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DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY
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May 21, 1982

Dr. Jaques Berney
Executive Secretary
CITES
c/o IUCN
Avenue du Mont-Blanc
CH-1196 Gland
Switzerland

Dear Dr. Berney:

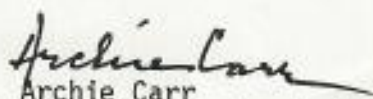
In belated response to your note of 16 April I can only say that my personal view of the Surinam and the French petitions for down-listing *Chelonia* in their areas remains as expressed in my previous letters to you on this subject. Both proposals have been carefully planned, with due attention given to the diverse aspects of the undertakings. But the aim of both sets of aspirant turtle farmers is to develop international commerce. They want to be allowed to keep alive and extend demand and markets for turtle products, and they propose to do this before any mechanism for controlling the illegal exploitation and smuggling of wild populations has been perfected. The very existence of CITES recognizes this fundamental and troublesome relationship between farming an endangered animal and providing security for the natural species.

In the case of crocodylians, a classic precedent often cited as justification for regional delisting, the markets were already so extensive, so entrenched, and so vigorously defended by powerful entrepreneurs that all efforts to kill international traffic in crocodylian products died out. With the green turtle, however, no such avid, widespread demand has ever existed. But there is unlimited latent, potential demand; and the farmers will, quite naturally, cultivate this carefully. As markets grow, pressure on wild turtles grows with them, and the survival outlook of the species declines.

That is my chief objection to farming the green turtle - and thus, to down-listing it. And as CITES grants down-listing petitions, in response to recurrent parochial farming aspirations all around the range of the genus, other attendant abuses of the wild stocks are sure to multiply.

I am therefore, personally, opposed to delisting either the Surinam or the French island population. I should emphasize that this opinion is my own, and not necessarily the consensus of the Marine Turtle Group.

Sincerely yours,


Archie Carr

Chairman, Marine Turtle Specialist Group,
IUCN

cc: G. Lucas, W. King, G. Balazs