



# CITES and Grenada Queen Conch

**Karen Gaynor,  
CITES Secretariat**

# What is CITES?

- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (signed in 1973, in force since 1975).
- It aims to ensure that international trade in certain specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.
- It currently covers approximately 38,700 species: of which ~32,700 species are plants and ~6,000 species are animals.
- 183 member countries (Parties) to-date.
- Trade must be *responsible*: **Legal, sustainable, traceable**



# History of Queen Conch in CITES

- Queen conch was listed on Appendix II of CITES at CoP8 (November 1992).
- 36 range States, including Grenada.
- Under Resolution, Conf. 13.9 (Rev. CoP17) up to three queen conch shells are allowed per person for personal or household effects without the need for a CITES permit.
- 70% of international trade is to the United States; followed by France (including Guadeloupe and Martinique).
- CITES proposed a range of actions in the mid-nineties and again in 2003-05 to improve the sustainability and legality of the trade (Review of Significant Trade-RST).
- These were favourably acted upon by **most** of the 36 Caribbean countries and dependent territories where queen conch occurs.
- Measures included export quotas, (temporary) trade suspensions, harmonized fishery rules and better trade controls. RFMOs fully supported these efforts.
- Resulted in funding and technical support, targeted research efforts, and an improved understanding of the ecology and management of the species.

**What does an Appendix II listing mean for trade in queen conch?**

As an Appendix II species, commercial trade in Queen conch can continue subject to the following:

1. Legal Acquisition Finding (LAF)



'A Management Authority of the State of export is satisfied that the specimen was **not obtained in contravention of the laws of that State** for the protection of fauna and flora.'

and

2. Non-Detriment Finding (NDF)



' A Scientific Authority of the State of export has advised that such export will **not be detrimental to the survival of that species**'

See Resolution Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) on *Non-Detriment Findings*

**A Non-Detriment Finding (NDF) can take many forms:**

- **A written advice from the Scientific Authority**
- **A verbal advice from the Scientific Authority**
- **A quota agreed by the Scientific Authority for a specific time period**
- **Quotas may also be agreed by the Conference of the Parties (CoP)**

## The Non-Detriment Finding is essentially a science-based risk assessment.

- A **risk assessment** is a way to determine quickly where effort is best directed so that the conservation status of an Appendix I or Appendix II species is not harmed by exports.
- Determines how big the risk is that the impact will be damaging to the wild population.
- Based on the outcome, a Scientific Authority can identify cases that should be subject to a relatively high level of attention and where a more precautionary approach is required.

## Guiding Principles for making NDFs

- Data requirements should be proportionate to the potential risks to the species concerned
- Assessment should be based on the best information available
- Subjectivity is a necessary part of risk assessment
- Management should be adaptive and include monitoring

**Remember:** risk assessments are conducted to transform scientific data into meaningful information about the risk of human activities to the environment.



## Quotas, NDF and the Role of the Scientific Authority

Quotas are a **management tool**, used to ensure that exports of specimens of a certain species are maintained at a level that has no detrimental effect on the population of the species; and

When advised by a Scientific Authority, quotas effectively **meet the requirement to make an NDF** for an Appendix I or II-listed species.

For Appendix II-listed species, there is also a requirement to ensure that the species is maintained throughout its range at a level consistent with its role in the ecosystems in which it occurs.

Note that export quotas should be reviewed annually, in light of possible impacts on species.

## The Review of Significant Trade

- Reviews are initiated by the Animals and Plants Committees, who based on an analysis of the trade data, seek to identify problems concerning the implementation of Article IV, paragraphs 2 (a), 3 and 6 (a) of the Convention, and can recommend solutions that must be implemented by the Party concerned within specific timeframes.
- Non-compliance by any Party with the recommendations of these Committees may ultimately lead to a recommendation by the Standing Committee to suspend trade with that Party in specimens of the species concerned.

# Queen conch (*S. gigas*) from Grenada in RST

- Trade in *S. gigas* from Grenada was included in Category (ii) of RST - **'species of possible concern'** for which it is not clear whether or not the provisions of Article IV, paragraph 2(a), 3 or 6(a) are being implemented.
- Recommendations were formulated by the Animals Committee that were to be implemented within 24 months.
- Grenada did not provide information on its implementation of the recommendations and did not respond to the Secretariat's reminders or invitation to attend the Santo Domingo workshop.
- Unable to determine whether Grenada complied with the recommendations.
- In May 2006 that the Standing Committee recommended a suspension of imports of specimens of *S. gigas* from Grenada.
- The recommendations of the Animals Committee would need to be implemented before the recommendation of the Standing Committee to suspend trade in *S. gigas* can be withdrawn.

# Recommendations of the Animals Committee under RST - 1

- Within 12 months:
  - a) Establish cautious catch and export quotas, communicate these to the Secretariat and provide information for the basis of these quotas.
  - b) Establish a standardized minimum meat weight that corresponds to adult specimens of unprocessed and processed meat.
  - c) Design and implement a fishery data collection programme. This programme is designed to collect catch and effort data and shall include 1.) a system of permits and licenses for commercial harvesters and exporters, and 2.) regular reporting of landing and export data.
  - d) Design and implement a long-term population monitoring programme for the designated commercial fishing areas. This programme should provide reliable estimates of adult and juveniles densities within commercial fishing areas, at a minimum.



# Recommendations of the Animals Committee under RST - 2

- Within 24 months:
  - a) Apply adaptive management procedures to ensure that further decisions about harvesting and management of the species concerned will be based on the monitoring of the impact of previous harvesting and other factors.
  - b) Give serious consideration to the recommendations of the June 2003 IQCI meeting and commit specifically to those recommendations on:
    - i. development of a regional management regime, including cooperative quota setting,
    - ii. law enforcement capacity and effectiveness
    - iii. population assessments and other research relating to the management of Queen Conch.