeline for stakeholder engagement/input and will be in contact about this shortly.*]