Vitenskapskomiteen for mat og miljø
Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food and Environment

VKM assessment: Non-detriment finding for broad-snouted caiman

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Scientific name: *Caiman latirostris* (Daudin, 1802)

Common name (s): Broad-snouted caiman

Norwegian name: Bredsnutekaiman

Type of permit: CITES Appendix I (Norwegian Cites Regulation Annex 1, list A).

Purpose and source: The proposal concerns the re-export of six live, captive bred (source code C) broad-snouted caimans from Bjørneparken AS in Norway to Krokodille Zoo in Denmark (purpose code Z), where the animals were imported from in 2016.

Appendix I species bred in captivity are traded as if they were Appendix II species (Norwegian Cites Regulation Annex 1, list B) with the requirement to establish that exports are not detrimental to the survival of wild populations, in compliance with CITES Article IV.

Conclusion:

VKM has adopted the definition of detriment, cf. Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) suggested by the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Scientific Authority (https://www.fws.gov/international/pdf/archive/workshop-american-ginseng-cites-non-detriment-findings.pdf):

1. Harvest that is not sustainable.
2. Harvest that harms the status of the species in the wild.
3. Removal from the wild that results in habitat loss or destruction, or that interfere with recovery efforts for a species.

VKM concludes that the re-export of six live broad-snouted caimans is not likely to be detrimental to the survival of this species in the wild.

The conclusion is based on the following information:

- The individuals and their parents were bred in captivity.
- The population trend in the wild is considered stable.
- The broad-snouted caiman is listed as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List of endangered species.

1. Biological Information

Distribution:
Current geographical range of the broad-snouted caiman includes Argentina; the Plurinational States of Bolivia; Brazil; Paraguay; Uruguay (Siroski et al., 2020).

Life history:
The species lays between 18 and 50 eggs during the wet season (Larriera et al., 2004). The youngest reported reproductive age of a female was five years and was observed under captive conditions (Verdade et al., 2003).

Role in the ecosystem:
Crocodilians, including the broad-snouted caiman, are large predators and key stone species in many wetland ecosystems (Rodriguez-Cordero et al., 2019).

2. Population status and trend

The overall population trend is considered stable, and the estimated number of mature individuals is 500,000 (Siroski et al., 2020).

The broad-snouted caiman occupies a wide range of habitats and is considered abundant through much of its range (Siroski et al., 2020). Several studies across the Range States report encounter rates between 2.1 and 40 individuals/km, depending on the habitat (Siroski et al., 2020 and references therein).

It is still important to note that the diversity and extent of habitats occupied by the species make it difficult to estimate population abundance accurately (Siroski et al., 2020).

3. Conservation status

Global IUCN status: Least Concern ver 3.1 (assessed in 2019).
The species remains widespread and abundant in many places. It does not meet any of the criteria for the IUCN Red List threat categories (Siroski et al., 2020).

4. Threats

The broad-snouted caiman is mainly impacted by habitat destruction and loss, but also chemical pollution and the construction of large hydroelectric dams. Illegal hunting occurs in some states of Brazil where the population is low (Siroski et al., 2020).

5. Conservation and management measures

International legislation

C. latirostris was included in CITES Appendix I in 1975. The population in Argentina was downlisted to Appendix II in 1997 and as of February 2023 the population in Brazil was also included in Appendix II with a zero annual export quota for wild specimens. The species is also listed in Annex A of the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations, except for the Argentinian population which is listed in Annex B.

Conservation measures

There are different levels of knowledge about the species for each Range State, and also variation in which threats are most prominent. For example, in Argentina, extensive research has been conducted and there is a successful management program that was established about 25 years ago, whereas in Uruguay attempts are being made to establish a working group (Siroski et al., 2020).

The species is ranched for skin production, and this practice has had a positive effect on the population. To ensure that there are no negative impacts on the wild population from ranching, the Argentinian program releases broad-snouted caimans back into the wild with a rather high success rate based on nesting of released individuals (Larriera et al. 2006; Leiva et al. 2019 cited in Siroski et al., 2020).

6. Trade/use

The broad-snouted caiman is traded mainly for its skin and commercial hunting led to population declines up until ranching began in Argentina in the early 1900s. Three ranching programs are currently operating in Argentina, producing around 12,000 broad-snouted caiman skins per year (Siroski et al., 2020). The international trade in skins and leather products is still extensive and mostly involves ranched individuals, source code R (trade.cites.org). Illegal hunting occurs in some isolated areas but is no longer a major threat to the species. This is probably due to a combination of reduced density in some places, increased cost of illegal hunting and that legal skins are more attractive to traders (Siroski et al., 2020).

References

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