



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?

- **C**onvention on **I**nternational **T**rade in **E**ndangered **S**pecies of Wild Fauna and Flora (signed in 1973, in force since 1975).
- 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

import

export

re-export

introduction from the sea

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



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.



History of Queen Conch in CITES



- Ø Queen conch was listed on Appendix II of CITES at CoP8 (November 1992).
- Ø 36 range States.
- Ø Traded mainly as meat or shells (sometimes skins and pearls).
- Ø 70% of international trade is to the United States; followed by France (including Guadeloupe and Martinique).
- Ø 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

- Ø CITES proposed a range of actions in the mid-nineties and again in 2003-05 to improve the sustainability and legality of the trade.
- Ø These were favourably acted upon by most of the 36 Caribbean countries and dependent territories where queen conch occurs.
- Ø Measures included export quotas, (temporary) trade suspensions, harmonized fishery rules and better trade controls. RFMOs fully supported these efforts.
- Ø 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*

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

- Ø A **risk assessment** is a way to determine quickly where effort is best directed
- Ø Determines how big the risk is that the impact will be damaging to the wild population
- Ø Analysis - Management – Decision - Monitoring
- Ø 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 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.

| CITES CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA | | PERMIT/CERTIFICATE No. | Original | |
|--|---|---|---|--------------------------|
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPORT <input type="checkbox"/> RE-EXPORT <input type="checkbox"/> IMPORT <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: | 2. Valid until | |
| 7. Importer (name and address) | | 4. Applicant (name, address and country) | | |
| 6a. Quantity of export | | Signature of the applicant | | |
| 5. Special conditions | | 8. Name, address, national seal/stamp and country of Management Authority | | |
| For this permit, the permit or certificate is only valid if the Exporter certifies compliance to the Guidelines for Issuance of CITES Permits, or the state of the Exporter, to the CITES Core Authority Regulations. | | | | |
| 6b. Purpose of the transaction (see annex) | 6c. Security stamp no. | | | |
| 6d. Species name (genus and species) and common name of animal or plant | 6e. Description of specimens including identifying marks or numbers (specimen # list) | 6f. Appendix no. and serial (see annex) | 6g. Quantity (including unit) | 6h. Total exported/Quota |
| A | 12. Country of origin ¹ Permit no. Date | 13a. Country of last receipt Certificate no. Date | 13b. No. of the specimen ² or date of acquisition ³ | 13c. |
| B | 12. Country of origin ¹ Permit no. Date | 13a. Country of last receipt Certificate no. Date | 13b. No. of the specimen ² or date of acquisition ³ | 13c. |
| C | 12. Country of origin ¹ Permit no. Date | 13a. Country of last receipt Certificate no. Date | 13b. No. of the specimen ² or date of acquisition ³ | 13c. |
| D | 12. Country of origin ¹ Permit no. Date | 13a. Country of last receipt Certificate no. Date | 13b. No. of the specimen ² or date of acquisition ³ | 13c. |
| 1 - Country in which the specimens were taken from the wild, bred or captured in captivity (preparations for sale or transport) 2 - Only for specimens of Appendix I species bred in captivity or artificially propagated for commercial purposes 3 - For pre-Convention specimens | | | | |
| 9. The permit/certificate is valid for: | | | | |
| Place | | Date | Security stamp, signature and official seal | |
| 14. Export endorsement: | | 15. Seal or Label for receipt number: | | |
| Block | Quantity | | | |
| A | | | | |
| B | | | | |
| C | | | | |
| D | | Part of export | Date | Signature |
| | | Official stamp and title | | |

What happens with the permits?

- Ø Parties submit annual legal trade reports - exports (permits issued) and imports (actual trade).
- Ø Failure to submit annual reports for 3 consecutive years results in a recommendation to suspend trade.
- Ø Trade data is regularly reviewed (volumes; sharp increases; compare imports/exports, etc.).
- Ø 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 \(Rev. CoP17\)](#).

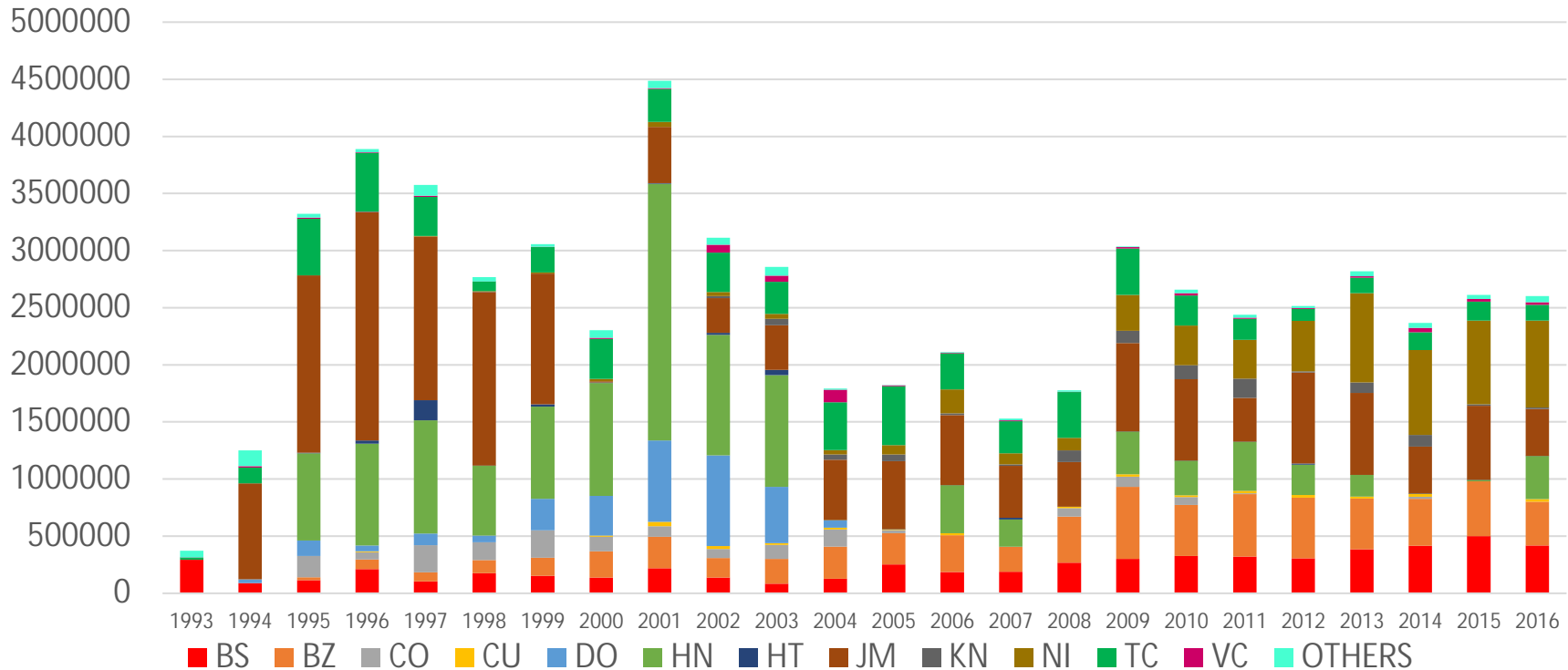
The Review of Significant Trade (RST)

- Ø 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.
- Ø Committee can recommend solutions that must be implemented by the Party concerned within specific timeframes.
- Ø 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.
- Ø 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

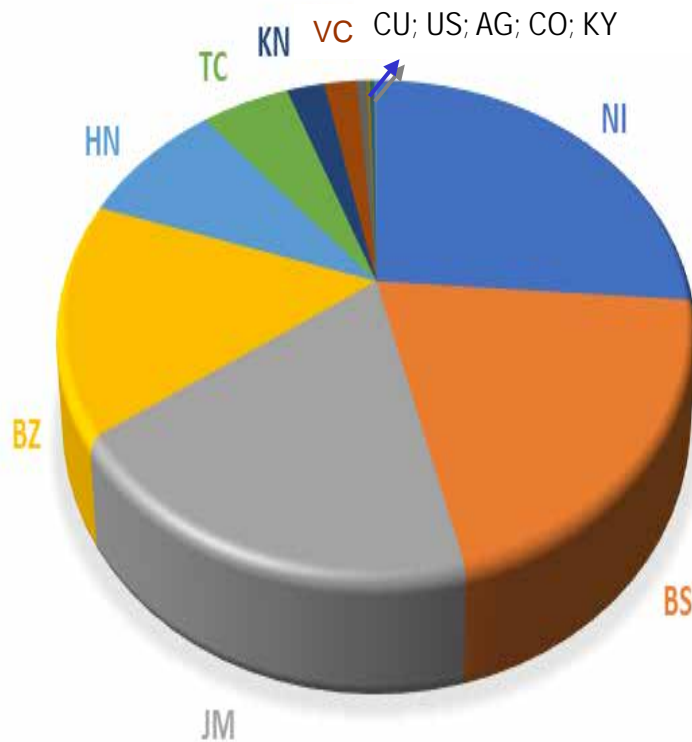


Export quantities of Queen conch (2014 -2018)

| Term | Unit | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|--------|------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Bodies | kg | 0 | 13.6 | 0 | 0 | 19,049.5 |
| Meat | | 348,973.3 | 17,043 | 88,271.3 | 51,285.9 | 7,719.1 |
| | kg | 1,963,828.9 | 2,057,368.2 | 2,200,673.3 | 2,066,852.7 | 2,267,315.9 |
| Shells | | 149,456 | 210,998 | 209,173 | 59,182 | 48,669 |
| | kg | 2,119.8 | 186,959.9 | 110,156.2 | 21,545.8 | 34,596.8 |
| Skins | kg | 32,474.5 | 47,375.9 | 0 | 3,353.4 | 114 |

Taken from AC31 Doc. 13.4 (Annex 2),
based on CITES Trade database

PERCENTAGE OF TRADE



| Exporter | Country Code | Percentage of trade |
|------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Nicaragua | NI | 26.2 |
| Bahamas | BS | 20.0 |
| Jamaica | JM | 18.8 |
| Belize | BZ | 15.2 |
| Honduras | HN | 8.8 |
| Turks & Caicos | TC | 5.4 |
| St. Kitt's & Nevis | KN | 2.3 |
| St. Vincent & the Grenadines | VC | 2.0 |
| Cuba | CU | 0.6 |
| United States | US | 0.2 |
| Antigua and Barbuda | AG | 0.2 |
| Colombia | CO | 0.1 |
| Cayman Islands | KY | 0.1 |

Saint Lucia



Exports from St. Lucia following removal of RST suspension (2002) – *CITES trade database*

Main conch product - Shells

| Year | Importer | Importer reported quantity | Exporter reported quantity | Term | Purpose | Source |
|------|----------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------|---------|--------|
| 2002 | GB | 15 | | shells | | I |
| 2002 | NZ | 1 | | shells | P | W |
| 2002 | NZ | 1 | | shells | | I |
| 2002 | US | | 3 | shells | P | W |
| 2003 | GB | 4 | | shells | | I |
| 2003 | JP | | 4 | shells | T | W |
| 2003 | NZ | 3 | | shells | | I |
| 2004 | GB | 6 | | shells | | I |
| 2004 | US | 1 | | shells | P | W |
| 2006 | SR | | 16 | shells | P | W |
| 2006 | US | 1 | | shells | T | I |
| 2009 | NZ | | 1 | shells | P | W |
| 2011 | CA | | 2 | shells | P | W |
| 2011 | US | 2 | | shells | P | I |
| 2013 | US | 7 | | shells | P | I |
| 2016 | US | 7 | | shells | T | I |
| 2016 | US | 7 | | shells | T | W |
| 2018 | US | 7 | | shells | T | W |

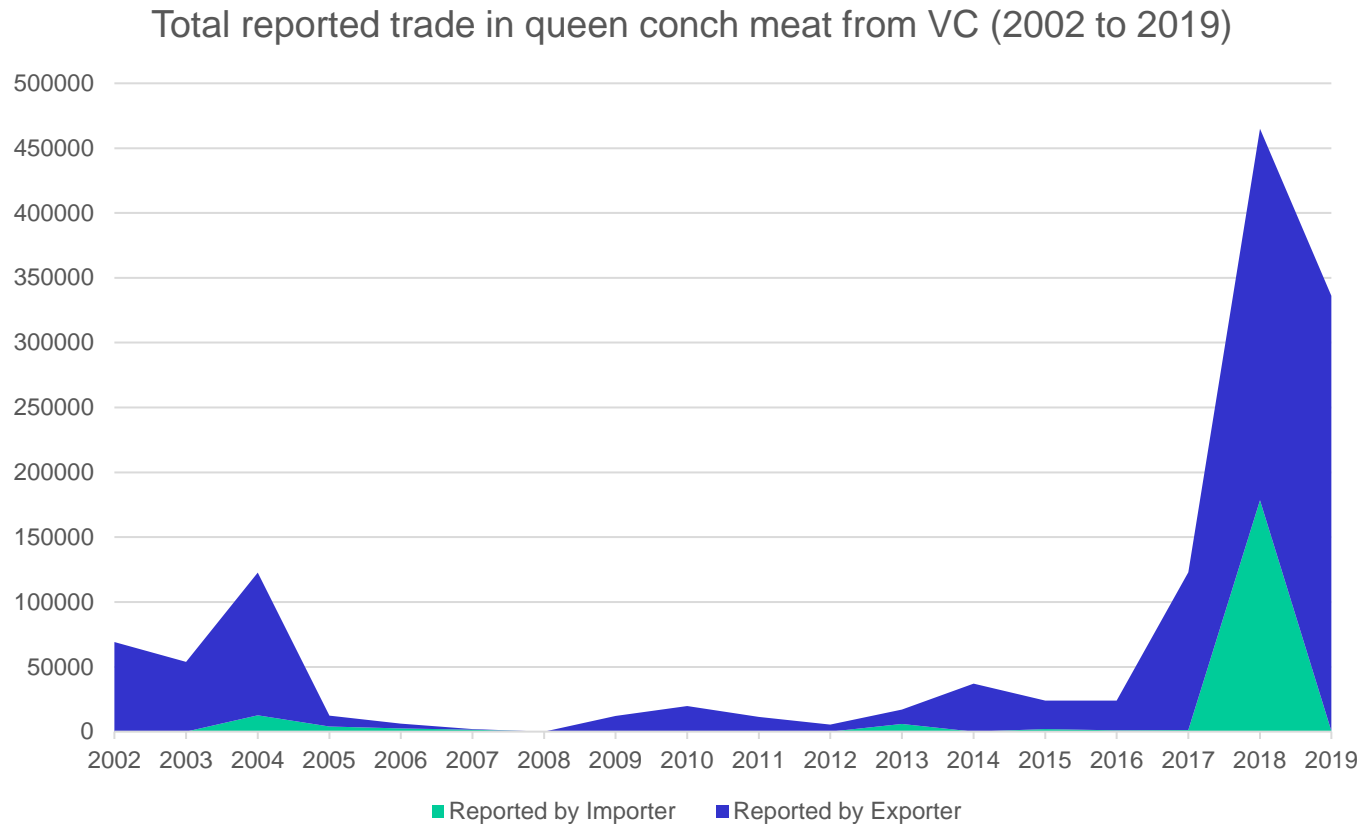
Other conch products

- 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*



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

- Ø Historically the fishery of Grenada supplied Trinidad, Tobago, and Martinique with queen conch.
- Ø 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.
- Ø Grenada has also been under a CITES RST trade suspension since May 2006.
- Ø 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:

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

https://cites.org/eng/prog/queen_conch



Thank you very much