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A glow of cautious optimism was evident in Thailand, the Land of Smiles, as the meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) concluded its two-week proceedings on 14 March. Member governments have extended CITES trade controls on valuable timber and other sustainable management critical agreements about respect to efforts to close for elephants, rhinoceros banned from trade under C

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In many respects the were a pleasant surprise conclusions of the 15th Parties to CITES (CoP15) dismay about the apparent in short-term commercial life trade and the increasing an ailing treaty struggling politics of the time. So what changed and the opening statements Prime Minister's bold statement the country's ivory market Achim Steiner's recognition in a world of increasing demand on a planet where unsustainable and production are shrinking that crucial resource base; John Scanlon's remark that reached a scale that poses to people, including lines to protect wildlife,

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UNLIKE ELEPHANTS, medicinal plants rarely make the headlines. And when they do, it's usually because of the discovery of a possible 'miracle cure', not because of the threats they face. The low level of public attention given to the conservation of medicinal plants is extremely worrying: medicinal plants form the foundation of much of traditional and 'modern' healthcare practices, and are, quite literally, critical to the survival of a large share of the human population. This is something that cannot so easily be said for the wild animal species that typically dominate both headlines and conservation funding. Medicinal plants also have a low profile at CITES meetings. Although numerous issues related to medicinal plants were on the agenda at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, discussion of these

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was limited and the results largely failed to make the news. Instead, debate during the meeting and associated news coverage focused on animal species, particularly, and unsurprisingly, elephants.

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The conversion of forests to other land uses and the illegal trade in timber have played an important part in the decrease of forest cover and loss of biodiversity in most countries of the world, with only a very few developing nations embarking on extensive replanting and forest rehabilitation.

In 2011—declared by the UN General Assembly as the International Year of Forests to raise awareness on sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of forests—the loss of forests and the biodiversity they harbour to illegal harvest and trade continues. This is despite longstanding national conservation efforts and action under international agreements such as the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to stem this decline.

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The likely failure of global efforts to meet the ambition of the Aichi biodiversity targets agreed by the vast majority of the world's governments in 2010 has long been predicted. A prominent review, published in the journal Science as early as late 2014, concluded that "despite accelerating policy and management responses to the biodiversity crisis, the impacts of these efforts are unlikely to be reflected in improved trends in the state of biodiversity by 2020", the agreed deadline for most of the targets set. Already, there is a flurry of inter-governmental consideration and learned thought hoping to shape the post-2020 biodiversity conservation agenda. Such efforts clearly have strategic importance, but the risk is that the unfinished business of the current decade may be put aside while we plan what comes next.

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An analysis by TRAFFIC in 2012 concluded that action on the threats and opportunities arising from trade in wild animals and plants would contribute to all but four of the 20 Aichi targets. Indeed an enormous amount of progress has been made over recent years: new regulatory measures under the Convention on International Trade in

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the species' appetite suppressant qualities was obtained. In a departure from CITES norms, the Hoodia proposal made specific reference to the potential economic benefits of trade to the San and other indigenous peoples, and linked this to the case for CITES action. Hoodia is not unique in being a source of income. Millions of people depend on income from medicinal plant collection worldwide - an estimated half a million households in Nepal alone. What is unique, however, is that the socio-economic importance of the trade to holders of traditional knowledge and rural collectors has received international attention.

Whether CITES helps, hinders or has no impact on the flow of benefits to rural harvesters of Hoodia and/or other CITES-listed medicinal species remains to be seen. The same can be said of its conservation impacts. In fact, given its focus on mitigating the negative conservation impacts of international trade, and that relatively few medicinal species are covered by CITES, the Convention is unlikely to be relevant for addressing either conservation or development concerns for the bulk of the medicinals trade.

This is why groups like TRAFFIC, IUCN-The World Conservation Union, WWF and others are also focusing

WWF and TRAFFIC, in China, Viet Nam, Indonesia, Thailand and show companies how legal requirements of Act as well as raising awareness of EU's Forest Law Enforcement and Trade programme, including of voluntary partnerships for timber work in Viet Nam, countries of the South America. Nevertheless to ensure the trade.

The economic development

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The former is critical, because the fact, too often among the headlines nowadays, is that the majority of wild-sourced animals and plants and their products are legally traded, often regulatory or other sustainability safeguards a minimal benefits flowing to people living in the area where wildlife is sourced. For much of this trade, businesses and consumers are hardly aware that using wildlife at all, never mind cognizant of the of their actions. There is enormous potential for improvement in this situation through mobilizing innovative assessment and traceability tools that both conservation gain and positive impact or well-being. Moreover, promoting and using such is often in the direct interest of businesses using goods, whether this be wild plants used for herbal cosmetics, timber used to make wooden or marine species used in seafood products. Third-party certification of sustainable related trace schemes such Forest Stewardship Council and rigorous use of framework that can be implemented, is

By contrast, the d been illuminated by a

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In trade terms, our world is getting smaller: movement of people, products and capital is quicker and easier than ever before and the reach of commercial institutions expands all the time. International commerce and changing societies are seemingly pulling different parts of the globe closer together. People in telephone call centres in South Asia answer the questions of European bank customers; people in Asian cities watch the world go by from replica US coffee shops. At the same time, the centres of economic power are changing, the demands of the North American and EU markets being matched by those rapidly evolving in countries like China, India, Russia and Brazil.

Unsurprisingly, many aspects of the international trade in wild animals and plants are changing as part of the wider shifts in the global economy. Among the many faces of such

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change in today's wildlife trade, one stands out more than any other: the increasing influence of Asian consumer markets, particularly that of China, where a growing component of the world's largest population has the affluence and interest to become a predominant buyer of animals, plants and their products from around the world. Of particular interest—and wildlife conservation importance—are the growing trade relations between Asia and Africa, the latter a continent so

Over the past three decades, the rate of deforestation around the world has remained at a very high level—about 16 million hectares per year—and, as recent investigations show, degradation of remaining forests is widespread. Timber remains an important global commodity: the value of solid timber-based commodity products (vener, sawn wood, plywood and logs) in international trade was USD46 billion in 2006. The international community is recognizing that trade-related instruments and tools to improve forest governance and conserve forests are more and more relevant. Good forest governance that is transparent and based on legality and sustainability is also a critical element of efforts to reduce the contribution of forest loss and degradation on climate change.

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In recent years, a number of countries have instituted new legal instruments to combat the entry of illegally harvested and traded timber products into their countries. The USA amended the Lacey Act in 2008 to cover timber products and the European Union (EU) is working on the Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) initiatives that include Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPA) with co-operating producer countries and 'Due Diligence' legislation for all non-FLEGT VPA countries exporting timber products to the region. China, an increasingly important driver in timber trade flows, has defined rules on responsible conduct for Chinese enterprises involved in forestry abroad, and governments around the globe now implement public procurement schemes that take into account a combination of legality and sustainability criteria. Many voluntary certification schemes have also been established for individual concessionaires covering these criteria, including local community ownership of forests. At the same time, countries experiencing rampant illegal logging, such as Indonesia, have signed Memoranda of Understanding with a number of countries to obtain support and collaboration to control the harvesting and illegal timber trade, for example with the USA, UK, China, and Japan. Customs, as the most important agency that controls cross border trade, has the World Customs Organization's SAFE Framework of Standards to standardize protocols for trade, including timber products. Some countries are also encouraging Free Trade Agreements (FTA) to include environmental issues in order to address potential gaps in timber trade controls, for example, the addition of a new annex on forest sector governance in the US-Peru FTA. Preceding all of the above schemes, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) came into force in 1976, and controls the export and import of species listed under CITES through a permit system, that is controlled and monitored by designated government agencies.

However, underpinning all of these international instruments is the need for strong legislative systems, procedures and operations in each country involved, with efficient and effective documentation at each step of the trade chain and strong oversight against abuse of the system.

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revealed that China's import statistics included ten times more timber from Tanzania than was documented by Tanzania's export records. TRAFFIC also reported an increase in uncontrolled timber harvesting in southern Tanzania, largely as a result of overseas demand from Asia. At around the same time, authorities in Mozambique seized a staggering 11 000 cubic metres of illegal timber. The logs had been sold by timber operators to Chinese companies, and were awaiting export to China. They were said to offer suppliers USD80 dollars per cubic metre, but it would sell in China for almost three times that price.

The rapid demise of Africa's forests is not confined to the southern half of the continent. In January 2008, President Ernest Bai Koroma of Sierra Leone placed a temporary ban on the export of timber pending a restructuring of the timber industry, in order to halt the damage to the nation's tropical forests and climate. He claimed that indiscriminate destruction by Chinese loggers in the country's north was wreaking havoc in the nation's forests. Recognizing the problem, the Chinese Government has begun to take steps to encourage responsible trade by its citizens. For example, it is understood that China is sending delegations to its diplomatic missions in Africa in an attempt to create greater awareness of the seriousness of illegal ivory trade. Another encouraging sign was China's first-time participation in a meeting of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership in Paris last October, where government delegates from ten Central African countries met with representatives of selected European countries and the USA

TRAFFIC has been working on chains for several years, an programme (2009-2012) w improving governance and harvest and trade.

The first priority for interc effective is the need to ensure by Customs in a consumer country of the exporting country. Stakeholders are aware of what is transparency in implementation has attempted to help address t China, Viet Nam, Malaysia Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo—through common framework to products in trade through Indicators for use by the WWF Global Forest framework operates at

However, governments design to maximize revenue through while maintaining the resource important that the assessor aspects of laws relating to social measures, to ensure a legality is used that is broadly rather than one that is soil management and harvest for timber

Transparency is the key to implement all their forestry legislation this will help to reduce many source through the entire trade be needed owing to the current governance and transparency temperate timber-producing countries include more participatory stakeholders, and reforms market communities and social is prominence and legal support mechanisms may also be need such a way as to reduce incident and illegal timber with that will Development of such tools hoc basis as issues arise and them. In order to maximize need to be implemented in ordinated manner. This will r in exporting countries, moving revenue capture through demonstrating transparency another way, the issue at hand source to market in all sectors

Together, this range of new their full potential, stand to curtailing illegal and unsustainable coming years.

Chen Hin Keong Global Fore TRAFFIC International

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TRAFFIC was established in 1976 with a conviction that viable and successful strategies to address conservation threats caused by commercial wildlife exploitation would have to be based on independent, accurate and credible knowledge of what was being traded and why. Reaching its 25th anniversary this year, TRAFFIC has evolved dramatically from a single London-based office to a global network of around 90 staff based in 25 countries. However, the core values and purpose of TRAFFIC's work remain faithful to this original vision.

TRAFFIC was initially set up as a volunteer group within the IUCN Species Survival Commission as a response to the 1975 entry into force of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Since then, assisting and encouraging the development of CITES as a focus for international efforts to prevent unsustainable wildlife trade has remained at the core of TRAFFIC's work. However, TRAFFIC has also developed a strong and recognized role in addressing wider wildlife trade issues, including a greater emphasis on the impacts of demand and use at a local scale, on non-regulatory approaches to trade problems and with increased attention to trade from major natural resource sectors such as forestry and fisheries.

The 25th anniversary is an excellent opportunity to look back on our achievements to date and to express sincere thanks to the many collaborators and supporters, including colleagues in WWF, IUCN-The World Conservation Union, the CITES Secretariat, government agencies and a wide range of other organizations and individuals that have made this work possible. It is particularly appropriate to take this opportunity through the pages of the *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, originally published by the Wildlife Trade Monitoring Unit, the temporary home of TRAFFIC International for most of the 1980s. The Bulletin, now in its 22nd year of publication, is a central pillar of our work and still an essential and widely-respected reference for news and learning about wildlife trade issues.

Despite there being a compelling case for organizations to take time to learn from past experiences, there is little doubt that the most exciting and challenging aspect of TRAFFIC's anniversary is looking ahead a similar distance into the future. What will be the status of wildlife resources 20-25 years from now? How will consumer attitudes change? Will market forces play a strong role in preventing over-exploitation of wild animals and plants in trade, or will we still be heavily dependent on regulation and enforcement strategies? Will today's inconsistencies between government approaches to different international institutions be resolved? What role, if any, will non-governmental organizations play in promoting and assisting conservation solutions?

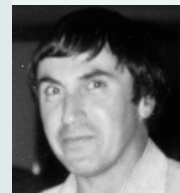
With an eye on some of the possible answers to these and other questions, TRAFFIC has recently adopted an ambitious new programme running to mid-2004. This, in turn, is being underpinned by a significant push for institutional investment to strengthen our capacity to meet current challenges. We plan to improve our attention to economic incentives and consumer motivations, expand our network in key regions, such as South Asia, West/Central Africa and Central America, and concentrate even more on forming strategic partnerships with other organizations to increase the impact of our efforts.

Nevertheless, our core purpose and values remain intact. TRAFFIC's commitment to delivering independent, accurate and credible knowledge about wildlife trade issues and sound advice based on direct experience of developing and assisting practical conservation solutions, remains as strong today as it was when our work began.



JOHN A. BURTON
Chair, IUCN/SSC
TRAFFIC Group,
1976-1981

S. GOLDFIELD



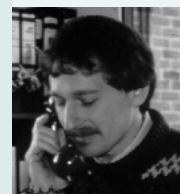
TIM INSKIP
Director,
TRAFFIC International,
1979-1980

K. LOCHEN



CHRIS HUXLEY
Head, Wildlife Trade
Monitoring Unit
1982-1983

K. LOCHEN



JONATHAN BARZOU
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1983-1990

N.H. COLLINS



JØRGEN THOMSEN
Executive Director
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PRIVAN DIJK



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The 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP12) in November in Santiago will once again put wildlife trade in the international spotlight - highlighting to a world audience the threat that unsustainable trade in wild animal and plant species can pose to their survival. However, it is often forgotten that the over-harvesting, unsustainable use and illegal trade of wildlife species threatens not only their continued survival but also the livelihoods of local communities and local economies that depend upon these species.

Wild plants and animals have been and continue to be a critical source of food and income for a wide range of communities and societies - from traditional hunter gatherers and small fishing communities to large multinational companies and consumers in urban centres

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across the globe. While wildlife represents the only viable source of food in some communities, in others food harvested from nature has formed the basis for large industries. The economic survival of many fishing communities depends upon healthy stocks of these same fish which form the basis of large-scale fisheries that contribute greatly to national economies. However, such stocks are now facing intense pressure from excessive harvests and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. For example, even a conservative estimate by TRAFFIC puts the IUU catch for Patagonian Toothfish as accounting for half of the specimens traded in 2000 - completely undermining the effectiveness of international conservation efforts and management regimes for the species.

Forests are another important resource for many national economies. However, governments are experiencing dwindling foreign currency exchange and tax revenues due to the illegal timber trade: businesses lose millions of dollars to illegal logging operations and the livelihoods of many local communities that depend upon these natural resources for employment and income are being threatened. Growing international demand, and prices for certain high-value timber species especially, are encouraging individuals to find even more ways to evade national forest controls. The effectiveness of these controls is further diminished by the financial, logistical and human resource limitations faced by the authorities tasked to implement and enforce them.

It is evident that much more needs to be done in areas such as fisheries and timber. With proposals to include a number of commercial fisheries species and a commercial timber species in Appendix II at the coming CoP, there is a golden opportunity for CITES Parties to meet this challenge - not only to empower CITES to play a more positive role in the management of our planet's natural resources but also to expand the scope and flexibility of the treaty, thereby strengthening its effectiveness.

However, Parties need to move beyond an "endangered species" approach when addressing trade in these species. The focus should not only be on the continued survival of the species but also on ensuring their security as wild resources that meet food, economic and other human needs. The approach will need a great deal of innovation and flexibility from CITES, allowing it to transcend its traditional role as a last-resort regulatory tool and become part of a more integrated management effort - providing Parties the processes and mechanisms necessary to complement and strengthen their own national policies and legislation.

Such an approach will also test CITES' ability and flexibility to interact, co-operate and integrate with the wide range of other multilateral environmental agreements that regulate and manage the harvest and use of wild resources. CITES will need to demonstrate that it not only has the potential to support other management regimes in meeting their objectives, but also be an effective safety net for some species when these management regimes cannot address their sustainable use and conservation effectively.

However, perhaps the greatest challenge in promoting the use of CITES in managing the sustainable use of wildlife resources is the misconception that CITES listings will always lead to trade bans. CITES is an international trade mechanism capable of helping to address concerns such as illegal harvesting and trade and unsustainable management, and not just a means to stop international trade when other conservation efforts have failed. Appendix II provisions, indeed, facilitate the controls, processes, tools and information that will assist countries in managing their natural resources so that species' populations do not reach the point where trade bans could be the only management option left. CITES has recognized that sustainable trade can itself contribute to the survival of a species by providing value and therefore economic incentives to ensure its continued existence. Parties will need to embrace this lofty ideal if they are indeed to rise to the challenge.

*Sabri Zain, Advocacy and Campaigns Director,
TRAFFIC International*

After timber, fisheries is the most valuable commodity sector in wildlife trade, globally worth an estimated USD55.2 billion in 2000 according to the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Reflecting the importance of fisheries in global trade and the growing pressure on these resources, the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, held in Chile in November 2002, considered a range of issues relating to marine fisheries, including five Appendix II listing proposals and a number of resolutions. The decisions arising from these deliberations will require a range of actions to be taken over the next couple of years. These will include addressing implementation issues concerning the listing of Whale Shark *Rhincodon typus*, Basking Shark *Cetorhinus maximus* and seahorses *Hippocampus* spp.,

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finalizing the Memorandum of Understanding between CITES and FAO, and moving forward with the consideration of marine species in the review of the criteria to amend the CITES Appendices. Importantly, these specific actions will also play a part in developing the complementary role CITES will play in strengthening the application of trade-related measures in fisheries agreements and in particular those dealing with large-scale commercial marine fisheries.

It was encouraging that during the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties discussion and debate on the individual fish listing proposals moved beyond the principle routinely advocated by some Parties that CITES is an inappropriate tool to apply to marine fisheries. Instead, the majority of the debate centred on whether a species met the listing criteria and the potential conservation benefits from a listing. The number of listings, Resolutions and Decisions adopted by the Parties should signal the beginning of a new phase in the consideration of marine fisheries issues under CITES - from questions of *whether* CITES should be engaged to questions of *how* it should best engage.

However despite the progress made at this meeting, there has since been a backlash against CITES within some fisheries circles, most significantly at the biennial meeting of the FAO's Committee on Fisheries in February 2003. In discussion of the content of the proposed Memorandum of Understanding between CITES and FAO, tension arose between those members promoting wording to limit the scope of any CITES engagement in marine fisheries and those wishing to explore wording that would promote the development of a complementary relationship. There was perhaps no clearer demonstration of the bridges that remain to be built between CITES and fisheries management agencies than the lack of agreement among FAO mem-

ber States to allow the representative from the CITES Secretariat to observe a working group discussion on the draft MoU. Evident in many of the interventions at the FAO Committee on Fisheries meeting and in other fisheries fora is an inconsistency in approach existing within some countries whereby a different policy position is advocated in different fora. At best this may reflect poor communication within governments and at worst deliberate attempts to obfuscate the process and retard progress.

Of interest in this debate is that over the past decade there has been a growing move by Regional Fisheries Organizations (RFOs) to use trade-related measures as a complement to those measures designed to control fishing activities taking place at sea. There has also been a growing body of international policy in support of such measures, most significantly the FAO's International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, which was adopted by the Committee on Fisheries in

2001. Technical consultations are also well advanced to consider how to strengthen the role of port and market States in conserving and managing fisheries resources (particularly those of the high seas). It would be disappointing if the outcomes of these consultations failed to chime with the capacity that already exists within CITES to regulate the trade in wildlife products, where appropriate, as a complement and support to other fisheries instruments.

Regardless of the management regime in place, and any role that CITES may play in that process, where a fishery's products are globally traded there will often be a need for some degree of international co-operation to ensure its long-term sustainability. The need for such co-operation was highlighted by the three-week pursuit in August 2003 by an Australian patrol vessel of a fishing vessel suspected of illegally fishing for Patagonian Toothfish *Dissostichus eleginoides* in Australian waters. Offers of assistance from other countries ranged from the deployment of vessels to assist in the apprehension, to the closure of markets to suspected illegal toothfish products. In the absence of such effective co-operation, sustainable management of the trade in fisheries products is unlikely to be successful.

Over the coming months, and with support from The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, TRAFFIC intends to publish the results of its analysis of the rationale for the introduction of trade-related measures by RFOs and the effectiveness of these measures in combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

The 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES in October 2004 will be the next major test of the Convention's engagement with fisheries issues.

*Anna Willock, Senior Fisheries Advisor,
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SOUTHEAST ASIA, perhaps more than any other region in the world, encapsulates the full range of challenges facing the management of wildlife trade. World-renowned as a centre of diversity, not only of animal and plant communities, but also for culture, language, politics and religion, the region is also a trade hotspot, functioning as supplier, consumer and a general import-export emporium. Southeast Asian communities at all levels rely in some way upon wildlife resources for food, medicines, clothing and other products. A large proportion of this wildlife trade is domestic and does not cross international boundaries - for example, products such as medicinal plants, charcoal, wild meat and fisheries - and therefore is not regulated by international agreements such as CITES. But there are also huge volumes of international wildlife trade both within the region, and between Southeast Asian countries and external trading partners.

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Come October 2004, when Thailand hosts the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, close attention will be focused on a region at the crossroads. To protect its globally recognized biodiversity, Southeast Asia's governments are grappling with the conundrum of "where to from here?" Economic growth, expansion of infrastructure, free trade agendas and a general push for development are all factors that are contributing to a rapidly changing socio-economic dynamic. Under an increasingly liberalized trade policy environment, it is all too easy to treat wildlife as just another commodity rather than paying heed to the management needs of natural production systems. For the average consumer, the picture may look rosy for the short term, and indeed, conservation management concerns are often interpreted as favouring the survival of animals and plants over human needs. But the challenge remains: how to reverse such trends of over-harvesting and instead implement long-term management plans that, in turn, ensure these wild animals and plants, their by-products and derivatives, can help support the sustainable development of human societies?

It is appropriate, therefore, that the list of species proposed for consideration at CoP13, includes many flagships of concern from Southeast Asia (a list of proposals can be found on pages 21-24). Apart from continuing discussions on how to enforce existing trade controls for Asian big cats and domestic ivory markets (a paper on the ivory trade in selected Southeast Asian countries is featured on pages 39-43), many other species will be on the agenda.

Not surprisingly, the push continues to harmonize international trade regulations for all Asian species of tortoises and freshwater turtles facing wholesale demand for consumption (and in the case of the endemic Roti Snake-necked Turtle *Chelodina mccordi*, for the pet trade) with more than 10 additional species proposed for inclusion in CITES Appendix II (see pages 25-34 for an article on the reptile trade in southern Viet Nam).

Most significant for live reef fish consumers in Asia is the support from Fiji, Ireland (on behalf of the European Community) and the USA for the listing of Humphead Wrasse *Cheilinus undulatus* in Appendix II of the Convention. This species is in decline throughout most of its range, but as well represents the large-scale demand for live reef fish as food, by consumers in Hong Kong SAR and wealthy communities in the region of ethnic Chinese origin.

Management of Asian tree species in trade will also be debated in Bangkok, with the genera of *Aquilaria*, *Gonystylus*,

Gyrinops and *Taxus* all under scrutiny. TRAFFIC's work on agarwood-producing species (*Aquilaria* spp., *Gyrinops* spp.) over the past decade has concluded that the majority of the global industry is currently supplied by wild stocks, of which coherent management of both the harvest and trade is in most cases lacking. Long-standing cultural, religious and medicinal use in the primary markets of East Asia and the Middle East depend on continuing supply of this valuable aromatic wood, of which only one species, *Aquilaria malaccensis*, is currently listed in Appendix II. Because agarwood is traded in the general form of wood chips, pieces, powder and oil, the proposal is to list all agarwood-producing species in Appendix II to promote harmonized management of the resource.

Indonesia, the proponent for the agarwood listing, is also proposing to amend the status of Ramin *Gonystylus* spp., which it listed in Appendix III in 2001. Concern over this valuable peat-swamp timber species has recently focused on the lack of management of the trade emanating from the tri-national nexus of export and re-export in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. In addition to Indonesia's proposal, the aforementioned three countries have recently committed to a tri-national task-force to contain the illegal Ramin trade.

By proposing species for listing in CITES Appendix II, Southeast Asian range States and their co-proponents are voicing the need for better management of wildlife trade, rather than a ban on all trade. However, the successful balancing of conservation and sustainable use relies upon a solid platform of science-based management. Lack of implementation of such precautionary approaches has been the downfall of wildlife trade management in Southeast Asia in the past. It has led to various 'boom and bust' cycles of supply and demand, and caused great concern among the global CITES community about the future sustainability of Southeast Asia's wildlife trade.

Yet current regional, bilateral and national initiatives suggest that it is not all doom and gloom for the region. The CITES Secretariat and TRAFFIC worked together in 2003 to train delegates from 10 Southeast Asian nations, as well as delegates from a major consuming country, China, under a "Science in CITES" workshop module and to recommend further capacity-building needs. With TRAFFIC's support, Viet Nam and China have held two bi-lateral meetings on transboundary wildlife trade management since December 2003, and the leadership of these two countries led to the convening in June 2004 of the first wildlife trade meeting for countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region, which links China with the five countries of the Mekong River basin (Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam). In March 2004, Lao PDR acceded to the Convention, filling a crucial gap in CITES coverage in mainland Southeast Asia, and also within the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). And perhaps most significantly, as this edition of the *TRAFFIC Bulletin* goes to press, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is set to present the Prime Minister of Viet Nam with that country's first National Action Plan to Strengthen Control on Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora.

Much work has been done but the challenge of effective implementation of regulations and law enforcement remains daunting. Only by countries working together, and by relevant government departments engaging with civil society can Southeast Asia conserve its unique natural heritage for future generations.

James Compton, Director,
TRAFFIC Southeast Asia

UNLIKE ELEPHANTS, medicinal plants rarely make the headlines. And when they do, it's usually because of the discovery of a possible 'miracle cure', not because of the threats they face. The low level of public attention given to the conservation of medicinal plants is extremely worrying: medicinal plants form the foundation of much of traditional and 'modern' healthcare practices, and are, quite literally, critical to the survival of a large share of the human population. This is something that cannot so easily be said for the wild animal species that typically dominate both headlines and conservation funding.

Medicinal plants also have a low profile at CITES meetings. Although numerous issues related to medicinal plants were on the agenda at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, discussion of these

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was limited and the results largely failed to make the news. Instead, debate during the meeting and associated news coverage focused on animal species, particularly, and unsurprisingly, elephants.

In terms of CITES outcomes, however, many more people are likely to be directly affected by those related to medicinals. A proposal to include several Asian Yew *Taxus* species in CITES Appendix II, the needles and bark of which contain a potent anti-cancer compound, was agreed with no objections. Big news, arguably, as this should mean that greater efforts are made to bring trade within sustainable levels, and therefore secure the long-term availability of this important cancer treatment.

Also accepted was a proposal to list the southern African succulent plant genus *Hoodia* in CITES Appendix II. Unlike other medicinal species, *Hoodia* (specifically *H. gordonii*) has made headlines both in Africa and abroad as a possible source of a new 'blockbuster drug' to treat obesity (see page 56). The *Hoodia* proposal was an unusual one, as it was 'annotated' to exclude from CITES provisions any items bearing a label from the governments of Botswana, Namibia or South Africa stating that trade had been approved (see page 64). The three governments promised to ensure that trade in labelled items was maintained within sustainable levels, and argued that structuring the listing in this way would facilitate control of trade in extracts and other partially finished or finished pharmaceutical products. Some questioned this approach, which, it could be argued, sidesteps CITES for a significant component of the trade, and a working group met to consider other options. In the end, the proposal was accepted as submitted, with agreement to consider the annotation further at the next meeting.

Hoodia has also made the news in conjunction with the development of a benefit-sharing agreement with the San people of southern Africa, from whom knowledge of

the species' appetite suppressant qualities was obtained. In a departure from CITES norms, the *Hoodia* proposal made specific reference to the potential economic benefits of trade to the San and other indigenous peoples, and linked this to the case for CITES action. *Hoodia* is not unique in being a source of income. Millions of people depend on income from medicinal plant collection worldwide - an estimated half a million households in Nepal alone. What is unique, however, is that the socio-economic importance of the trade to holders of traditional knowledge and rural collectors has received international attention.

Whether CITES helps, hinders or has no impact on the flow of benefits to rural harvesters of *Hoodia* and/or other CITES-listed medicinal species remains to be seen. The same can be said of its conservation impacts. In

fact, given its focus on mitigating the negative conservation impacts of international trade, and that relatively few medicinal species are covered by CITES, the Convention is unlikely to be relevant for addressing either con-

servation or development concerns for the bulk of the medicinals trade.

This is why groups like TRAFFIC, IUCN-The World Conservation Union, WWF and others are also focusing more widely on the development, promotion and implementation of guidelines, criteria and standards to promote sustainable and ethical sourcing of medicinal plants. This includes collaboration with the World Health Organization to update the 1993 WHO/IUCN/WWF *Guidelines on the Conservation of Medicinal Plants*, and with a technical committee including the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation and the Forest Stewardship Council to develop more detailed standards and criteria.

However, funding such work remains a constant challenge. Most conservation donors seem more interested in animals (recent interest in illegal logging being a notable exception), while development donors often focus on cultivation, which currently is viable for a relatively small number of species, and can shift benefits away from people benefiting from wild harvest.

Even once developed, the effectiveness of guidelines and standards for wild harvest will depend as much on the understanding and support of consumers as it will on that of producers. However, although growing, the 'ethical consumer' market is very small in the USA, somewhat stronger in western Europe, and almost non-existent in the developing world.

In order to spur greater investment in securing the future of medicinal plants - and of those who depend on them - greater attention must be given to their importance and the threats they face. Medicinal plants, it seems, are in need of a 'miracle cure' themselves.

Teresa Mulliken, Research and Policy Co-ordinator,
TRAFFIC International

WHILE MUCH of the public's perception of wildlife trade is focused on charismatic species such as Tigers and elephants, few probably realize that the most valuable wildlife commodity being traded globally is actually timber. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the global trade in wood products is estimated at USD168 billion, with the formal forestry sector alone employing more than 13 million people worldwide (2000). However, this vital economic resource is being threatened by poor management and governance, illegal logging and illegal timber trade, with governments experiencing rapidly dwindling revenues as a result of uncollected forest-related taxes and foreign currency exchange losses. The legal timber industry, in the meantime, loses millions of dollars to illegal logging operations, and the livelihoods of many local communities that depend upon forest resources for employment and income are being threatened. Not so easily quantifiable is the destruction to the habitats of millions of plant and animal species, as well as the loss of valuable water catchments and other vital ecological services provided by the world's forests.

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Illegal logging and illegal timber trade is a plague that not only affects the tropical timber producing countries in South-east Asia, Central Africa and the Amazonian countries, but also the temperate forests of regions such as the Russian Far East and the Caucasus. While there are no reliable statistics available, between 40% and 80% of total wood production in Indonesia is thought to be illegal, while estimates for the Russian Far East and the Caucasus can be up to 50%. Worldwide, the percentage of timber entering international trade that is illegal is reported to be between 20% and 80%.

Accurate figures for illegal timber are difficult to determine because illegal logging and illegal timber trade encompass such a wide range of different and disparate practices. This may include logging outside concession boundaries or within protected areas; logging protected species; illegal occupation of forest lands; obtaining logging concessions through bribes; illegal timber transport and trade; smuggling; transfer pricing and other illegal accounting practices; under-grading; under-measuring; under-valuing; misclassification of species; and, illegal processing of timber.

This complex web of illegal activity is further complicated by the lack of an internationally accepted definition of what constitutes legality of timber products. For timber species listed in the Appendices of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the permit and certificate system, including provisions in the text of the Convention relating to legal procurement, can provide a proxy for ensuring that timber traded internationally is not illegally obtained. CITES is, in fact, one of the few treaties that incorporates a dual checking mechanism to detect illegal trade. In the country of export, local authorities and Customs will have checked for the legality of the permit and shipment. In the importing country, Customs inspect the shipment against the CITES permit that accompanies it. All imports and exports are recorded in national CITES annual reports, which are sent to the CITES Secretariat and compiled in a central database. The data are available to any Party for analyses. This increased transparency in the trade can help governments monitor the industry and extraction from the forest more effectively and

hence increase the flexibility for adjusting their management regime accordingly.

However, for timber species not listed under CITES - the vast majority of those traded - the legality or illegality of shipments of timber in international trade may vary at different points of the trade chain, depending upon whether the illegality occurs up to the point of export or import, or whether such imports and exports are recorded by importers and exporters. Illegally sourced timber products could find their way to the international markets even if regulatory conditions and documentation for export and import are met. For instance, illegal export from one country may be acceptable as legitimate import into another as long as the import requirements are apparently met.

It is therefore imperative that logging should not be examined in isolation from the timber trade. Illegal trade, to a large extent, drives uncontrolled logging and illegal logging. Illegal timber trade, in turn, is often masked by the lack of transparency of the timber trade in general, with little or no reliable information available regarding trade routes, timber values, species in trade, trade volumes and other important characteristics.

With increased transparency in trade information and enhanced analysis of statistics on timber exports and imports, governments could be in a good position to identify indicators of abnormal trade discrepancies - and possible illegality. Trade discrepancies may arise from a variety of 'routine' practices such as differences in fiscal year, method of product valuation, time lag between export and import, exchange rate fluctuations, conversion of product weights to volumes and shipment of mixed products. However, if governments take steps to eliminate or at least greatly reduce such factors, significant trade discrepancies could be clear pointers to illegal activity such as mis-specification of product characteristics, fraudulent trade data and smuggling.

Realizing the potential importance of trade statistics as a tool, and to follow up on similar work conducted by the International Tropical Timber Organization, TRAFFIC received funding support from the Keidanran Foundation in Japan to study the system between Japan and Indonesia. The study reviewed and defined the routines and procedures for checking the data, in particular the raw data obtained by Customs at the point of export and import. The findings from the study were presented at a workshop in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 9 May 2005, involving stakeholders from various government departments in Indonesia and the forestry representative from the Embassy of Japan. TRAFFIC hopes that recommendations from the workshop can be implemented in the countries concerned and intends to co-operate with governments from other key timber producing and importing countries on similar initiatives. TRAFFIC will also be collaborating with the Secretariat of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to develop a project that will expand the scope of the study.

Trade statistics can be used as a valuable weapon with which governments and other stakeholders could monitor and address the scourge of illegal logging and illegal timber trade. The adage "there are lies, damned lies and statistics" may be true for some instances. But in the case of the international timber trade, statistics may in fact hold the key to revealing the truth about where a country's valuable forest resources are going - and how they can be protected.

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CAVIAR - just the very word evokes images of luxury and opulence. Yet the source of this luxury food, the sturgeon, is becoming increasingly rare in the wild due to a variety of threats, from poaching and illegal trade, to habitat loss, pollution and the damming of rivers.

Since 1997, all species of sturgeon and paddlefish *Acipenseriformes* have been listed in the Appendices of CITES. This was to halt the decline of some sturgeon stocks due to unsustainable - and often unregulated - harvest and trade, and stem the high levels of illegal trade. The ultimate aim was to facilitate a trade that was both legal and sustainable.

Since then, CITES has attempted to use every tool at its disposal in order to make its provisions work for sturgeons. This has included a Review of Significant Trade, new CITES Resolutions and Decisions, regional agreements, annual export quotas, trade restrictions, various missions to range States and numerous notifications to CITES Parties. The issue has been discussed at almost every meeting of the Animals Committee, the Standing Committee and the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to CITES that took place since the CITES listing in Appendix II.

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Yet eight years later, in May 2005, an international symposium that brought together more than 500 sturgeon experts and scientists from around the globe concluded that the state of sturgeon stocks worldwide continues to decline. Many sturgeon populations are now highly threatened, with some facing the risk of extinction. Based on the revised *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* published in 2006, 23 of the world's 27 species of sturgeon and paddlefish are now threatened with extinction, of which six are considered as Vulnerable, eleven as Endangered (including the most-sought after species Russian Sturgeon *Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, Persian Sturgeon *A. persicus* and Beluga *Huso huso*), and six are categorized as Critically Endangered.

Concern over the plight of the sturgeon was clearly demonstrated when, in early 2006, the CITES Secretariat postponed the approval of the annual export quotas for caviar and other sturgeon products originating from shared basins such as the Caspian Sea, the Black Sea-Danube River and the Amur-Heilong River. The information provided by the range States indicated that many of the sturgeon species in these shared fishing grounds were suffering serious population declines and the quotas proposed did not appear to reflect fully the reductions in stocks or make sufficient allowance for illegal fishing. By April, the CITES Secretariat finalized its assessment of the export quotas and only authorized an export quota of 44 tonnes of caviar from the Persian Sturgeon from Iran, and 1.4 t of beluga caviar from the Black Sea-Danube River basin, with no export quotas for caviar from other sturgeon species published. In practice, this means that no exports of wild harvested caviar of these sturgeon stocks should take place in 2006.

Though often incorrectly referred to as a "ban" in the media, this decision has certainly sent a strong signal to caviar-producing countries and traders, emphasizing the need to comply with the provisions and requirements

agreed to by all CITES Parties. It also brought increased awareness to the significant levels of illegal caviar that is being traded internationally and nationally. It is estimated that the illegal trade exceeds legal trade by several times and is likely to be the primary cause for the drastic population declines that several sturgeon stocks have encountered in recent years. These high levels of illegal trade undermine the efforts to halt the population declines and to facilitate a trade in sturgeon products that is legal and sustainable. They also demonstrated the need for caviar exporting and importing countries alike to step up efforts significantly in order to crack down on these illegal activities - many with strong linkages to organized crime networks.

Two important and encouraging developments addressing this illegal trade have occurred this year. One of these has been the adoption of a universal caviar labelling system by the European Union (EU) - the world's largest consumer market for caviar, accounting for almost 50% of all caviar reported in legal trade in recent years. In May 2006, the EU adopted a new regulation that made the caviar labelling requirements agreed to by CITES Parties in 2003, and described in CITES Resolution Conf. 12.7, legally binding

in all 25 EU Member States. The new regulation requires that all caviar tins in trade in the EU bear a label that contains information such as the year of harvest or re-packaging, the registration number of the processing or repackaging plant and the country

of origin of the caviar. In addition, all caviar importing, exporting, re-packing or producing companies have to be registered and maintain records of all caviar traded.

These new rules will help to combat the forces driving illegal trade in caviar as it will not only enable authorities to identify the source and origin of the caviar but also allow consumers to distinguish between legal and illegal caviar products. However, the effectiveness of these new labelling rules will be dependent upon how effectively they are implemented and enforced across all of the 25 EU Member States. International co-operation beyond just the EU is also essential in ensuring that these measures stem an international illegal trade that is driving sturgeon species to the brink of extinction. In June 2006, the European Commission hosted an international workshop attended by 120 law enforcement officials from 34 key trading countries and organizations worldwide to discuss ways to combat illegal trade in caviar. The meeting concluded with agreement on a set of rigorous measures to improve the exchange of intelligence and co-ordination, undertake joint international investigations and to implement the universal labelling system for caviar.

These are all clearly significant steps in the right direction but, with the status of wild populations of sturgeon species so perilous, it is also clear that much more needs to be done. All existing initiatives - from scientific research and fisheries management to trade monitoring and law enforcement - should operate in concert in order for these actions to be consolidated. Only with a unified drive by all involved - fishers, businesses, governments and consumers - can we ensure a sustainable future for both the species and the caviar trade.

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In November 2002, the editorial of this journal focused on CITES and marine species, highlighting related topics up for discussion at the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP) to CITES, but also noting the tension between those supportive of the Convention's engagement in marine fisheries and others who feel that CITES trade controls have no place in fisheries management. Five years on and with CoP14 having just finished, has there been any progress?

Certainly this meeting had the potential to take previous developments a step further, with more listing proposals submitted for commercially important marine species than at any

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previous CoP. They included three shark and ray proposals—Spiny Dogfish *Squalus acanthias*, Porbeagle *Lamna nasus* and sawfish (all species of the family Pristidae)—the Banggai Cardinalfish *Pterapogon kauderni*, all coral species in the genus *Corallium*, the European Eel *Anguilla anguilla*, and the Brazilian populations of two spiny lobsters—*Panulirus argus* and *Panulirus laeviscauda*. All of these proposals were for inclusion of the species in CITES Appendix II apart from sawfish which were proposed for inclusion in Appendix I.

A solid platform had been laid at the previous two CoPs, with a number of marine species being listed in Appendix II, including the Whale Shark *Rhincodon typus*, Basking Shark *Cetorhinus maximus*, all seahorses *Hippocampus* spp., Humphead Wrasse *Cheilinus undulatus* and Great White Shark *Carcharodon carcharias*. This was a notable recognition of marine species threatened by unsustainable harvest and trade, but none of those listed could be classified as large-scale commercial fisheries. The CoP14 line-up presented a number of opportunities, in particular through the Spiny Dogfish and Porbeagle proposals, to make the major advance in establishing a role for CITES for marine fisheries that the Appendix II Big-leaf Mahogany *Swietenia macrophylla* listing in 2002 had done for timber species.

As it turned out, those supportive of the listing proposals were to be disappointed, with only sawfish and the European Eel being listed. The Banggai Cardinalfish and spiny lobster proposals were withdrawn before they went to a vote. Corals quite easily obtained a two-thirds majority in Committee I, yet when voting was re-opened in plenary, the proposal was rejected after heavy lobbying by those opposing the listing.

The most intense debate, however, reflected in both interventions from the floor as well as the formal documents submitted by CITES Parties, the CITES Secretariat and the ad hoc Expert Advisory Panel of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), centred on the proposals for Spiny Dogfish and Porbeagle. Both of these are valuable commercial species, which have suffered from stock declines as a result of long-term harvesting for international trade through both directed and incidental catch. The FAO Expert Advisory Panel did not support either of the proposals and the ensuing debate lay primarily in differences of opinion over the application and interpretation of CITES listing criteria.

While neither proposal was adopted, Spiny Dogfish received more than 60% support and the Porbeagle only slightly less. This demonstrates that a majority of CITES members are not, in principal, against the use of trade controls in the fisheries sector. This is borne out by the action of CITES Parties in other fora such as Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs), where there has been a notable

increase in the use of trade-related measures over the last decade. Apart from the Catch Documentation Scheme used by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) for tracking trade in Patagonian Toothfish *Dissostichus eleginoides*, other trade measures have been introduced through what are known collectively as the 'Tuna RFMOs' and are currently limited to tuna and tuna-like species. Thus, while it is encouraging that trade measures are considered as effective tools for fisheries management, RFMOs do not currently provide trade mechanisms for many commercially important marine species in trade, such as Spiny Dogfish and Porbeagle. Further, RFMOs would benefit from CITES as a complementary management measure as it has an almost global membership, comprehensive uniform permitting and administrative procedures, and comparatively strict and effective compliance measures.

A good example of this complementary relationship was the plea at CoP14 by CCAMLR for CITES Parties to co-operate with its conservation measures and its highlighting of a number of CITES Parties involved in illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

While all eyes were on the CoP14 listing proposals, progress on other marine-related issues such as positive CITES Decisions related to sea cucumbers and sharks, as well as the inter-session listing by South Africa of its endemic abalone species *Haliotis midae* in CITES Appendix III, went almost completely unnoticed. The South African commercial abalone fishery is in a state of crisis, primarily due to illegal harvesting and trade. Driven by Asian demand for the culinary delicacy, a failure to reduce the illegal trade significantly could result in the species being declared commercially extinct, leading to closure of the legal fishery and the loss of many hundreds of jobs. While the species would almost certainly meet Appendix II-listing criteria, South Africa opted for an Appendix III listing, possibly mindful of the challenge in securing sufficient support at a CoP for inclusion in Appendix II.

The global abalone trade is of significant commercial value and while poaching levels in other parts of the world are not as high, almost all other abalone range States are faced with problems of illegal harvest and trade. It will accordingly be interesting to see how these other countries react to the Appendix III listing.

While it is of concern that timber and marine species of commercial importance have to reach critical levels of over-exploitation and unsustainable trade before sufficient numbers of CITES Member States will support their inclusion in the Appendices, of possibly greater concern were the very public disagreements between the FAO and CITES Secretariats. Despite the successful conclusion of the MoU between CITES and FAO, what emerged at CoP14 was almost an ideological debate between the two institutions on the application and interpretation of CITES listing criteria. Such a situation serves only to fuel the divide between fisheries managers and CITES officials, which still appears to exist at a national level in many countries.

The meeting closed with the Secretariat being tasked with initiating discussions with FAO on enhancing co-operation between the two organizations. If we are to see CITES playing a positive role in the future in the management of unsustainable large-scale commercial fisheries, it is essential that these discussions lead to a relationship of trust, collaboration and mutual respect.

Markus Bürgener Senior Programme Officer
TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa

In trade terms, our world is getting smaller: movement of people, products and capital is quicker and easier than ever before and the reach of commercial institutions expands all the time. International commerce and changing societies are seemingly pulling different parts of the globe closer together. People in telephone call centres in South Asia answer the questions of European bank customers; people in Asian cities watch the world go by from replica US coffee shops. At the same time, the centres of economic power are changing, the demands of the North American and EU markets being matched by those rapidly evolving in countries like China, India, Russia and Brazil.

Unsurprisingly, many aspects of the international trade in wild animals and plants are changing as part of the wider shifts in the global economy. Among the many faces of such

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change in today's wildlife trade, one stands out more than any other: the increasing influence of Asian consumer markets, particularly that of China, where a growing component of the world's largest population has the affluence and interest to become a predominant buyer of animals, plants and their products from around the world. Of particular interest—and wildlife conservation importance—are the growing trade relations between Asia and Africa, the latter a continent so rich in natural resources, yet struggling to find its place in the world economy.

Without doubt Asian businesses are of increasing influence in Africa. China's investment alone in Africa reached USD50 billion in 2006 and is expected to increase to USD110 billion by 2010. This should lead to a whole host of benefits: competition for African goods and services, better fortune for African businesses, increased revenue for African governments to ease their dependence upon international aid and loans and, in turn, it has to be hoped, alleviation of the grinding poverty that so many people on the African continent suffer. However, there is also the risk that such rapidly expanding business could prove to be another wave of the extractive exploitation that has plagued Africa for so long. Given the opportunity and little incentive to do otherwise, businesses all too easily fall into the habit of cutting corners. They avoid legal restrictions, exploit governance weaknesses and leave little behind in terms of local income or revenues.

In the wildlife trade sector, evidence of this is found in the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS), where information is collated on ivory seizures worldwide. It is operated by TRAFFIC on behalf of the CITES Parties, and at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties a comprehensive analytical report is tabled for discussion. In 2007, the message from the analysis of the ETIS data was clear: Asian-run organized crime syndicates based in Africa are increasingly being implicated in an escalating illegal trade in elephant ivory. The study identified the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cameroon and Nigeria as the three African nations most heavily implicated as the sources of ivory in this illegal trade, but the data show evidence of commercial-scale illegal ivory operations involving Chinese nationals in 22 African Elephant range States.

Asian links are clear in the activities of criminal syndicates in other spheres of trade in natural resources too. In May 2007, a TRAFFIC report on illegal logging in Tanzania

revealed that China's import statistics included ten times more timber from Tanzania than was documented by Tanzania's export records. TRAFFIC also reported an increase in uncontrolled timber harvesting in southern Tanzania, largely as a result of overseas demand from Asia. At around the same time, authorities in Mozambique seized a staggering 11 000 cubic metres of illegal timber. The logs had been sold by timber operators to Chinese companies, and were awaiting export to China. They were said to offer suppliers USD80 dollars per cubic metre, but it would sell in China for almost three times that price.

The rapid demise of Africa's forests is not confined to the southern half of the continent. In January 2008, President Ernest Bai Koroma of Sierra Leone placed a temporary ban on the export of timber pending a restructuring of the timber industry, in order to halt the damage to the nation's tropical forests and climate. He claimed that indiscriminate destruction by Chinese loggers in the country's north was wreaking havoc in the nation's forests.

Recognizing the problem, the Chinese Government has begun to take steps to encourage responsible trade by its citizens. For example, it is understood that China is sending delegations to its diplomatic missions in Africa in an attempt to create greater awareness of the seriousness of illegal ivory trade. Another encouraging sign was China's first-time participation in a meeting of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership in Paris last October, where government delegates from ten Central African countries met with representatives of selected European countries and the USA to discuss sustainable forest management. With China now on a par with the European Union as a leading importer of Central African timber, its participation was indeed timely.

However, it cannot be denied that much more can and must be done. There is a need for greater awareness amongst government policy makers, industry and consumers in China of the country's impact on wildlife resources in countries all over the world. The China CITES Management Authority has, in recent years, become very proactive in discussions on cross-border wildlife trade with its Asian neighbours and similar initiatives could perhaps be extended to its key trade partners who are further afield. At the same time, a lot more needs to be done by African governments to harness the development and conservation benefits of these new wildlife trade relations through sustainable trade policies, improving governance and strengthening law enforcement action and co-ordination.

That said, it is important to remember just how global the global economy really is. Whilst there is undoubtedly a rapidly growing domestic demand for African wildlife products in Asia, the final consumers of such goods may be elsewhere. Skilled Asian carpenters turn African wood into beautifully crafted furniture, which is then re-exported to where it will find the highest prices—often the markets of Europe and North America. As ever, it all comes back to the global economy; where, in most cases, it is a matter of who can afford what, and who can supply goods in demand at the best price. More than ever before, actions to address conservation challenges arising from international wildlife trade need to be developed with a global perspective and with a close eye on the opportunities and threats of the shifting world economy.

Steven Broad Executive Director, TRAFFIC International

For those working to reduce the illegal and/or unsustainable trade of wild species, the *2008 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* makes grim reading. The number of species whose conservation status has declined was approximately four times larger than the number whose status had improved. Among the losers were several species traded illegally in large quantities, including Malayan Pangolin *Manis javanica* and Chinese Pangolin *Manis pentadactyla*, both of which are now classified by IUCN as Endangered. These small, reclusive anteaters are sought after for their scales, which are used in traditional medicine in Asia, and for their meat. Efforts to reduce illegal and unsustainable trade have been in place since the mid-1970s, with international trade bans

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in place since 2000, with little apparent effect. Similarly, the trade in Tiger products continues today, despite major investments in strengthening and enforcing hunting and trade controls and discouraging consumers from buying Tiger products. Plant species are also under pressure—trade in agarwood, the scented heartwood of tree species in the genera *Aquilaria* and *Gonystylus*, resulted in declines reflected in the categorization of eight *Aquilaria* species as Threatened in the *Red List* in 1998.

These declines don't just threaten individual species. In the case of agarwood, the income earning potential of legal collectors—which include indigenous peoples such as the Orang Asli in Malaysia—is undercut by illegal and unsustainable collection. Over-harvest of medicinal plant species threatens health-care systems, both traditional and modern, dependent on them. Regardless of the species involved, wildlife population declines threaten to disrupt the balance of the ecosystems in which they occur.

Nevertheless, despite all the warnings, despite all the efforts to reverse the trends, these and many other species continue to be over-harvested and traded towards extinction. Many contend that the problem lies in not spending enough, and not doing enough, to enforce existing harvest and trade controls. Others believe that until consumers understand the conservation impacts of their purchasing decisions, demand for wildlife products will continue to drive illegal and unsustainable practices. Some think that market forces are the answer, some that market forces are the problem, and some that solving underlying issues of rural poverty or resource tenure provide the key.

Until recently, there has been little investment to assess the validity of the above beliefs under different circumstances, and therefore to identify what the best approaches might be to reduce illegal and unsustainable trade in a particular species, product or place. This may reflect in part the lack of information available for such an analysis: there are surprisingly few reliable data on wildlife harvests and trade that span a number of locations and/or time periods. This is particularly true of illegal harvest and trade. There are even fewer data available on the success (or failure) of efforts by governments, NGOs, businesses or others to bring trade within sustainable levels and stamp out illegal practices.

As a result, those striving to keep trade from driving still more species on to the *IUCN Red List* are working from a relatively limited pool of knowledge. This situation is not unique to the wildlife trade. A growing number of voices are calling

for better documentation of conservation project outcomes and sharing of lessons learned, for conservation efforts to follow the route of the medical profession and become more “evidence-based”, as put forward by Cambridge University Professor William Sutherland.

Thanks to strong interest and support from The World Bank, and funding from The World Bank-Netherlands Partnership Program, a small but important step has been made towards building such an evidence base for wildlife trade in South-east Asia. *What's Driving the Wildlife Trade? A Review of Expert Opinion on Economic and Social Drivers of the Wildlife Trade and Trade Control Efforts in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR and Vietnam*, considers both the key factors driving wildlife trade and the perceived effectiveness of different approaches to reducing trade that is illegal and/or unsustainable. The report was produced by TRAFFIC in collaboration with the IUCN Species Programme and Asia Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group, and drew on the knowledge of over 80 individuals with expertise on wildlife trade in and from these countries, as well as on published sources.

Some of the results are not surprising. For example, experts believed that the abundance of traded species in the wild had declined over the past decade, that rising affluence and increasing disposable income in consumer countries was a major driver of demand for wildlife in the region, and that wildlife trade controls, while generally somewhat or very effective, needed greater enforcement. By contrast, interventions to reduce poverty or diversify livelihoods were generally not considered to have reduced wildlife harvesting for trade, while those seeking to change consumer behaviour through awareness campaigns were considered successful in about half the cases.

These and other project results need to be considered for what they are, a review of expert knowledge and opinion, not an analysis of hard data, which, as noted above, do not exist. Nevertheless, they represent an important starting point from which individuals and institutions concerned with reducing illegal and unsustainable wildlife trade in South-east Asia and elsewhere could begin to pool their knowledge, and data, more effectively. This will require ongoing investments of both time and money, money that might be better spent, some will argue, on action rather than on what is, essentially, research.

However, as is all too clear from the *Red List*, our collective actions, as currently funded and targeted, are not enough. Nor, given recent economic downturns, does it seem likely that funding available to reduce illegal or unsustainable wildlife trade will increase substantially in the near future. This means we need to get even better at directing those funds that are available towards those treatments most likely to save the patient. This means moving from belief- to more evidence-based approaches. Further investments in generating the necessary evidence base, building on the initial commitment from the World Bank, will be critical to such efforts. So will be a willingness to collaborate more effectively on the part of governments, NGOs, and intergovernmental organizations. Wild species, and the people who depend on them for food, medicine, income and a variety of other uses—including the sheer enjoyment of simply knowing they exist in the wild—deserve nothing less.

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Over the past three decades, the rate of deforestation around the world has remained at a very high level—about 16 million hectares per year—and, as recent investigations show, degradation of remaining forests is widespread. Timber remains an important global commodity: the value of solid timber-based commodity products (vener, sawn wood, plywood and logs) in international trade was USD46 billion in 2006. The international community is recognizing that trade-related instruments and tools to improve forest governance and conserve forests are more and more relevant. Good forest governance that is transparent and based on legality and sustainability is also a critical element of efforts to reduce the contribution of forest loss and degradation on climate change.

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In recent years, a number of countries have instituted new legal instruments to combat the entry of illegally harvested and traded timber products into their countries. The USA amended the *Lacey Act* in 2008 to cover timber products and the European Union (EU) is working on the Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) initiatives that include Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPA) with co-operating producer countries and 'Due Diligence' legislation for all non-FLEGT VPA countries exporting timber products to the region. China, an increasingly important driver in timber trade flows, has defined rules on responsible conduct for Chinese enterprises involved in forestry abroad, and governments around the globe now implement public procurement schemes that take into account a combination of legality and sustainability criteria. Many voluntary certification schemes have also been established for individual concessionaires covering these criteria, including local community ownership of forests. At the same time, countries experiencing rampant illegal logging, such as Indonesia, have signed Memoranda of Understanding with a number of countries to obtain support and collaboration to control the harvesting and illegal timber trade, for example with the USA, UK, China, and Japan. Customs, as the most important agency that controls cross border trade, has the World Customs Organization's SAFE Framework of Standards to standardize protocols for trade, including timber products. Some countries are also encouraging Free Trade Agreements (FTA) to include environmental issues in order to address potential gaps in timber trade controls, for example, the addition of a new annex on forest sector governance in the US-Peru FTA. Preceding all of the above schemes, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) came into force in 1976, and controls the export and import of species listed under CITES through a permit system, that is controlled and monitored by designated government agencies.

However, underpinning all of these international instruments is the need for strong legislative systems, procedures and operations in each country involved, with efficient and effective documentation at each step of the trade chain and strong oversight against abuse of the system.

TRAFFIC has been working on various aspects of such trade chains for several years, and under its new four-year programme (2009-2012) will continue focusing on improving governance and transparency of the timber harvest and trade.

The first priority for international instruments to be effective is the need to ensure that documentation required by Customs in a consumer country reflects the legal systems of the exporting country. This can only happen if all stakeholders are aware of what it means to be legal and there is transparency in implementation of the laws. TRAFFIC has attempted to help address this issue in seven countries—China, Viet Nam, Malaysia, Gabon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Republic of the Congo—through the development of a common framework for assessing legality of timber products in trade through Principles, Criteria and Indicators for use by companies that are members of the WWF Global Forest and Trade Network (GFTN). The evidence-based approach of the common framework operates at each step in the trade chain.

However, governments design their systems and institutions to maximize revenue through royalty and fee collection, while maintaining the resource base. Therefore, it is important that the assessment of legality includes other aspects of laws relating to social, environmental and conservation measures, to ensure a comprehensive framework of legality is used that is broadly applicable across countries rather than one that is solely concerned with forest management and harvest for timber production.

Transparency is the key and if governments are able to implement all their forestry laws in a transparent manner, this will help to reduce many types of illegality—from the source through the entire trade chain. New approaches will be needed owing to the current weaknesses in forest governance and transparency in many tropical and some temperate timber-producing countries. Monitoring should include more participatory and independent multi-stakeholders, and reforms may be needed to ensure local communities and social issues are given sufficient prominence and legal support. New administrative mechanisms may also be needed to link the trade chain in such a way as to reduce incidences of the mixing of unknown and illegal timber with that which is legal.

Development of such tools has hitherto been on an *ad-hoc* basis as issues arise and as governments take heed of them. In order to maximize efficiency, such instruments need to be implemented in a complementary and co-ordinated manner. This will require a major paradigm shift in exporting countries, moving away from maximizing revenue capture through controls and penalties, and instead demonstrating transparency along the trade chain. Put another way, the issue at hand is good governance, from source to market in all sectors engaged in the industry.

Together, this range of new measures, if implemented to their full potential, stand to have a significant impact in curtailing illegal and unsustainable timber trade over the coming years.

Chen Hin Keong Global Forest Trade Programme Leader,
TRAFFIC International

It is ironic that as we enter another Year of the Tiger, Tiger populations in the wild have plummeted from as many as 100 000 to a mere 3200 over the past 100 years. Despite our best efforts, we continue to lose wild Tigers to poaching for the illegal trade, habitat loss, increased conflict between Tigers and people, and intense over-hunting of their prey species.

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Over the years, there has been a huge amount of conservation effort and millions of dollars in resources invested in saving wild Tigers. But forests that Tigers inhabit are still full of snares; criminals kill and smuggle Tiger parts at will; and Tiger parts are still openly displayed for sale all over Asia. Why has this been allowed to continue? Why are we not boasting healthy, thriving populations throughout Asia? Why are the efforts of national governments and the international community failing?

Certainly, part of the problem is that resources put into on-the-ground Tiger conservation are either inadequate, or are not being channelled where they are needed the most. Those on the frontline of law enforcement regularly deal with age-old inadequacies, ranging from a lack of equipment to insufficient capacity. Enforcement officers in key trade hubs use taxis or buses to carry out their investigations and raids, often unarmed, while the poaching syndicates they hope to eliminate move freely in powerful four-wheel drive off-road vehicles, using the latest satellite navigation technology and packing high-powered automatic weapons.

At the very root of these practical problems is insufficient political will to provide the capacity to implement and enforce adequately the relevant national laws and international measures governing illegal Tiger trade, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Those authorities whose commitment and action matters most are frequently disengaged from and even in denial about the plight of the Tiger—mainly because their political masters are indifferent as well.

Fortunately, recent developments have shown that there could be light at the end of the tunnel. A new international initiative, the Global Tiger Initiative, led by the World Bank, has injected fresh impetus, momentum and new opportunities to foster increased international co-operation and co-ordinated action. The initiative hopes to sound the alarm to the highest level of decision-makers, culminating in an International Tiger Summit of Heads of State at Vladivostok, Russia, later this year.

The Global Tiger Forum (GTF)—the world's only inter-governmental organization dedicated solely to Tiger conservation—is in the process of being revitalized and has added a new sense of urgency to its work, plotting a fresh course for Tiger conservation efforts range-wide.

Other new partnerships are taking place, particularly in the area of law enforcement co-operation. Today's illegal trade in Tigers could be markedly reduced, if concerted efforts were made by everyone in the law enforcement community. For this reason, CITES is forging stronger linkages with other enforcement organizations such as INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization and United Office on Drugs and Crime. Bilateral efforts, such as the India-China protocol on Tiger conservation, and regional enforcement initiatives such as ASEAN-WEN and the South Asia wildlife enforcement network are taking the fight against poachers and illegal traders across borders and national boundaries.

These efforts are indeed encouraging but they will amount to nothing unless they are translated into effective enforcement efforts on the ground. Given the challenges already being faced by the enforcement front line today, the rapidly rising rate of poaching and the downward spiral of Tiger numbers in the wild, ground-level enforcement action must be the highest priority.

At the same time, a new complication is arising that could undermine these actions. Commercial farms for Tigers are being proposed by some parties as a potential conservation solution. However, commercial farming of other wildlife in Asia, such as Asiatic Black Bears in China, crocodiles in Thailand, or Yellow-crested Cockatoos in Indonesia, has done little, if anything, to protect the species in the wild. Unless Tigers are effectively protected in their habitat and illegal markets are shut down, illegal killing and trade of Tigers will continue. Commercial Tiger farms may simply make the situation worse, stimulating demand for Tiger parts and confusing enforcement efforts. With poaching of wild Tigers a much cheaper option than rearing animals in captivity, and good evidence of a market preference for wild-sourced Tiger products, this would undoubtedly lead to an escalation of poaching in the wild, spelling disaster for wild Tigers.

Will there be Tigers in twelve years from now, when we enter the next year of the Tiger, or will the Tiger have become a creature of myth, like the lunar calendar's Dragon? It is not too late—Tiger populations can rebound if the pressures are removed. Adequate habitat still exists and prey populations can recover quickly if given the chance. But serious protection and enforcement is essential, and resources are needed more than ever to be spent accountably and efficiently, with an urgent need for better support for enforcement personnel. And most importantly, support from those with the power to effect real change, and to save Tigers from extinction in the wild, is imperative, now more than ever.

*Chris R. Shepherd, Senior Programme Officer,
TRAFFIC Southeast Asia*

“Commerce trumps conservation at wildlife convention”, was the Reuters headline at the close of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP15) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in Doha, Qatar, in March 2010. A chorus of similarly gloomy commentary was heard from a wide range of media, organizations and governments reflecting on the meeting’s outcomes, painting a picture of an ailing treaty, where decision-makers were unwilling to look beyond short-term politics and vested interests and face up to the serious conservation management challenges that CITES had been designed to address.

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So what actually happened in Doha? Were the meeting outcomes universally bad? And what do they mean for the future of CITES in its 35th anniversary year? As is often the case, the answers are not straightforward, but they are important to consider both in the context of international efforts to address unsustainable trade in wild animals and plants and in the wider scene of multilateral negotiations on environmental issues in the shadow of the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.

The CITES CoP15 results that attracted most of this negative commentary were a series of decisions against the listing of commercially important marine species in the Convention’s Appendices (the lists of animals and plants subject to trade controls under the treaty). Primary among these was a proposal to list Atlantic Bluefin Tuna in Appendix I (which would ban commercial trade), which raised a host of questions about the relationship between CITES and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the body so far used by governments to oversee management and trade in this species.

Despite ICCAT’s clear failure to prevent catastrophic declines in stocks of this species caused by excessive catches, there was a strong movement to ensure that its authority not be undermined by a CITES listing. The proposal was heavily defeated by vote after debate. And this decision appeared to set a trend for a negative reception for a range of other marine species proposals for various sharks and red coral. Overall, there was a strong sense in debate that CITES was simply not viewed by a majority of government members as an appropriate tool to address trade concerns for valuable marine species, despite the fact that alternative international approaches were either failing or simply did not exist. In this regard, the despondency felt by many by the end of the meeting was to some extent justified.

Fortunately, though, it was not all bad news from CITES CoP15. Member countries made important progress in deciding how to address issues such as trade in rhinoceroses, Tigers, agarwood and ivory. The majority of proposals to list other species in the Appendices were adopted and much was agreed with respect to matters

relating to implementation of the treaty; for example procedures for dealing with e-commerce. However there is no escaping the fact that these glimmers of progress struggled to shine a positive light for the future amidst the low spirits engendered by the marine debates.

So, what lies ahead for CITES? Some might argue that keeping a narrow focus and avoiding the difficult high-value marine and forest trade sectors would provide a workable comfort zone for CITES to operate in. However, this ignores the fact that the Convention has long been applied to these other areas of wildlife commerce. And more importantly, it would be an admission of failure and that a treaty established by governments to help prevent negative conservation effects

from international wildlife trade be treated as irrelevant to the sectors that account for the vast majority of this commerce in terms of both value and impact. In fact, despite its age, CITES actually provides a rather modern set of flexible and powerful tools that governments can use as a basis for collaborative action to manage sustainable trade and avoid negative impacts in any sector of wildlife commerce. At its heart is a sustainability standard, a chain of custody system for international trade and a framework for collaborative enforcement and compliance management that can be applied in a manner fully compatible with existing national and international management agreements for the harvest of marine species, trees and other high-value wildlife species.

That said, there is no denying the fact that some important things need to change if CITES is to be used to its full potential. Within governments, there is an urgent need for more emphasis on longer-term economic, social and environmental goals. It should not be tenable for decisions about natural resource use to ignore scientific advice, historical experience and sustainability promises made regularly under many international agreements. At the same time, there is a need for greater private sector responsibility and a move away from a culture of claiming to be working within a set of rules, while at the same time campaigning to ensure that those agreed are as weak as possible. Furthermore, at an international level, a great deal needs to be done to improve coherence between negotiations under different agreements, especially those relating to high-seas governance, fisheries management and international trade regulation.

If commerce and conservation are simply treated in CITES and other international negotiations as irreconcilable competitors, then it is inevitable that neither will succeed. In the field of wildlife trade management at least, some of the outcomes of the CITES CoP15 were rightly viewed as bad tidings for the treaty’s future. Looked at another way, though, the strong media attention to CITES debate on engagement with marine fisheries trade has placed the inadequacies of existing management arrangements firmly in the public spotlight. Governments now need to stand back and use the full range of tools available to address the fact that commerce will only be sustained if conservation is accepted as part of its concern.

Steven Broad, Executive Director, TRAFFIC International

The conversion of forests to other land uses and the illegal trade in timber have played an important part in the decrease of forest cover and loss of biodiversity in most countries of the world, with only a very few developing nations embarking on extensive replanting and forest rehabilitation.

In 2011—declared by the UN General Assembly as the International Year of Forests to raise awareness on sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of forests—the loss of forests and the biodiversity they harbour to illegal harvest and trade continues. This is despite longstanding national conservation efforts and action under international agreements such as the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to stem this decline.

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One of the factors driving the demand in wildlife consumption is the increase in disposable income of the affluent and middle classes. The contribution of the timber industry to employment and revenue generation means that greater attention must be paid to the sustainable use of forest resources; moreover the curtailment of illegal trade needs to focus on control and enforcement and a greater emphasis placed on licensing, verification and transparency in order to reduce the risk for buyers and to show conformity with regulations.

A simple comparison of Customs data is enough to demonstrate major unauthorized flows of timber. For example, TRAFFIC's studies of timber trade flows from Indonesia to Japan and other major markets, show major discrepancies, such as large imports of Indonesian logs into Japan despite a ban on the export of logs and rough sawn timber from Indonesia. TRAFFIC has brought the importance of changing Customs trade controls for timber to the attention of key consumer markets and governments and prompted discussions on this subject at international fora. TRAFFIC's study of the flow of timber from Tanzania to international markets, including China, found serious problems of illegality which has prompted numerous actions in Tanzania on both the policies and regulation reforms, which has received attention at the highest political levels in Tanzania, as well as bilateral dialogue with the Government of China.

Governments in key markets have increasingly recognized the need to address illegal logging and trade as shown by a number of initiatives around the world, for example: amendments to the US *Lacey Act* to include plants, the EU Voluntary Partnership Agreement to license legal timber from partner countries to the EU, the recently adopted EU Illegal Timber Regulations that cover all timber imports to the EU, illegal logging policy initiatives in Australia, and various efforts to enhance co-operation bilaterally such as between the EU and the USA with China, Japan and other tropical timber-producing countries, among others. Governments in many producing countries are taking strong action including policy and regulation reforms in an attempt to address illegal logging in their own countries.

These same governments are also investing in helping exporters and industry to comply with new regulations and the changing market for legal verification: training, conducted by

WWF and TRAFFIC, has taken place in China, Viet Nam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Lao PDR to show companies how they can meet legal requirements of the US *Lacey Act* as well as raising awareness on the EU's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (EU-FLEG) programme, including establishment of voluntary partnership agreements for timber work in Malaysia, Viet Nam, countries of the Congo basin such as Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, and South America. Nevertheless, much more can be done by these countries to ensure the legality and sustainability of the timber trade.



The economic development of some countries has helped to fuel their demand for timber products and the business networks that are being developed are likely to continue to drive trade to those countries. Some emerging markets—India and the Middle East, for example—must act to ensure that economic development in these countries is sustainable. India's strong and stringent controls on the use of its own forest resources drives imports to feed the demand for timber products.

How much more time has to pass before forest loss can be halted and use be managed sustainably for current and future generations? Urgency is growing, not only because of the role of forests as centres of biodiversity, but also for their function in providing a variety of critical ecosystem services such as in capturing carbon, protecting watersheds, and supporting the livelihoods of people living within and adjacent to forest areas.

Investment in forest conservation is increasing as the role of forests in climate change mitigation is increasingly understood. This is illustrated by mechanisms such as REDD (Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) and the large sums of money committed by Norway to Indonesia and Guyana to reduce deforestation. However, there is a need to make sure that some of these investments go towards addressing illegal timber flows, and key markets that have not yet committed to combating illegal imports should use all avenues—including policy and regulatory changes—to work with countries that are facing illegal logging problems. It is of paramount importance that funding support to traditional conservation efforts continues.

Illegal logging and the corresponding trade in those timber products continues to have an impact on government revenues, institutions, rule of law, lives and livelihoods of marginalized and indigenous peoples, employment, and a whole host of conservation, environmental and social issues, as well as promoting corruption. A balanced approach and funding to address the problem of illegal logging should be continued to complement work dedicated to tackling climate change, but not to the exclusion of those efforts.

Finally, it is important to educate consumers to make sustainable choices such as selecting timber that has come from well-managed forests. This in turn will give producers an economic incentive to invest in forest management, to seek certified timber products and provide careful stewardship of forest resources, or face losing out in the international market place.

Chen Hin Keong, Global Forest Trade Programme Leader,
TRAFFIC

Whenever an animal or plant is desired for its features or its rarity, and determined to be of commercial value, it is in a position of risk. It becomes sought after, a marketable entity potentially vulnerable to overexploitation. South-east Asia is a region that boasts an incredible diversity of wildlife, from the iconic Tiger, and the brilliantly plumed birds-of-paradise, to the virtually unknown Tokay Geckos. However much of this wildlife is being assailed by illegal and unsustainable trade.

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In addition to the ever-increasing pressures of human population expansion, extraction levels of wildlife for commercial gain are massive and growing. While legal and sustainable harvest and trade of some species is possible, unsustainable and illegal harvest and trade undermines efforts to achieve sustainability and greatly impedes conservation. With other species, such as the Tiger or the endemic Roti Island Snake-necked Turtle, any trade will only bring it closer to the brink of extinction.

While much of the illegal trade is carried out at a local level, much is also cross-border and in violation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Many of the region's species have been all but eradicated to supply the black market; perhaps the best-known examples of this are the Sumatran and Javan rhinoceroses.

Very few are aware of lesser-known species like the Southern Serow, Sunda Pangolins and Asiatic Black Bears that are heavily exploited, and fewer still are doing anything about it. That so little effort is channelled into protecting these species is mostly a result of a severe lack of resources devoted to work on species perceived to be uncharismatic.

Illegal, unsustainable and poorly regulated trade in wildlife is rife in South-east Asia. Some of these issues are explored in this issue of the *TRAFFIC Bulletin* and illustrate that South-east Asia is, increasingly, a regional hub of illegal wildlife trade, acting both as source and consumer.

Birds and reptiles are in demand for the pet trade and tonnes of tortoises and freshwater turtles are shipped to China, fuelled by the demand for meat and medicinal products.

Raw ivory from African nations moves via Malaysia, Thailand, Lao PDR, Viet Nam and the Philippines, most often on to China to meet the demand for luxury items. Pangolins from Indonesia

make their way to China and Viet Nam through Malaysia and Thailand.

Commensurate with its increasing economic prosperity is South-east Asia's booming role as a consumer, prime examples of which being high-value tortoises from India and Madagascar that continue to be smuggled in by the thousands.

Understanding the current situation is only the first step. These challenges must be addressed urgently if further declines and extinctions are to be

prevented. Dissemination of information, raising awareness and ultimately influencing consumer behaviour, as well as increasing enforcement efficiency, is the next. As recently as 20 years ago, half of South-east Asia's 10 countries were not even members of CITES. Today, all the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are not only CITES Parties but have joined together to combat illegal wildlife trade in the form of the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network, which was established at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP) to CITES in Thailand in 2004.

That meeting was, in fact, the first CITES Conference of the Parties to be hosted in the region and it is set to host a second CITES CoP in 2013, again in Thailand. With the spotlight of the international conservation community squarely focused on the region at CITES CoP16, this would be an ideal opportunity for South-east Asia to showcase the rich biodiversity of the region and the steps it is taking to conserve and protect this vital natural heritage. However, much more needs to be done before the region can demonstrate to the international community that it has decisively and successfully stemmed the tide of illegal and unsustainable wildlife trade. Much more also needs to be done by the international community to help support that work.

Since the establishment of its regional programme for South-east Asia 20 years ago, TRAFFIC has worked closely with governments in the region providing that support. This includes providing critical information on the impacts of trade, motivating efforts to increase the ecological sustainability of trade in wild species and improving enforcement of national and international wildlife trade controls by helping to build the capacity to carry out this work. There is still much to be done however, now more urgently than ever. The needs are great but the possibilities are infinitely greater if we act: it is lack of action that is the greatest threat to wildlife in South-east Asia and around the world.

*Chris R. Shepherd, Deputy Regional Director,
TRAFFIC Southeast Asia*

Illegal killing, trade and use has been, and remains today, one of the main causes of the drastic and apparently continuing decline in the numbers in the wild of many of the world's most charismatic endangered species. Despite increased law enforcement efforts, the South African Government recently announced that the country lost 448 rhinos to poaching in 2011—almost four times the number killed in 2009. Moreover, 2011 was the worst year of large-scale ivory seizures since systematic

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monitoring began. More than 13 large-scale ivory seizures, amounting to 23.7 tonnes, were recorded that year—the first year ever to record tonnage in double digits and more than double the tonnage compared to 2010. The situation is no better with Tigers, with parts of at least 1069 Tigers having been seized in the species' range countries over the past decade—indicative of more than 100 wild Tigers killed in total each year.

There is little doubt that more effective direct action to identify and apprehend poachers and illegal traders is critical to stem this tide of over-exploitation. However, without a complementary effort to address effectively the persistent market demand that drives this trade, enforcement action alone may be futile. The harsh economic reality is that criminals are raking in huge profits from this activity, at relatively little risk, because parts and products of dead elephants, rhinoceroses and Tigers have a high market value—the desire for these products is persistently high, the supply is dwindling by the day and the ability of consumers to pay high prices for these products is increasing.

There have been in the past many efforts to dissuade demand for these products, primarily by generating greater awareness of the importance of the conservation of these species or highlighting the highly illegal nature of consuming products derived from these species. Unfortunately, when examining the continuing evidence of illegal killing and illegal trade, the overall performance of these efforts must be called into question. Even when there have been successes, such as the shift by formal traditional Asian medicine practitioners away from use of rhinoceros and Tiger parts in prescribed medicines, traders have simply adapted their marketing to popularize endangered species products in other market sectors, including gift giving and unproven quick-fix health tonics for the wealthy.

If demand for these products is to be significantly reduced, there needs to be a paradigm shift in the design, planning and execution of these demand reduction strategies. Greater effort should be applied to understanding the underlying factors influencing the behaviour of these consumers, how we might influence this behaviour and what concrete steps can be made to prompt such behaviour change.

Initiatives aimed to reduce demand for endangered species frequently jump immediately to message development and campaign ideas without exploring more deeply the attitudes and behaviours that they hope to change and, most importantly, the fundamental human interests and motivations behind those attitudes and behaviours. Addressing the primary drivers of human behaviour must be at the heart of demand reduction efforts. The initial focus should not be on the specific users themselves but the attributes that shape their behaviours—from ignorance of and apathy about conservation concerns, to basic desire for rarity, prestige and risk-taking that spark the attraction for endangered wildlife goods.

Academic exploration of behavioural drivers of consumer choice is a complex and evolving field, focused more on the desire to discover what makes people buy goods on offer, rather than on what it takes to convince them not to buy goods that cause environmental or social harm. Nevertheless, there is a great deal to be learned from this work by those designing demand reduction interventions in the context of wildlife conservation. For some of the species under most pressure from over-exploitation, the potential for success of immediate protection efforts and long-term conservation strategies can only be greatly strengthened by investment in well-designed and effective means to engage consumer behaviour.

Demand reduction work needs to get out of the conservation 'ghetto' and involve different partners, agencies, research institutions and other actors who will be needed to fill knowledge gaps in the conservation world. This should include participants from a wide range of professional and institutional backgrounds—behavioural science and economics, social research, marketing, and advertising. A collaboration of this rich mix of expertise and experience is essential to success.

*Steven Broad, Executive Director
TRAFFIC International*

Levels of poaching and illegal trafficking in elephant ivory and rhinoceros horn have surged in recent years, reaching crisis levels. Last year, 2011, saw the highest number of elephant deaths to poaching and ivory seizures since the 1980s. The number of rhinoceroses poached in South Africa alone has risen from 13 in 2007, to an alarming 448 in 2011 and in 2012, some 467 rhinoceroses had been killed unlawfully by the end of October, a figure that was rising daily.

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Clearly, the current approach to combating the illegal trade in wildlife is failing. According to a report by management consultancy firm Dalberg Global Development Advisors, commissioned by WWF, the root cause of this failure is that governments do not give the issue a high-enough priority. Dalberg notes the difficulties faced by its researchers wishing to discuss wildlife trade with representatives from Ministries not directly related to environmental issues, such as Justice, Commerce, Internal Affairs, Trade and Economic Affairs. Out of 110 representatives they approached, interviews were granted with only 23. This limited response rate is a telling sign and raises the question of whether crucial government bodies beyond the Ministries of Environment see illegal wildlife trade as an issue of concern at all.

Wildlife crime is not an obscure, victimless crime, but one which is often carried out by determined and well-organized criminals. It may sometimes attract involvement of the rural poor, whose life choices may be limited, but increasingly is run by career criminals who are involved in other illicit activities. Illegal wildlife trade has become well-organized, often conducted by criminal networks that span continents.

The human impacts of wildlife crime are much greater than acknowledged by governments. Frequently, it constitutes a threat to national territorial integrity, rule of law, and security. It can destabilize economies, lead to human deaths and can be symbiotic with other serious crimes such as arms and drug trafficking.

It is also a crime that needs co-ordination with efforts to halt other forms of illegal trafficking and cannot be tackled in isolation. Justice Ministries need to ensure that judges and prosecutors recognize the seriousness of such illegal activities and that penalties imposed provide an effective deterrent. Other Ministries need to ensure that sufficient personnel are deployed at national trade hubs to detect and intercept illicit wildlife. Unless all appropriate government departments are involved, commitments made and actions taken by government to address wildlife crime are likely to be unco-ordinated and will fail to address the issue effectively.

It is not all bad news. India's wildlife crime control bureau is staffed with officers from police, Customs and the forest department, allowing them to work in a co-ordinated manner. In China, the National Inter-Agencies

CITES Enforcement Coordination Group has been established and includes high-level representatives from more than 15 agencies, including the CITES Management Authority, General Administration of Customs, Ministry of Agriculture, State Industry and Business Administration, Ministry of Public Security, and the Forest Police Bureau and Conservation Department of State Forestry Administration.

For the first time, the issue of poaching and the illicit trafficking of wildlife was raised in the United Nations General Assembly in September 2012 during discussions on strengthening national and international governance. World leaders gathering in New York for the global body's 67th annual meeting highlighted wildlife trafficking along with other severe threats to the rule of law, such as corruption and the illegal drugs trade. In a written statement, permanent Security Council member United States highlighted "the harm caused by wildlife poaching and trafficking to conservation efforts, rule of law, governance and economic development." Gabon's President Ali Bongo Ondimba said during the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law that "such organized crime is increasingly affecting the environment and biodiversity through poaching and illegal fishing", and that Gabon intends to strengthen its criminal justice system to combat this phenomenon. "But such efforts will require a greater international legal co-operation", he said.

Momentum is building, and it is time to change the approach to fight illegal wildlife trade by creating the right incentives for all to make the issue a priority. Collaborative mechanisms such as CITES need to be better employed to embolden regulatory efforts and hold governments to account, with the use of sanctions if necessary. Governments must work to reduce both supply as well as demand, as neither approach alone will be successful.

As with all forms of crime, improving communications between all relevant law enforcement agencies, both nationally and internationally, and stressing the need for intelligence-led investigations is essential to identify and prosecute the criminals at the heart of the trade, with penalties sufficient enough to create the deterrent required to stifle criminal involvement.

High-level decision-makers need to ensure resources are allocated to co-ordinating mechanisms, such as INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization. Regional enforcement networks such as The Association of Southeast Asian Nations Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) and The South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN), also need to build on the great foundations that have been created to bring about significant lasting change. If countries co-operate, make full use of the resources available to them in terms of manpower and expertise, and take wildlife crime seriously at all levels of government, there can perhaps be a glimmer of hope that the current escalation in illegal trade can be reversed.

*Stephanie Pendry, Enforcement Programme Leader,
TRAFFIC International*

A glow of cautious optimism was evident in Thailand, the Land of Smiles, as the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP16) to CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) concluded its two-week proceedings on 14 March 2013. Member governments had taken much-needed action to extend CITES trade controls to a range of vulnerable and valuable timber and shark species as a complement to other sustainable management measures. There were also critical agreements about action and accountability with respect to efforts to close down illegal trade and markets for elephants, rhinoceroses and other endangered species banned from trade under CITES.

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In many respects the positive results of the Conference were a pleasant surprise. Just three years ago, the conclusions of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP15) were greeted with a chorus of dismay about the apparent prevalence of interests vested in short-term commercial gains from unsustainable wildlife trade and the increasing symptoms of CITES being an ailing treaty struggling for relevance in the global politics of the time.

So what changed and why? The tone was set from the opening statements of the Conference: the Thai Prime Minister's bold statement of intent to close down the country's ivory markets; UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner's recognition of the relevance of CITES in a world of increasing demand for natural resources and on a planet where unsustainable patterns of consumption and production are shrinking, rather than husbanding, that crucial resource base; and CITES Secretary-General John Scanlon's remark that illegal trade in wildlife has reached a scale that poses an immediate risk to wildlife and to people, including those serving in the front-lines to protect wildlife, in part owing to increasing involvement of organized crime syndicates and in some cases rebel militias. Each echoed the growing voice of global concern about the seriousness of wildlife crime and its increasingly harmful environmental, economic and social impacts.

Sadly, a principal trigger for this concern is the wave of poaching and illegal trade that has built up to crisis levels for rhinoceroses and elephants over the past few years. For rhinoceros horn trade, new market demands in Viet Nam have been the central driver of runaway poaching levels in South Africa. For elephant ivory, indicators of poaching and illegal trade levels indicate that commercial pressure is increasing, despite the existence of a CITES action plan that aimed to motivate efforts to close down illegal markets and trade routes.

As reported in the editorial of the last issue of this journal, the policy-level response to these facts has been

vigorous, with wildlife trafficking raised for the first time in the UN General Assembly, high level statements by Gabon's President and the US Secretary of State, among others. New resources have been mobilized for engagement by INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, and for the development of regional wildlife enforcement networks.

That said, arguably the biggest practical impact of this policy concern at CoP16 was a change in tone in the critical debates about CITES-listings for shark and timber species under serious exploitation pressure and for which proponents argued that regulatory controls under CITES would complement other management measures and help ensure sustainable trade levels in future. For the sharks, a tough debate largely focused on valid questions about practical implementation challenges, rather than opposition to the principle of CITES listing for commercial fishery species that has been heard at previous CoPs. And for the timber species, including Malagasy ebony and rosewood species subjected to high levels of illegal harvest in recent years for trade to Asian markets, a CITES Appendix II-listing was remarkably agreed by consensus.

For the pachyderm species in the spotlight, a range of measures were agreed that greatly increase compliance pressure on source, transit and market countries to take rapid action to address illegal trade, along with new initiatives to support those individual national efforts through new international law enforcement approaches, such as use of forensic methods to assess origin of ivory seizures.

It would be wrong to paint an unblemished picture of this reinvigoration of CITES. Its Secretariat remains woefully under-funded and debate at the CoP sometimes drifted back to the days when listing in the CITES Appendices was viewed simply as a flag of conservation concern, rather than an evidence-based judgement that the treaty's specific trade measures could help prevent unsustainable international trade. Nevertheless, the concerns driving key decisions at CoP16 were undeniably powerful and the policy outcomes overall demonstrated an intent by governments to seek solutions.

As ever, the real test of this intent will be the actions taken—the implementation of trade measures introduced for those shark, timber and other newly-listed species, and whether countries under the CITES compliance spotlight make effective interventions and whether they are held to account if they fail to do so. The level of global policy concern about illicit wildlife trade is arguably stronger now than at any time in CITES's 40-year history. If this can indeed be translated into effective action, the glow of optimism might well be brighter still when the Convention's member governments convene again in South Africa in 2016.

Steven Broad, Executive Director,
TRAFFIC

Interventions to tackle the illegal trade in endangered species have focused traditionally on reducing the supply of wildlife specimens, parts, products and derivatives into the market. These have taken a variety of approaches: for example, by protecting flora and fauna in range countries, closing legal gaps and loopholes, enhancing law enforcement effort, increasing seizures and prosecutions and strengthening the suite of penalties and other deterrents aimed at poachers and traffickers.

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Despite such efforts, however, during the past decade there has been a significant increase in the volume of illegal wildlife trade for some species, and a shift in the dynamics underpinning it. Factors driving this include a surge in demand, largely from East and South-east Asian markets, for endangered species products such as elephant ivory, rhinoceros horn, Tiger bones and skins, luxury woods, reptile skins and species used in traditional medicines.

Since 2008, sustained economic growth in parts of Asia, China in particular, has provided a counterbalance to a period of increased volatility and widespread recession in Europe and North America. Three decades of unprecedented social, political and economic transformation have also generated important opportunities for improvements in quality of life and increased purchasing power across the majority of Asian economies. This has also given rise to trends such as the conspicuous consumption of unique and precious luxury goods, including rare wildlife products.

TRAFFIC's trade and market monitoring shows that products derived from particular species of wild fauna and flora, many long-venerated, pervasive and deep-rooted in Asian countries' cultural history, are part of that general profile of status-driven consumption.

When juxtaposed against increasing species scarcity, this rising demand has made wildlife crime a lucrative endeavour, and thus an attractive prospect for well-organized criminal syndicates. Interventions to disrupt these will only be effective if an integrated approach to doing so is adopted; i.e. by reducing the demand for endangered species products while concurrently pursuing ways to increase law enforcement effectiveness and limit the supply of products into the market.

Recognizing the magnitude of the challenge, TRAFFIC and WWF convened at the end of 2011 a group of "creative experts" to coalesce ideas and experience on influencing public behaviour. Success factors and challenges common across fields beyond nature conservation were explored in depth, e.g. environmental economics and public healthcare. Representatives from the media, public relations, management advisory and other companies, as well as Inter-Governmental Organizations, academia and government, agreed that "demand reduction" interventions to dissuade consumption would only work if accurately targeted, based on empirical evidence about purchasing motivations, and with messaging delivered by those persons and vectors influential with key audiences.

A clear consensus was also expressed: to be effective, demand reduction messaging should be tailored to people's interests, attitudes, values and desires—for example, their hopes of attaining social status and reinforcing self-worth. Conservation messaging has historically emphasized the need to protect animals instead, e.g. by urging compassion for their plight or to protect the planet for future generations. Expert opinion recognized, however, that this was unlikely to resonate with those whose behaviour and leadership would be essential to drive change in consumption patterns.

Building on this set of insights, TRAFFIC has since developed a five-step process grounded in social science principles, led by statutory authorities and engaging a wide variety of stakeholders, as a framework for future demand reduction initiatives. Two years on, this structure has been endorsed by both the Global Tiger Recovery Programme and the Rhino Working Group established under CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) with respect to framing both species-specific and systemic interventions.

TRAFFIC has also begun to apply the framework through initiatives in China and Viet Nam. Market research conducted in these countries has confirmed the specific behaviours (Step 1) and consumer segments (Step 2) that need to be targeted. Insights have been gleaned into whether people are consuming endangered species products for themselves, or as gifts to others, and what their motivations are for doing so. A rich mix of "emotional motivators", including the demonstration of status, prestige or to adhere to some form of social norm, and "functional motivators"—including perceived medicinal purposes—has become apparent.

Such perceptions have been cross-referenced with models, concepts and theories from fields including behavioural economics, psychology and sociology (Step 3), and are informing the development of marketing frameworks (Step 4) that will guide activities to change the behaviour of consumers (Step 5). Examples of these include inviting influential business leaders to develop Codes of Conduct to reduce the corporate gifting of products.

In order to ensure this type of insight-led approach is delivered at sufficient scale and for a significant duration, TRAFFIC is facilitating collaborations amongst key stakeholders, including government, corporate leaders and those influential in society. This is helping to foster strong "thought leadership" around demand reduction interventions, which are a relatively new field of conservation interest. Such approaches will be critical if we are to implement an optimized suite of interventions, and employ effectively the agents of change that will realistically undermine the factors driving serious organized wildlife crime. Only then will we begin to change patterns of over-exploitation towards a collective security—environmental, economic, food, health and overall national and international aspects—that will ensure a long-term future for wild populations of endangered species.

*Gayle Burgess, Development and Evaluation Officer and
James Compton, Senior Director, Asia Pacific, TRAFFIC*

There is little doubt that the past few years have seen unprecedented levels of poaching and illegal trade in many species. Over 1000 rhinoceroses were illegally killed during 2013 in South Africa alone, the equivalent of nearly three animals a day, making it the worst year on record for rhinoceros poaching in the country. In 23 years of compiling ivory seizures data

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for the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS), 2011 was the worst year ever for large-scale (>500 kg) ivory seizures, with some 21 incidents involving a total of more than 34 t of ivory. Preliminary figures for 2013 already represent a 20% increase over the previous peak in 2011, with some 18 large-scale seizures totalling more than 41 t.

One of the factors leading to these unprecedented figures is the increased involvement of organized criminal networks in illegal wildlife trade. Wildlife criminals are now better organized, better equipped and exploiting extensive trading links and networks that span Africa and Asia.

In view of these fast-changing trends and the impact they are having, it is no surprise that illegal wildlife trade has received previously unseen international attention at the highest political levels over the past year. In 2013, the issue was discussed at the United Nations General Assembly and at regional political fora such as the Africa Security Summit, APEC Leaders Meeting and the European Parliament. World leaders—from President Ali Bongo of Gabon and President Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania, to US President Barack Obama and United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon—were for the first time publicly speaking out about the implications of wildlife trafficking. More importantly, they linked wildlife crime to wider issues of concern such as national security, rule of law and socio-economic development, and all echoed the urgent need for a global response to this threat.

The London Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade 2014, that was held on 12–13 February was perhaps exactly the global response that was needed and the culmination of over a year of high-level political attention and commitments on the issue. Initiated by His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, and the Duke of Cambridge, the Conference was organized by the UK Government, its aim to inject a new level of political momentum into efforts to combat the growing global threat posed by illegal wildlife trade, with a focus on rhinoceroses, elephants and Tigers. There is little doubt that this was achieved, with participants including the heads of government from Botswana, Chad, Gabon and Tanzania, foreign ministers from seven countries, environment and other ministers from 19 countries, and other senior officials.

The meeting concluded with the London Declaration that was adopted by acclamation by 41 countries, plus the European Union. This 12-page document sets out a clear, detailed and ambitious international plan to fight wildlife crime, with specific objectives and tangible actions to eradicate the market for illegal wildlife products; strengthen law enforcement efforts and ensure effective legal frameworks and deterrents are in place; and promote sustainable livelihoods through positive engagement with local communities. New resources to tackle illegal wildlife trade were also discussed during the Conference and donors urged to provide resources, support and technical assistance for implementing the Declaration commitments. Global Environment Facility (GEF) CEO and Chairperson Naoko Ishii announced that the GEF has redesigned its funding strategy for the next four years to step up its support to stamp out illegal wildlife trafficking. Individual countries also announced crucial new funding and resources to support effective implementation of the Conference commitments.

The Conference also reaffirmed high-level political support for the effective implementation of prior commitments made in the past year, such as the Urgent Measures agreed to at the IUCN African Elephant Summit and the elephant and rhinoceros Decisions adopted at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

While all these represent huge steps forward in the international fight against wildlife crime, the Conference was not without its disappointments. Missing from the list of countries pledging their support for the London Declaration were key nations implicated in the surge in rhinoceros poaching and the illegal ivory trade—South Africa and Thailand. The engagement and support of these countries is absolutely essential for the successful implementation of the Conference commitments.

Ultimately, the real success of the London Conference can only be demonstrated with positive conservation action on the ground in the key source, transit and consumer countries concerned. While the high level of political attention to illegal wildlife trade and unanimous international call for action is unprecedented, the challenge now is to keep up the pressure and help translate this attention into tangible action at the national level.

Hopefully, by the time of the follow-up conference in Botswana in 2015, the London Conference will perhaps be viewed as a key turning point in the war against wildlife crime and the point at which the tide of unrelenting poaching of elephants, rhinoceroses and Tigers finally turned.

Sabri Zain, Director of Policy, TRAFFIC

There has been long-standing global concern for shark and ray populations under pressure from consumer demand for their fins, meat, skin and liver oil. Historically, fisheries involving these species have taken place in the absence of even basic management. In 2014, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Shark Specialist Group produced a report assessing the conservation status of over 1000 shark and ray species, the main findings of which are that: 1) there is a severe lack of data on sharks and rays, with no information for nearly half of all the species assessed; 2) almost a quarter of all sharks and rays are threatened with extinction; and 3) overfishing and habitat loss are the biggest threats to these species. The study demonstrates that management of fisheries and trade is urgently needed to avoid extinctions and to promote population recovery.

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There is growing acceptance at the international level that management of shark and ray fisheries is critical if further overexploitation of these resources is to be curtailed. Broad, but non-binding commitments have been made by States to resolve the issue, however, many governments lack the resources, expertise, and political will necessary to conserve effectively the vast majority of shark and rays. As a result, many of these species have continued to decline.

However, recent years and months have seen a growing commitment by States to start managing their shark and ray resources responsibly and to put in place a package of measures that will help to ensure that products are traceable, sustainable and legal.

One of the most groundbreaking developments in this regard took place in September 2014, when five species of sharks and two manta ray species received protection under CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) following the decision by Parties in March 2013 to include these species in CITES Appendix II. Formal measures to regulate international trade have now come into effect for Scalloped Hammerhead Shark *Sphyrna lewini*, Great Hammerhead Shark *S. mokarran*, Smooth Hammerhead Shark *S. zygaena*, Oceanic Whitetip Shark *Carcharinus longimanus*, Porbeagle Shark *Lamna nasus* and manta rays *Manta* spp. The challenge is to ensure effective implementation of these listings. All the sharks except Porbeagle Shark are caught for their fins, which are exported to East Asia, especially Hong Kong, where they are the key ingredient in shark-fin soup—an expensive, but popular delicacy. The Porbeagle Shark is mainly caught for consumption of its meat within the European Union, while the gill plates of manta rays are highly valued as a health tonic in southern China.

As a result of these listings, commercial trade in these species must now be strictly regulated and specimens only taken from national and international waters and exported when the fishing/exporting country certifies that they were legally sourced and that the overall level of exports does not threaten the survival of the species. There are technical issues to resolve, such as species product identification and determining when harvest is from sustainable sources, among others, but the growing engagement across the world by States, regional organizations, the non-governmental sector and industry to improve capacity on managing

fisheries is encouraging. Governments are starting to take responsibility by introducing and improving shark management, including support for CITES-listings, and in some cases, banning shark catch. Certain shipping and airline companies have introduced restrictions on the carriage of shark products, some retail outlets are limiting or have banned the sale of shark fin products, and shark-fin soup, often a popular dish at wedding banquets in East Asia, has been removed from the menu of certain hotel chains. Sections of the fishing industry are also joining the push for sustainable, legal and traceable products.

Recently, TRAFFIC and WWF spearheaded a new initiative *Sharks: Restoring the Balance*, which is focused on the protection and sustainable use of sharks and rays. This initiative seeks to build a future where these species can thrive around our

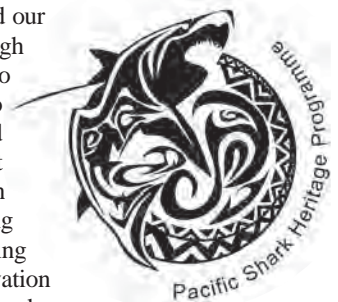
coasts and in the high seas, contributing to the ecosystem and to a healthy culture and economy. This joint strategy is focused on reducing demand, improving management and generating broader support for the conservation and responsible use of sharks and rays.

As part of this work, the Pacific Shark Heritage Programme aims to work with governments throughout the Pacific region to assist them in managing their shark and ray populations sustainably, while safeguarding the cultural heritage of the Pacific Island nations.

The past 20 years has seen increasing recognition of the need to manage sharks and rays. Provision can now be made for trade-related management controls such as CITES to be put in place for a range of vulnerable species. Furthermore, broader responsibility is being taken by stakeholders to establish the provenance of the products they are carrying and selling. Such increasing awareness and concrete action represents a valuable start on the road to sustainability. However, without greater political will from some major fishing nations that have a long history of blocking action to manage shark and ray fisheries at sustainable levels, all the good work by other governments will be undermined and depletion of these resources will continue. It is crucial, therefore, that commitment is enshrined in binding measures by governments and regional organizations responsible for managing fisheries. Greater partnership and collaboration is needed between industry, government and non-governmental organizations to ensure that products are from sustainable and legal sources.

The greatest challenge, however, lies with us, the consumers. There cannot be any long-term solution unless there is responsible consumption. We must take greater care in the choices we make and recognize that each of us has the power to influence consumer demand. It is imperative that we therefore become more discerning in our choices and educate ourselves about what we eat, and challenge suppliers, carriers and other stakeholders, exhorting them to reject marine species that have been caught illegally or from unsustainable sources. The future of the world's oceans depends on it.

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In 1976, TRAFFIC was established to monitor trade in flora and fauna and to make recommendations for conservation action. This specialist role forms the nucleus of our work. Monitoring—of markets, both physical and online—as well as of trade statistics and seizure data, for example, is essential to identifying trends at varying levels and emerging issues, and provides an early warning function. Monitoring also allows us to measure the impact of our work, as well as that of other internal or external interventions. As the number of species threatened by illegal and unsustainable trade grows, this role becomes increasingly essential. Recent examples described here illustrate the importance of monitoring the global wildlife trade.

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As is the case with many other types of crime, illicit wildlife traders are many steps ahead of those of us monitoring and researching the trade. Populations of many species of animals have been greatly diminished or extirpated by trade before conservationists are even aware of the extent or impact of the overexploitation, or before steps to provide legal protection or other conservation interventions are made. It is key that negative trends detected through trade monitoring are made available to the broader conservation community, enforcement agencies, decision-makers and the public so that actions can be taken to slow, stop and reverse the trend.

Some claim that publishing such information may increase demand for the species in question. This notion is in most cases misguided although there are a few examples where publicity of the rarity of a species has actually increased the value and demand for it. However, this needs to be balanced with the benefits to be gained from drawing attention to the threats and conservation needs of a species so that the obstacles to tackling the trade can be identified and solutions found.

Take the Earless Monitor Lizard *Lanthanotus borneensis*, for example, a little-known reptile endemic to the island of Borneo. In 2014, through monitoring actions, TRAFFIC became aware of increased demand and availability of this species in the black market pet trade. It published a report on this emerging trade, highlighting the fact that unscrupulous traders were illegally collecting the species and smuggling it to Japan and the EU, and called for action to be taken. Despite the species being totally protected in all three countries that share the island of Borneo (Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia), it is not listed in CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) and importing countries are therefore not obliged to take action against the trade. As a direct result of the report's findings, steps are now being taken to list the species in the CITES Appendices and it is hoped that effective international co-operation to regulate this trade can soon be achieved.

While CITES plays an important role in encouraging and facilitating co-operation in international efforts to regulate illegal wildlife trade, a CITES listing cannot always ensure that trade is sustainable, particularly where enforcement is lacking. It is therefore vital that both

importing and exporting countries are kept abreast of areas of conservation concern so as to aid source countries in their efforts to protect their wildlife, regardless of whether the species is listed in CITES.

Continual monitoring and highlighting of important and emerging issues is paramount not only to identifying and prioritizing matters of concern, but also essential to track and monitor progress, successes and failures. Monitoring the trade in the wildlife market of Mong La, Myanmar, on the border with China, for example, has yielded alarming findings—a market that once typically only carried regional species has now become a hub for trade in illicit African wildlife products, such as ivory, rhinoceros horn and hippopotamus teeth. Reports by TRAFFIC and others on the findings and trends observed in this market over time have been covered extensively in the media, and as a result, Mong La market has become a priority for conservation action.

Regular monitoring of “legal” trade and trade records and volumes has led to the detection of one of the most frequent, high-volume and problematic forms of wildlife trafficking methods used—the trade in wild-caught species falsely declared as captive-bred. Literally millions of animals are currently traded around the world, declared as captive-bred, with little or no requirements to prove these claims. Laundering of wild-caught animals in this manner is not only a threat to the conservation of a multitude of species, but it is also undermining the efforts and credibility of businesses that truly are engaged in legal commercial breeding.

A number of case studies highlighting the large-scale laundering of wild-caught animals into the global market have been published, raising the issue as a major concern, and priority for action. A report by TRAFFIC arising from the monitoring of trade in wildlife declared as captive-bred focused on the previously unknown Short-beaked Echidna *Tachyglossus aculeatus*. This species is difficult to breed in captivity, and the trade in supposedly captive-bred individuals sparked concern amongst zoo communities around the world, who subsequently began reviewing their policies regarding the acquisition of specimens declared as captive-bred, taking major steps to eliminate this form of fraud, including through the development of forensic tools and methodologies.

The issue continues to be addressed and championed by prominent organizations, such as the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), which recently released a statement calling for due diligence among their members globally when obtaining wildlife declared as being captive-bred. Efforts are also under way to add restrictions and policies to regulations that allow for the trade in captive-bred wildlife, calling for proof of parentage to be provided to the importing countries.

The drive to combat unsustainable and sometimes illegal wildlife trade is far from complete, and it is essential that evidence-based findings continue to be disseminated widely and used as a basis for shaping conservation action. Basic monitoring, be it of wildlife markets, online, or of trade statistics, is integral to the global effort to ensure that wildlife trade is not a threat to the conservation of nature.

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While the trade in wild animals—the illegal and crime-linked components in particular—has risen on policy and practice agendas, far less attention is paid to the challenge arising from harvesting and trade in wild plants. This is particularly true for aromatic, food and medicinal commodities, which remain largely overlooked as “hidden ingredients” in everyday and luxury products. Arguably, this is the wildlife trade that directly affects the largest proportion of people around the world, through consumption of products including herbal teas (e.g. liquorice), chocolate (wild cocoa, shea nuts), carbonated drinks (gum arabic), beauty products (sandalwood oil, frankincense), and medicines (ginseng, hoodia).

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Estimating the scale of the trade is difficult, as it is often unregulated. Most available statistics do not include figures for the volumes in trade or species composition. It is estimated that 60 000 plant species are used for medicinal purposes around the world, with several thousand traded internationally. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the global value of non-wood forest products (NWFP) of plant and animal origin was estimated as USD20.6 billion in 2010. This is likely a substantial underestimate as NWFPs are rarely captured in national statistics: in a recent International Trade Centre study, the export of plant-based NWFPs from China was estimated at over 1.3 billion kg, with a reported Customs value of over USD5 billion. Trade chains are often complex and difficult to monitor, involving multiple trading and processing companies from the point of harvest to the end products. Surprisingly little attention is paid to the significance of a trade that provides livelihoods to millions.

Every fifth plant species is estimated to be threatened with extinction in the wild, according to IUCN. Just 3% of the world’s well-documented medicinal flora has been evaluated for global conservation status, almost half of it as threatened. Plants have been used by humans over millennia and, in that time, they have been pretty resistant to collection pressures. However, the existing and growing market demand creates an important driver of increased harvesting pressure, including in species that were not traded internationally in the past (e.g. for superfoods or cosmetics). For example, there are estimates that the nutritional supplements market globally has grown from USD40 billion to USD96 billion between 1996 and 2012, while the global organic cosmetics market is increasing by 10% annually. Wild plant ingredients, including extracts and essential oils, are important components of such products and are now facing pressures like never before. Companies’ marketing strategies often emphasize the “natural” and “wild” properties of the ingredients, but little attention is directed at whether their sourcing is ecologically and socially sustainable.

For wild plant species, there is generally less control and enforcement of legality and sustainability, and a lack of management planning for the majority of species harvested and traded. CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) trade controls can help address the legality and sustainability of

sourcing, but they do not apply to many of the key species in trade. More regulation governing harvesting and trade of wild plants does not always translate into sound resource management—particularly taking into account the interplay with issues of tenure and access rights, traditional use, and the characteristics of products in trade.

Despite these complexities, wild plants in trade can “tell” very positive conservation stories of sustainable use. TRAFFIC works with the FairWild Foundation, IUCN/SSC’s Medicinal Plant Specialist Group and others to support implementation of the FairWild Standard, the best practice guidelines for sustainable harvest and equitable trade in wild plants. Under the FairWild certification system, now operational for five years, 24 species have been certified in eight source countries, and over 20 products are now sold on the market labelled as “FairWild”. The scheme is also providing better incomes to local communities through its fair trade approach to over 1000 collectors, including the Samburu people in northern Kenya tapping Frankincense *Boswellia* and *Commiphora* spp. resin, community groups harvesting Ayurveda ingredients in sacred groves in India’s Western Ghats, Liquorice *Glycyrrhiza* spp. harvesters in Kazakhstan, Spain and Georgia, and Roma plant collectors in Central/Eastern Europe. This uptake is primarily driven by FairWild’s “early adopter” champions in the business sector. Beyond certification, other companies are using the FairWild Standard as a basis for responsible sourcing of wild plants through their internal policies and sourcing practices. This includes some key traditional Chinese medicine manufacturers, which were a focus of a recently completed project in China (see pages 48–50), who are beginning to employ FairWild principles as part of their corporate social responsibility commitment.

Sound decisions on the trade in plants must be based on sound information. The assessment of trade and the threat status of key resources and the development of species and area management plans is needed in all source countries, to guide resource management policies and strategies, and to capture information about harvesting, trade and its impacts on species and people. Balancing rigorous scientific approaches with community-based participatory resource management models is paramount to ensure the engagement of resource owners and users.

With an increasingly strong range of tools now available to help ensure and demonstrate responsible sourcing of wild plants, the key question now is how their use can be expanded to have impact on a much bigger scale. One critical factor is gaining consumer engagement about the sourcing of ingredients that they all too often are unaware of as being part of their daily lives. Perhaps in the same way that concern about illegal trade in wild animals has been prompted by exposure of the impacts on a few charismatic “flagship” species, greater action on trade in wild plants can be motivated by drawing attention to a similar set of iconic wild plant species that can capture greater public attention. This could help drive the sort of innovative partnerships between conservation organizations, consumer associations, companies, and development agencies that are so badly needed to bring this trade out of hiding and motivate more action for people and plants.

Anastasiya Timoshyna, Medicinal Plants Programme Leader, TRAFFIC. E-mail: anastasiya.timoshyna@traffic.org

The transportation and logistics sector, comprised primarily of passenger and cargo airlines, express couriers, freight forwarders and shipping companies, has long been a critical link in the trade chain for illegal wildlife. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected by advancements in transportation networks for both goods and people, these companies are being exploited by criminal networks to move large volumes of illegal wildlife and wildlife products such as elephant ivory, rhinoceros horn, abalone, pangolin and timber across the globe with increasing efficiency. Despite the fact that the global value of illegal wildlife trade is estimated to be among the top five most lucrative forms of transnational crime, previous engagement by the

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transportation industry in helping to find solutions has been limited. This lack of engagement was due to numerous reasons ranging from a lack of awareness of the scope and scale of the problem within the wider industry and at the company level, an emphasis on the role of law enforcement, and fears of increased trade regulation, screening and liability, which could impact trade efficiency and profit margins. However, in 2015 TRAFFIC witnessed the most dramatic shift in the transportation industry's commitment to the fight against illegal wildlife trade globally.

This sudden "sea change" can be attributed to several factors. Over the past few years, landmark measures such as President Obama's Executive Order 13648—Combating Wildlife Trafficking in 2013, the London Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade Declaration in 2014 and the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Tackling Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife in 2015, to name a few, have solidified the issue at the highest levels of the global political agenda in response to the alarming rates of poaching and trade of some of the world's most iconic species. Central to these pronouncements of political will was the acknowledgement of the need for greater resources aimed at collaboration between public and private sectors. Global initiatives such as the USAID-funded Wildlife Trafficking Response Assessment and Priority Setting (Wildlife TRAPS) project and Reducing Opportunities for Unlawful Transport of Endangered Species (ROUTES) partnership co-ordinated by TRAFFIC, have acted as catalysts for the meaningful engagement of the transportation industry by creating a space for collaboration and dialogue between companies, law enforcement, governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) around creative solutions. Similarly, the United for Wildlife International Taskforce on the Transportation of Illegal Wildlife Products, led by the Rt Hon. the Lord Hague of Richmond, through the Royal Foundation of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry, has captured the commitments of over 50 CEOs of large transportation companies and agencies through the signing of the recent Buckingham Palace Declaration in March 2016.

An event that proved to be a catalyst for TRAFFIC's wider engagement with the transportation sector came in January 2015, when TRAFFIC convened a ground-breaking workshop in Bangkok, Thailand, through the Wildlife TRAPS project, to raise awareness on the issue of illegal wildlife trade within various supply chains, and identify gaps and opportunities to improve co-ordination and screening of illegal wildlife products with industry players. The event

was attended by industry and transport associations, several airlines, supply chain experts, Customs officials, express courier companies, NGOs and government representatives. In retrospect, the success of the event was certainly influenced by the growing appetite to address this illicit trade as a result of increased media attention and global outcry. However, there were other factors that contributed to securing the participation from such a large cross-section of the industry. First, the workshop concept was grounded in acknowledging the potential risks to industry players including reputational, legal and economic risks due to the growing scale of the trade. Co-hosting the event together with the World Customs Organization (WCO) provided reassurance to participants that discussions would remain within existing agency mandates and would examine the interface between law enforcement and the private sector more closely. The workshop also focused on tangible solutions that could be undertaken by identifying priority actions that could realistically be undertaken by participating agencies in the future. Lastly, the priority actions identified could be supported with sufficient financial resources for implementation over a long-term period to ensure sustained engagement.

The Wildlife TRAPS project is currently advancing collaborative partnerships with several companies and associations including airlines, express couriers and freight forwarders that participated in the workshop in January 2015. The ROUTES partnership is focusing on air passenger and cargo companies globally and will expand to other sector partners such as shipping in subsequent years of implementation. Both initiatives are working with partners to influence change at multiple levels. Specific activity areas include: improving data and analytics on wildlife trafficking with passenger and cargo supply chains for evidence-based action, integration of wildlife trafficking responses into relevant industry standards and protocols, engaging leadership by developing corporate buy-in strategies, improving the ability of transport personnel to assist law enforcement by developing systems for information exchange and screening practices, staff training for companies and increasing passenger and client awareness through targeted campaigns. This multi-level approach is therefore designed to address identified weaknesses and loopholes along the trade chain and achieve significant systemic change from within the industry.

This dramatic shift in the transportation sector's engagement in such a short period of time is remarkable, but is also a result of a growing voluntary commitment by companies and acknowledgement that any solution to the current wildlife trade crisis requires collective action. High-level political attention has greatly assisted in securing buy-in, and activities such as those being undertaken through the Wildlife TRAPS project and ROUTES partnership demonstrate how seemingly insurmountable challenges can be more effectively addressed by fostering industry-led actions and setting realistic expectations across partnerships. This approach is already creating a culture of accountability between agencies which will undoubtedly continue to raise necessary awareness and develop targeted action and creative solutions where it can achieve the greatest impact along the trade chain.

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Opening to the sound of delegates participating in a plenary-wide drum workshop and closing with the equally regular beat of the Chair's gavel marking agreement on a remarkable array of new decisions, resolutions and listing proposals, the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP17) to CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) has been widely heralded a conservation success.

Held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 24 September to 4 October 2016, and reportedly attended by 3500 participants representing 152 governments, international

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organizations, non-governmental organizations and media, CoP17 was certainly the largest meeting of the Convention to date. In closing comments, the CITES Secretary-General, John E. Scanlon stated, "The most critical meeting in the 43-year history of CITES has delivered for the world's wildlife. CoP17 is a game changer for the planet's most vulnerable wild animals and plants."

It is indeed true that there were some very positive decisions reached at this meeting. CITES Appendix II regulation will be introduced for various commercially important species of sharks, rays and rosewoods. Proposals to re-open commercial trade in ivory and rhinoceros horn were not approved, at least in part because of valid concerns that current over-heated markets for these commodities manipulated by organized and adaptive criminals pose unacceptable risks that legal trade options would not deliver claimed benefits. The meeting also made progress on some important policy matters gaining traction for the first time, including enhancement of the role of local communities in CITES decision making, recognition of the impact of corruption in undermining wildlife trade regulation, the potential of strategic demand reduction actions, the development of systems for legal trade traceability and measures to improve verification of captive-breeding claims.

Indeed, there is much to celebrate, albeit with the usual proviso that it is effective action, not encouraging words that will prove the eventual worth of the decisions taken. On that front, the continued international attention to the conservation, economic and security implications of illegal wildlife trade and associated criminality is certainly bringing important new actors and resources to the CITES table. Running alongside the CoP this time was a global meeting of the Wildlife Enforcement Networks, a session of the INTERPOL Wildlife Crime Working Group and a packed timetable of other side events on topics ranging from forensic science to cybercrime. There is no doubt that international co-operation and local action within many countries to address wildlife trade challenges are as vigorous now as at any time since CITES was crafted.

Nevertheless, there is undoubtedly room for further improvement. CITES is often billed as "the environmental treaty with teeth". This may be the case, but its drawn-out decision making, supported by an obviously under-resourced Secretariat, often means those teeth are employed to chew ponderously over key national compliance issues, rather than credibly threaten the sort of sharp bite that might prompt faster action.

At the same time, the basic "rules of the game", the listing criteria that member countries adopted to help guide their decisions about regulatory treatment for particular species, are in need of some thoughtful review and revision. As we reflected in the introduction to TRAFFIC's published recommendations on proposals to amend the CITES Appendices at CoP17, current criteria do not provide the sort of clear guidance needed to judge whether a proposed change in CITES regulatory treatment would, on balance, be "in the best interest of the conservation of the species concerned, and be a proportionate response to anticipated risks" (in the words of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. Conf. 16)).

Such judgement requires: a clear identification of a trade-related problem; a credible explanation of how the regulatory change proposed could help, alongside a balanced assessment of opportunities, risks and alternative solutions; and a realistic appraisal of the likelihood of adequate implementation and enforcement. More guidance is also needed on strategies for dealing with uncertainty in making such judgements, including on interpretation of often patchy biological and trade information. Moreover, as demonstrated by the recent habit of adopting ever more convoluted annotations to the Appendices, the range of recommended precautionary measures in CITES' regulatory armoury sorely needs to be modernized. Lessons must be learned from cases where long-term regulatory attention by CITES for species such as Asian pangolins and the African Grey Parrot have not delivered positive conservation outcomes—their listing in CITES Appendix I at this meeting is a sign of failure, not a cause for celebration.

That the CITES community has a strong rhythm moving forward is not in doubt and CoP17 may well prove to mark a breakthrough in international efforts to achieve the treaty's goals. With so much international interest in this subject, there is a unique opportunity right now to ensure CITES really does change the game and deliver positive outcomes for many species in the longer term, and bring wider conservation benefits. For many other species, the next few years leading to CITES CoP18 in Sri Lanka in 2019 are nothing short of critical.

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Initiatives to combat wildlife crime and corruption

Recent years have seen greater recognition that impacts of wildlife crime reach beyond species, undermining good governance, reducing opportunities for legitimate income generation and affecting local communities, the rural poor and national economies. Ending wildlife crime is rightly seen as a global development issue, addressed in the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and linked implicitly to corruption, illicit financial flows and rule of law. Nature-based tourism, for example, an economic powerhouse of many African States and worth an estimated USD30 billion per year, is directly threatened by wildlife crime.

According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and others, corruption is a key enabler of wildlife crime. It is prevalent along the entire wildlife value chain, including bribery of officials to issue permits or to turn a blind eye to illegal shipments. It is also a complex challenge. Rangers, for example, are essential to preventing poaching but equipment deficits resulting from procurement abuse may render them unable to patrol; some may also be bribed not to patrol. In both cases the result is the same, but potential solutions are very different.

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A formal conversation around corruption in wildlife trafficking would have been unimaginable just a few years ago. There has been progress more recently: legal frameworks and conventions, for example the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions have come into being; and, the Sustainable Development Goals explicitly recognize corruption and illicit financial flows as obstacles to their achievement. The United Nations General Assembly resolution (2015), *Tackling Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife*, devotes three paragraphs to anti-corruption; outcomes of State-led processes, for example, the London, Kasane, Hanoi Conferences on Illegal Wildlife Trade, the Brazzaville and Forum on China—Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) declarations, all call upon countries to address corruption facilitating wildlife crime; and, in October 2016, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the principal global wildlife trade convention, adopted its first anti-corruption resolution.

References to “corruption” as an aggregate phenomenon make it appear impenetrable, causing paralysis compounded by fear (people who know or say too much are sometimes killed) or by an entrenched defensiveness in environmental organizations that “we work on conservation, not anti-corruption”. Unpacked, however, it becomes easier to understand, for example, judges giving lenient sentences, embezzlement of funds or bribery of an official, and thus easier to manage. But are conservation organizations building on progress in the policy fora to take up the challenge and incorporate anti-corruption strategies into conservation planning? Where anti-corruption elements are incorporated, are external experts sought to inform through an anti-corruption lens?

Uninformed or politically expedient interventions can give rise to greater harms: selective or misplaced enforcement interventions can increase injustices towards local communities and the rural poor, while more powerful actors such as those funding illicit operations are left untouched. A human rights perspective in addressing corruption facilitating wildlife crime is critical: pressure on police to demonstrate results may lead to increased bribes or to

increased human rights abuses against vulnerable communities, especially to those unable to pay bribes¹. The extrajudicial killing of people alleged to be poachers or of environmental human rights defenders is unfortunately by no means uncommon².

Frustrated with the siloed status quo, but cognizant that collaboration between the anti-corruption and wildlife conservation communities is critical to informed approaches, the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, Transparency International, and WWF convened a meeting in early 2016 to cement a new alliance of stakeholders from the anti-corruption, development and conservation communities—including TRAFFIC—forming the 3C Network: Countering Conservation-related Corruption. A collaborative research paper³ arising from this meeting highlighted the need for informed corruption risk assessments and tailored responses with iterative monitoring in order to build the evidence base.

Focusing analysis at the sectoral level is now recognized as essential, but cross-sectoral partnerships that reach beyond the natural living resource sectors also inform. Algorithmic assessments identifying irregular financial flows to disrupt human trafficking networks are equally applicable to wildlife trafficking; existing principles and policies of financial and regulatory bodies concerning money laundering could be adapted to make more explicit the links between wildlife crime and financial crime. Targeting financial beneficiaries of wildlife trafficking would help redress the disproportionate focus on low-level actors, bring into play a different suite of laws with harsher penalties and enable asset recovery. Approaching transnational environmental crimes through a financial crime lens is not new, but so far has gained more traction perhaps in the fisheries sector than in other wildlife sectors. Strengthened partnerships between public, civil society and the private sector would inform due diligence procedures, strengthen integrity along the value chain, and push corruption to the margins. There are promising signs of this approach in the transport sector, notably through The United for Wildlife Transport Taskforce Buckingham Palace Declaration⁴.

Unfortunately, the discourse around wildlife crime and corruption is often centred around Africa (elephants/rhinoceroses) and Asia (consumers) and takes place largely from a Western-centric perspective; it is something that happens “out there”. This is very convenient particularly in the fisheries and timber sectors where it overlooks illicit payments made by corporations in “the west” for access rights in developing countries. Addressing corruption requires us to look inwards in Europe and the Americas, to banking secrecy, tax havens, and to opportunities created by normative financial systems enabling investment of corrupt monies in the luxury goods and property markets.

Conservationists are not going to exchange conservation for anti-corruption targets, and nor should they. The line of engagement does however need to be redrawn, starting with an understanding of the anti-corruption landscape and the added value that conservation organizations bring to the table, informed through partnerships with anti-corruption specialists, development agencies, civil society and the private sector. In doing so, conservationists perhaps may find that they have more to contribute than they realize in terms of knowledge and data to inform the anti-corruption discourse.

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¹See Downs, F. (2013). *Rule of law and environmental justice in the forests: The challenge of 'strong law enforcement' in corrupt conditions*, U4 Issue. June 2013 No 6. U4 Anti-corruption Resource Centre, Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI), Bergen, Norway. ²See Knox, J. (2016). *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment*. Human Rights Council. A/HRC/34/49; ³See Williams, A., Parry-Jones, R. and Roe, D. (2016). *The resource bites back: Entry-points for addressing corruption in wildlife crime*. U4 Anti-corruption Resource Centre, Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI), Bergen, Norway. ⁴the Declaration identifies 11 commitments that the transport industry can support where relevant, e.g. adopting zero tolerance policies to illegal wildlife trade, enhancing due diligence and risk assessment, etc.

The likely failure of global efforts to meet the ambition of the Aichi biodiversity targets agreed by the vast majority of the world's governments in 2010 has long been predicted. A prominent review, published in the journal *Science*¹ as early as late 2014, concluded that “despite accelerating policy and management responses to the biodiversity crisis, the impacts of these efforts are unlikely to be reflected in improved trends in the state of biodiversity by 2020”, the agreed deadline for most of the targets set. Already, there is a flurry of inter-governmental consideration and learned thought hoping to shape the post-2020 biodiversity conservation agenda. Such efforts clearly have strategic importance, but the risk is that the unfinished business of the current decade may be put aside while we plan what comes next.

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An analysis by TRAFFIC in 2012 concluded that action on the threats and opportunities arising from trade in wild animals and plants would contribute to all but four of the 20 Aichi targets. Indeed an enormous amount of progress has been made over recent years: new regulatory measures under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); strong national actions in many countries around the world; real progress with sustainability standards and voluntary certification; and positive commitments for action by businesses involved in wildlife trade chains.

Unfortunately, the challenges have grown just as quickly: rapidly expanding new markets for some very scarce wildlife commodities; and a fast-changing law enforcement environment as global communications, transport and money flows evolve and virtual markets become commonplace. Furthermore, it is clear that wildlife trade has now attracted serious criminal involvement at unprecedented levels, attracted by perceptions of low risk and high reward. The trend overall for biodiversity impacted by wildlife trade is indeed unlikely to be improving.

With this harsh reality in mind, TRAFFIC has recently established its *Programme Strategy to 2020*, as a strong institutional commitment to informing, encouraging and supporting action on wildlife trade issues in the remainder of the current decade. At its heart is the quest to gather credible and persuasive evidence about wildlife trade, which has been fundamental to TRAFFIC's work for over 40 years, along with carefully considered plans for mobilizing this knowledge to influence actions by governments, businesses and individuals to ensure positive conservation and development outcomes. Since the need for transformative action is urgent, we will focus our efforts in the coming years on two main streams of work: action to enhance systems for sustainable, legal wildlife trade; and action to help strengthen responses to wildlife crime and illegal trade.

The former is critical, because the fact, too often lost among the headlines nowadays, is that the majority of wild-sourced animals and plants and their products in world commerce today are legally traded, often without regulatory or other sustainability safeguards and with minimal benefits flowing to people living in the areas from where wildlife is sourced. For much of this trade, involved businesses and consumers are hardly aware that they are using wildlife at all, never mind cognizant of the impacts of their actions. There is enormous potential for rapid improvement in this situation through mobilization of innovative assessment and traceability tools that can drive both conservation gain and positive impact on human well-being. Moreover, promoting and using such systems is often in the direct interest of businesses using wildlife goods, whether this be wild plants used for herbal teas and cosmetics, timber used to make wooden furniture or marine species used in seafood products.

Third-party certification of sustainability and related traceability systems are available through schemes such as the Marine Stewardship Council, Forest Stewardship Council and FairWild. More creative and rigorous use of the sustainable trade verification framework that can be provided through CITES Appendix II implementation, is eminently achievable.

By contrast, the challenges of wildlife trade crime have been illuminated by an increasingly bright media spotlight over recent years. This has prompted much needed attention by governments, international organizations and a wide range of implicated businesses, from airlines and internet service providers to banks and insurers. This attention is critically important: organized crime has brought immense pressure to conservation efforts for many exploited species, and the negative impacts on the security of local people and law enforcers from source to markets are clear. Remedial action is needed across the trade chain to make illicit wildlife trade more difficult, to increase the risks to illegal traders and to reduce rewards from crime through more discerning consumption choices. With strong momentum in global efforts to tackle wildlife trade crime, major gains are achievable in the short-term, but the pressure to make solutions work needs to be maintained by all involved. Some great initiatives and ideas emerging in recent years are still used by exception not the norm, such as forensic and “follow-the-money” investigation techniques, controlled deliveries and preventative measures by e-commerce businesses.

There is little doubt that action on wildlife trade in the context of the Aichi targets, reducing pressures of illegal and unsustainable activities and enhancing benefits from sustainable trade, will be unfinished business by 2020. It is indeed important to think ahead to new approaches and longer-term solutions. That said, targets need to be taken seriously. There is still time to deliver not just greater action, but real impact on wildlife trade trends by the end of this decade. The pre-2020 conservation agenda is no less important now than when it was first conceived.

¹Tittensor, D.P. et al., (2014). A mid-term analysis of progress toward international biodiversity targets. *Science* 346(6206): 241–244. <http://bit.ly/2zDDrr8>.

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In 2017, over 12 months, eBay prevented or removed 45,000 listings that violated the company's wildlife trade policies. As a percentage of the company's product offering at any given time—one billion+ listings—this number is relatively small. However, with regards to illegal wildlife trade, it is indicative of the prevalence of illegal trade and criminal operations in online marketplaces, which give large-scale market exposure to sellers and provide a layer of anonymity to protect against risk of detection.

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Wildlife law enforcement action is no longer solely focused on individual outlets or physical markets, but increasingly across websites and social media applications globally. In 2017, TRAFFIC found 2,069 advertisements for endangered species products for sale online in China during a four-month period, with 1,687 of those advertising elephant ivory.¹ Similarly in the USA, TRAFFIC recorded 2,056 ivory items offered for sale online in a seven-week period in 2016.²

Wildlife trafficking online isn't limited to products like elephant ivory, tiger teeth or pangolin scales. Live, protected species that are in demand for the exotic pet trade are increasingly available through social media platforms. A rapid online survey conducted by TRAFFIC in 2017 found 1,623 protected live birds and reptiles for sale on Facebook in the Philippines in just 17 days.³

A 2016 study investigating the availability of illegal wildlife products on the "dark web" found offerings to be negligible, indicating that wildlife trafficking through the surface web was so unregulated as to not require traders to seek the cover of the dark web.⁴ It is likely that continuing advancements in technology and global connectivity will only fuel the trade in endangered species and their products online without intervention. Fortunately, the private sector has stepped up to take on this challenge and is presenting an increasingly united front from the industry against wildlife crime.

TRAFFIC, along with partners WWF and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), launched the Global Coalition to End Wildlife Trafficking Online on 7 March 2018, bringing together some of the world's biggest internet companies⁵. The aim of the collaboration is to reduce wildlife trafficking online by 80% by 2020.

This Coalition expands on previous collaborations with the private sector to address the threat of illegal wildlife trade online. TRAFFIC regularly monitors

online trade and shares findings with both the companies identified and local law enforcement for action. Just one year prior to the Global Coalition to End Wildlife Trafficking Online launch, Baidu, Alibaba and Tencent—the biggest technology companies in China and some of the largest in the world—joined together to pledge zero tolerance to wildlife trafficking online in celebration of World Wildlife Day.⁶ On 22 November 2017, eight more China-based companies joined this effort and an alliance was formed.⁷ The companies recently received training by wildlife and enforcement experts at Baidu's headquarters in Beijing to increase capacity for monitoring illegal wildlife trade online and learn how to find and deal with illegal wildlife trade information on their platforms in China.⁸

On 4 December 2017, Instagram launched a hashtag interstitial to educate users about wildlife trafficking when searching for one of the hashtags provided by TRAFFIC and WWF that may be linked to illegal trade.⁹ Activities such as these will continue through the Coalition, aiming to strengthen detection by companies and encourage behaviour change in company users.

TRAFFIC will work with Coalition members to address specific illegal wildlife trade threats on their platforms. This includes providing wildlife policy guidance, delivering training to company staff members to help them better detect products derived from threatened species, looking to advance the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance technological tools for detection, and engaging company users and conservation supporters to be a part of the solution to wildlife trafficking online.

The launch of this Coalition is just the first step. TRAFFIC aims to see eBay's efforts replicated across the industry, with companies sharing best practices to prevent criminals simply shifting between platforms. Truly unplugging online trafficking routes will require additional partnerships across sectors such as the transport and financial sectors, as well as hand-in-hand collaboration with law enforcement. Rather than the availability of illegal wildlife going viral online, the Coalition aims to use the global connectivity of the online industry—which originally led to this current crisis—to provide solutions to combat wildlife trafficking online.

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¹Zhao, Xu, Xiao, Guan and Lau (2017). *Revisiting China's ivory markets in 2017*. TRAFFIC Briefing; ²Kramer, Sawyer, Amato and LaFontaine (2017). *The US elephant ivory market: A new baseline*. TRAFFIC Report; ³Canlas, Sy and Chng (2017). A rapid survey of online trade in live birds and reptiles in the Philippines. *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 29(2); ⁴Harrison, Roberts and Hernandez-Castro (2016). Assessing the extent and nature of wildlife trade on the dark web. *Conservation Biology*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.12707>; ⁵The founding members of the Global Coalition to End Wildlife Trafficking Online are Alibaba, Baidu, Baixing, eBay, Etsy, Facebook, Google, Huaxia Collection, Instagram, Kuaishou, Mall for Africa, Microsoft, Pinterest, Qyer, Ruby Lane, Shengshi Collection, Tencent, Wen Wan Tian Xia, Zhongyikupai, Zhuanzhuan and 58 Group, convened by WWF, TRAFFIC and IFAW; ⁶*Youth and internet giants speak out against wildlife cybercrime* (2017). <http://www.traffic.org/home/2017/3/2/youth-and-internet-giants-speak-out-against-wildlife-cybercrime.html>; ⁷*Chinese internet giants launch alliance to combat wildlife cybercrime* (2017). <http://www.traffic.org/home/2017/11/22/chinese-internet-giants-launch-alliance-to-combat-wildlife-c.html>; ⁸*China-based internet alliance trained on combating wildlife cybercrime* (2017). <http://www.traffic.org/home/2018/3/26/china-based-internet-alliance-trained-on-combating-wildlife.html>; ⁹*Instagram users to receive alerts about threatened wildlife* (2017). <http://www.traffic.org/home/2017/12/4/instagram-users-to-receive-alerts-about-threatened-wildlife.html>

TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, is a leading non-governmental organisation working globally on trade in wild animals and plants in the context of both biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

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