CITES regulations and decisions applicable to trade of queen conch: Non-detriment findings (NDFs) and effective license/permits system

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What is CITES?


• It aims to ensure that international trade in certain species of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.

• It 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
CITES Scope

- Animals and plants (live, dead, parts and derivatives)
- Permits and certificates under certain conditions

import  export  re-export  introduction from the sea
CITES Appendices
>38,000 species

Trade regulations tailored according to species conservation needs!

**Appendix I**
~1,100 spp.
- Species threatened with extinction.
- Trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances (e.g. scientific purposes)

**Appendix II**
~37,400 spp.
- Species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but trade must be controlled to avoid unsustainable use.
- “Lookalike” species

**Appendix III**
~220 spp.
- Species protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES Parties for assistance in controlling the trade.
Queen conch was listed on Appendix II of CITES at CoP8 (November 1992).

36 range States.

Traded mainly as meat or shells (sometimes skins and pearls).

70% of international trade is to the United States; followed by France (including Guadeloupe and Martinique).

Under Resolution Conf. 13.9 (Rev. CoP17) up to three queen conch shells are allowed per person for personal use or as household effects without the need for a CITES permit.
Impacts of the CITES listing on Queen Conch trade

- CITES proposed a range of actions in the mid-nineties and again in 2003-05 to improve the sustainability and legality of the trade.

- 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.'

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
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.
- Determines how big the risk is that the impact will be damaging to the wild population.
- **Analysis - Management – Decision - Monitoring**
- 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 are an important **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.**
How is the trade monitored?
CITES Pillars and permits

A CITES certificate/permit provides information concerning:

**Legality:**
Origin & sourcing, duration of validity

**Sustainability**
Non-detriment findings (NDFs)

**Traceability**
trade data – purpose, quantity, etc.
What happens with the permits?

- Parties submit annual legal trade reports - exports (permits issued) and imports (actual trade).

- Failure to submit annual reports for 3 consecutive years results in a recommendation to suspend trade.

- Trade data is regularly reviewed (volumes; sharp increases; compare imports/exports, etc.).

- Under the Convention, concerns about sustainability of trade and/or failure to institute effective risk assessments and adaptive management schemes in support of non-detriment findings may lead to a process called the Review of Significant Trade - see Resolution Conf. 12.8 (Rev. CoP17).
The Review of Significant Trade (RST)

- Reviews are initiated by the Animals and Plants Committees, who based on an analysis of the trade data, select species/country combinations for further review.

- Committee 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 has been through RST twice
CITES reported trade in Queen Conch
Main direct exporters of Queen Conch

Max reported quantity [kg] of *Strombus gigas* by exporter, 1993-2016
### Export quantities of Queen conch (2014 -2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bodies</td>
<td>kg</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19,049.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>kg</td>
<td>348,973.3</td>
<td>17,043</td>
<td>88,271.3</td>
<td>51,285.9</td>
<td>7,719.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shells</td>
<td>kg</td>
<td>1,963,828.9</td>
<td>2,057,368.2</td>
<td>2,200,673.3</td>
<td>2,066,852.7</td>
<td>2,267,315.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skins</td>
<td>kg</td>
<td>149,456</td>
<td>210,998</td>
<td>209,173</td>
<td>59,182</td>
<td>48,669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kg</td>
<td>2,119.8</td>
<td>186,959.9</td>
<td>110,156.2</td>
<td>21,545.8</td>
<td>34,596.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taken from AC31 Doc. 13.4 (Annex 2), based on CITES Trade database.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exporter</th>
<th>Country Code</th>
<th>Percentage of trade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>NI</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>BS</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>JM</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belize</td>
<td>BZ</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>HN</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turks &amp; Caicos</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Kitt’s &amp; Nevis</td>
<td>KN</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Vincent &amp; the Grenadines</td>
<td>VC</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>CU</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>CO</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cayman Islands</td>
<td>KY</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Saint Lucia
Exports from St. Lucia following removal of RST suspension (2002) – CITES trade database

Main conch product - Shells

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Importer</th>
<th>Importer reported quantity</th>
<th>Exporter reported quantity</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>GB</td>
<td>15 shells</td>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>1 shells</td>
<td></td>
<td>P W</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>1 shells</td>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>3 shells</td>
<td></td>
<td>P W</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>GB</td>
<td>4 shells</td>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>JP</td>
<td>4 shells</td>
<td></td>
<td>T W</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>3 shells</td>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>GB</td>
<td>6 shells</td>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>1 shells</td>
<td></td>
<td>P W</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>16 shells</td>
<td></td>
<td>P W</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>1 shells</td>
<td></td>
<td>T I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>1 shells</td>
<td></td>
<td>P W</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>2 shells</td>
<td></td>
<td>P W</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>2 shells</td>
<td></td>
<td>P I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>7 shells</td>
<td></td>
<td>P I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>7 shells</td>
<td></td>
<td>T I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>7 shells</td>
<td></td>
<td>T W</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>7 shells</td>
<td></td>
<td>T W</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other conch products

- **Meat (reported by LC)**
  - 4.45kg to MQ in 2002
  - 214.55kg to MQ in 2003
- **Pearls (reported by LC)**
  - 10 to CA in 2007
  - 4 to CA in 2008
  - 1 to CH in 2014
St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Queen conch meat exports (kg) from VC following removal of RST suspension (2002 – 2019) – CITES trade database

Total reported trade in queen conch meat from VC (2002 to 2019)

Importers:
AG, AI, BB, CA, CN, CW, DK, DM, GE, HU, JP, KN, LC, MF, MS, OM, SR, SX, TT, US, VI, VG, ZA
Grenada
Grenada

- Historically the fishery of Grenada supplied Trinidad, Tobago, and Martinique with queen conch.

- Grenada is subject to a recommendation to suspend trade based on lack of annual report submissions. In order for the recommendation to suspend trade to be withdrawn, Grenada would need to submit annual reports dating back to at least 2013.

- Grenada has also been under a CITES RST trade suspension since May 2006.

- 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) of the Convention are being implemented.
Grenada – RST recommendations

Grenada shall:

a) Apply adaptive management procedures to ensure that further decisions about harvesting and management of the species will be based on the monitoring of the impact of previous harvesting and other factors;

b) Give consideration to and implement the recommendations of the International Queen Conch Initiative - CITES workshop (Montego Bay, Jamaica 11-12 June, 2003) annexed hereto, particularly the recommendations concerning:

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 *Strombus gigas*.

The Blue BioTrade Project provides an excellent opportunity to work closely with Grenada towards lifting the CITES trade suspensions and ensuring future trade is sustainable.
BBT will also contribute to implementation of CoP18 Decisions (18.275 – 18.280) on Queen conch

Decision 18.275 is directed to range States

The range States of *Strombus gigas* are encouraged to collaborate in the following areas:

- Implementation of the *Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan*
- Development of national Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plans
- Regional and national conversion factors
- Joint research programmes at the sub-regional or regional level to support the making of non-detriment findings
- Public education and awareness programmes regarding the conservation and sustainable use of *S. gigas*
- Enhancing the traceability of specimens of *S. gigas* in international trade
- Combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activity
https://cites.org/eng/prog/queen_conch

Thank you very much