

CITES CoP16

Bangkok, Thailand

2-14 March 2013

By Ericka Ceballos

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I went to CITES proudly representing our new Polish NGO: **Fundacja dla Ochrony i Dobrostanu Zwierząt** (Animal Conservation and Welfare Foundation).

The ACWF was created last year as a follow up to our CATCA work in North America, bringing the animal welfare to the animal conservation issues in Poland and in Africa.

In this CoP16, I was very busy lobbying for several animal protection issues and I am very proud to have secured a third of all the votes for each one of the sharks, the manta ray and African manatee Proposals on the third day.

Our shiny new e-commerce report: CATCA/ACWF "*E-trade on elephant ivory in Africa and Asia-Report 2013*" was very successful. It was well received by the CITES Secretariat, delegates and Interpol. Interpol congratulated the CATCA/ACWF team for this initiative and added this report and our previous reports in their database as good resources for future reference.

I was honored to meet Bryan Christy the National Geographic investigator and author of the worldwide praised article "Blood Ivory" (October 2012), that exposed the illegal ivory trade to the Catholic church, Buddhist monks and others. I was delighted to know that he was interested in my 2009-10 investigation on the e-trade of elephant ivory in Latin America and my findings of Catholic religious ivory with the Philippines as a main country of origin.

You can find our report and more info here: <http://www.catcahelpanimals.org/97.html>

About our prior investigation: "*E-trade of primates in Latin America-Report 2011*", the recognized conservationist Ian Redmond OBE, UNEP Ambassador and expert in gorillas and African elephants, held an UNEP event about the illegal trade of primates. There Ian mentioned the results (on chimpanzees) of the previous CATCA investigation on the e-trade of primates in Latin America, CATCA and my name.

Some of the highlights of the CITES CoP16 were:

Proposal 3 Polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*) This US Proposal was the hottest item of the CoP. The US brought back the Proposal to uplist the Polar bears in Appendix I, but this time and making history the Russians totally supported the US Proposal. The Russians even held a Polar bear event trying to get more support for the Proposal. Unfortunately, thanks to the intensive lobbying of Canada (they brought back the Inuits and held a large informative table for two weeks with lots of leaflets and brochures about why the PB's should not be included in Appx I. Canada and the WWF (they also killed the Proposal in the last CoP 3 years ago), but this time Greenpeace also lobbied with the delegates from all over the world not to get their support and to vote against the Proposal, and all the EU support that we already had at the beginning, slowly collapsed.

Therefore the Proposal was rejected as amended by EU (to maintain in Appx II including related Decisions. The original Proposal was rejected by a total of 38 for, 42 against and 46 abstentions. The votes were 63 for, 43 against and 17 abstentions.

As I already have mentioned this before in our CATCA alert –from the CITES CoP16 “front” and in FB, I am very proud of the Polish delegation. They were my delegation as I represented the ACWF from Poland. They fought up to the very end to re-gain the support they had at the EU on the beginning so much, that other EU delegations started to call it the “Poland bear” Proposal. Due that most of the support was from Eastern and Central Europe and many delegates pronounce the word bear as beer, it was named at the end, even by the US: “The Poland bier Proposal”. ☺

My delegation did an amazing job in general.

Proposal 4 – 9 from Australia were to delete several animal species already extinct.

Proposal 10 Southern white rhino (*Ceratotherium simum simum*) from Kenya. This was to amend the annotation for *Ceratotherium simum simum* as follows: Only the populations of South Africa and Swaziland; all other populations are included in Appendix I. For the exclusive purpose of allowing international trade in live animals to appropriate and acceptable destinations and hunting trophies. Hunting trophies from South Africa and Swaziland shall be subject to a zero export quota until at least CoP18. All other specimens shall be deemed to be specimens of species included in Appendix I and the trade in them shall be regulated accordingly.

This Proposal was withdrawn.

Proposal 11 was withdrawn before the CoP16 but it is important to mention it. From Tanzania. This was a very threatening Proposal to transfer the population of the African elephant, *Loxodonta africana* of the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) from Appendix I to Appendix II and trade in registered raw ivory (whole tusks and pieces).

Proposal 12 From Kenya. This Proposal was to amend the annotation for *Loxodonta africana* as follows: no further proposals to allow trade in elephant ivory from any populations already in Appendix II shall be submitted to the Conference of the Parties for the period from CoP14 and ending nine years from the date of the single sale of ivory.

This Proposal was withdrawn.

Proposal 13 West African manatee (*Trichechus senegalensis*) From Benin, Senegal and Sierra Leone. This Proposal was to Transfer from Appendix II to Appendix I. It was adopted by consensus.

Proposal 42 Oceanic whitetip shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*) from Brazil, Colombia and USA. Inclusion in Appx II with the following annotation: “The entry into effect of the inclusion of *Carcharhinus longimanus* in Appx II of CITES will be delayed by 18 months to enable Parties to resolve the related technical and administrative issues”.

Committee I: Accepted by secret ballot with 82 for, 42 against and 8 abstentions.

Plenary: Rejected motion to reopen debate: 44 for, 93 against, 4 abstentions. The Proposal was adopted.

Proposal 43 Scalloped hammerhead shark, great hammerhead shark and smooth hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*, *S. mokarran* and *S. zygaena*) Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark on behalf of the EU, Ecuador, Honduras and Mexico Inclusion in Appendix II with the following annotation: The entry into effect of the inclusion of these species in CITES Appendix II will be delayed by 18 months to enable Parties to resolve the related technical and administrative issues.

Committee I: 91 for, 39 against and 8 abstentions. Accepted by secret ballot.

Plenary: Rejected motion to reopen debate: 40 for, 96 against and 6 abstentions. Proposal, therefore adopted.

Proposal 44 Porbeagle shark (*Lamna nasus*) Brazil, Comoros, Croatia, Denmark on behalf of EU and Egypt. Inclusion in Appendix II with the following annotation: The entry into effect of the inclusion of *Lamna nasus* in CITES Appendix II will be delayed by 18 months to enable Parties to resolve related technical and administrative issues

Committee I: 93 for, 39 against, 8 abstentions. Accepted by secret ballot.

Plenary: Adopted, as per Comm. I.

Proposal 45 Freshwater sawfish (*Pristis microdon*) Australia. Transfer from Appendix II to Appendix I.

The Proposal was adopted by consensus.

Proposal 46 Manta rays *Manta spp* (including *Manta birostris*, *Manta alfredi* and any other possible species of *Manta*) Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador. Inclusion in Appendix II.

Committee I: 96 for, 23 against, 7 abstentions. Accepted by secret ballot.

Plenary: Adopted as per Comm. I.

All the shark Proposals and Manta rays were accepted by a large majority of votes or consensus.

Japan intervened several times on the day of the voting in Comm. I for these Proposals and as well on the last day of the Plenary, trying to re-open the votes. The Latino Americans delegations led by Honduras, Mexico and Brazil were very well prepared and defended their positions firmly. The US, Costa Rica, Ecuador and other countries involved in these Proposals were quite active too. It was a surprise to see Canada supporting the Porbeagle shark Proposal and the other shark Proposal. In the last two Cops's Canada opposed the uplisting of the Porbeagle sharks and the other shark Proposals.

Proposals 47-48 for the Ceja river stingray, Ocellate river stingray and rosette river stingray were rejected.

The rest of the Proposals included several frogs, turtles, lizards and birds species which in its vast majority were adopted. The three Proposals for crocodiles were rejected.

Every day there were events about the sharks, seeking to gain support from the delegates.

There were multiple side events about the problem of the elephant ivory illegal traffic from several enforcement authorities, NGO's, scientists, elephant experts and even National Geographic in partnership with PBS.

There were also several events of rhino horn traffic and how the problem is affecting African and Asian rhinos.

I am glad to inform that several amphibians and lizards got protected:

To resume it all, this was an excellent CoP16, with surprisingly very good results for most of the animal pro-conservation Proposals.

Best regards,

Ericka Ceballos

