

TRAFFIC POST

the wildlife trade monitoring network

ISSUE 1
SEPTEMBER, 2007

TRAFFIC INDIA NEWSLETTER ON ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA

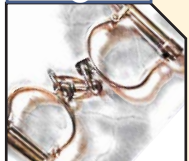


TRAFFIC INDIA
UPDATE

- **WWF-India and TRAFFIC** organise a press conference to highlight issues related to Tiger conservation
- **CITES rejects lifting of the ban** on Tiger Trade
- **WWF and TRAFFIC launch** a 'Signature Campaign' for the Tigers in the wild
- **TRAFFIC India up scales its effort** to curb illegal wildlife trade
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OUTPOST



TRAFFIC
'ALERT'

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IN FOCUS



- **Fact file on illegal trade of Indian Star Tortoises**

From the desk

Welcome to the first issue of the 'TRAFFIC Post' - a quarterly newsletter of TRAFFIC India. This newsletter also marks the come back of TRAFFIC India.

The TRAFFIC Network is a joint conservation programme of WWF the global conservation organization and IUCN-The World Conservation Union. TRAFFIC was established in 1976, since when it has developed into a worldwide network with a considerable international reputation for helping to identify and address conservation challenges linked to wildlife trade.

TRAFFIC came to India in 1991, operating as a division of WWF India. It worked closely with the National and the State Governments and various agencies to help study, monitor and influence action to curb illegal wildlife trade. For various reasons, the office had to shut down in 2002. It resumed work once again in December 2006. WWF and TRAFFIC are committed to work together with government agencies, NGOs, and all like minded individuals to curb illegal wildlife trade that has become a growing threat to our natural treasures.

As a specialist organisation monitoring wildlife trade issues, TRAFFIC India has an important contribution to make in the country.

'TRAFFIC Post' is a TRAFFIC India's quarterly newsletter conceived to highlight the burning issues related to illegal wildlife trade. It also aims to update its readers on TRAFFIC India's efforts in this cause. You can also look forward to reading about emerging issues on wildlife trade trends through the sections called TRAFFIC 'Alert' and 'In Focus'.

We look forward to your valued inputs on how to make this publication even better. Let's work together to help ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature in India.

Yours in conservation,
Ravi Singh
SG & CEO
WWF-India



Photo: Samir Sinha

Photo: WWF-Canon/Edward PARKER

Photo: Samir Sinha

WWF-India and TRAFFIC organise a press conference to highlight issues related to Tiger conservation



Photo: WWF-Canon/Vladimir Filonovimage

Tigers today are threatened with extinction. One of the primary threats to their survival is illegal trade in bone and other body parts used for Traditional Chinese Medicines. The illegal trade in skins for clothing is also a growing threat.

China's existing policy—a complete trade ban, implemented in 1993—has been vital to protecting Tigers in the wild. However, Tiger farms across China continue to house over 4,000 Tigers in their farms. Tiger farming in China is also supported by Article 17 of their Wildlife Protection Law, 1988 which says that the state shall encourage domestication and breeding of wildlife. Reports have indicated that the Tiger farms are getting huge amounts of funding for their captive breeding programme for restocking tigers in the wild. The Tiger carcasses are being refrigerated at present in the hope that one day the domestic ban will be lifted and these could be sold legally. **Therefore, there was a strong belief that China will lobby to re-open its trade domestically during the Conference of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) of Wild Fauna and Flora, to be held in June 2007 in Netherlands.**

In order to create awareness in civil society and request the Indian Government to take up the cause of the wild Tigers during the CITES meeting, WWF-India and TRAFFIC India had organised a press conference in New Delhi on May 16, 2007 which was also attended by the International Tiger Coalition partners from India.

The conference helped to generate interest and awareness about Tiger conservation. During the conference, the Indian delegates spoke strongly about the impact of the lifting of this ban in China in other countries and especially in India, where there is already a struggle for better enforcement and protection of Tiger habitat.

CITES rejects lifting of the ban on Tiger trade



CITES is an inter-governmental treaty to regulate wildlife trade. It aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. It is one of the most successful international conventions and has 172 countries party to it. India has been its members since 1976.

The 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES COP14) was recently held at The Hague in the Netherlands from June 3 to 15, 2007. Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India attended the CoP 14 as member of the TRAFFIC delegation.

The meeting was a significant milestone in international cooperation to strengthen support for Tiger conservation. Three countries with wild Tigers India, Nepal and Bhutan were joined by the United States in calling on China to phase out the country's privately run "Tiger farms" that presently house over 4,000 of these big cats. These farms have been pushing the Chinese government to allow legal trade in Tiger parts. The pressure brought on was fruitful and the 172 member countries of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) adopted a strong Tiger trade decision by consensus. "Tigers should not be bred for their parts or derivatives" was the unequivocal message from the forum. This is expected to have a significant positive impact on the future of wild Tigers.

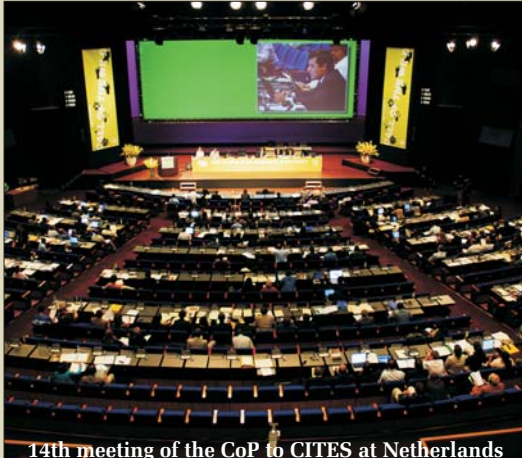


Photo: Samir Sinha

14th meeting of the CoP to CITES at Netherlands

Mr. Samir Sinha, Head, TRAFFIC-India who was present at the meeting adds, "It was truly rewarding to see India speaking out strongly and courageously for its wild Tigers. Hopefully, this will translate into more strong and concerted efforts on the ground for the conservation of our national animal".

The Tiger debate during the CITES meeting has been captured in a publication called 'The Roar of the

Tiger'. This publication was recently released by TRAFFIC India at a press conference organised jointly by the Indian members of The International Tiger Coalition in New Delhi on August 3, 2007. The publication can be viewed at www.wwfindia.org.

The 'Roar of the Tiger': This publication tries to capture the essence of the Tiger debate that took place during the 14th meeting of the Conference of Parties. Voices rung clear that it is important to urge China to continue with the ban on Tiger trade, and not allow trade in their parts in any part of the world. During the meeting, India was vocal on the issue to save the Tigers, and keen to take proactive measures for the benefit of Tiger conservation in our country. It said that, "Open sale of Tiger body parts through farmed specimens is detrimental to the survival of an umbrella species like Tiger, which is symbolic of the well being of an ecosystem. Therefore we strongly urge the Parties to desist from the idea of captive breeding of Tiger and phase out all such programs in the interest of wild Tigers."

The significance of the debate was set not only by what was introduced and finally adopted on the floor of the committee by the respective parties but also in the statements and remarks made by them during the course of the debate. One of the key messages on this important international forum was that "Tiger should not be bred for their parts or derivatives."

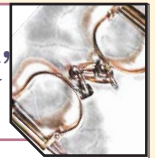
WWF-India and TRAFFIC launch a 'Signature Campaign' for the Tigers in the wild



WWF-India and TRAFFIC have initiated a 'Signature Campaign' to draw nationwide attention to the plight of the Tiger. The campaign aims at reaching out to the multitudes of Tiger and nature lovers in the country, while simultaneously hoping to drive home the point, that it could be 'now or never' for the Indian Tiger.

The campaign was launched at the Secretariat, WWF-India in New Delhi. Schoolchildren, Tiger lovers, eminent conservationists and WWF affiliates such as the Indian members of The International Tiger Coalition (an alliance of 35 organizations representing more than 100 organizations across the globe, united under the common aim of stopping trade in Tiger parts and products from all sources) were present at the launch.

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Red Sanders confiscated in Chennai

Directorate of Revenue Intelligence officials had seized 37 tonnes of Red Sanders from three containers meant for export at the Chennai port in August 2007. The estimated value of the seized goods was around Rs1.5 crores and was on their way to China and Malaysia. A similar seizure also took place in the month of July 2007 where the Officers of Directorate of Revenue Intelligence had seized 10.204 tonnes of Red Sanders from an export container at the Chennai airport. The estimated cost of this consignment was around Rs 62 lakhs. The Red Sanders were on their way to Singapore.

On April 18, 2007, the police in Nepal seized nearly 7 tonnes of Red Sanders near its border with Tibet. Hidden under mounds of rice, the cargo was being moved from India to China via Nepal.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Red Sanders *Pterocarpus santalinus* is a hard wood that is mainly found in the Southern parts of the Eastern Ghats. It is valued for its natural scent and its oil that is used to make perfumes. The export of Red Sanders in the log form is prohibited in India.

Red Sanders is largely smuggled to Japan but recent reports have indicated that China is the new emerging market for the trade.

Recent seizure of 200 tonnes of Red Sanders in Nepal has indicated that the transport of this timber from the Southern States to the North Eastern states of India and further ahead to Nepal and beyond is a new trend in illegal trade of this species.

<http://www.hindu.com/2007/08/16/stories/2007081654400500.htm>
<http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/004200707261550.htm>
<http://www.indiaenews.com/nepal/20070419/48030.htm>



Photo: Rahul Dutta

Also at the event, WWF-India displayed a Tiger mosaic on the Secretariat building. This mosaic is a product of an international campaign that ran on websites, prior to the latest Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Having received over 20,000 pictures from over 150 countries of which India was amongst the top ten contributors -- the mosaic symbolizes the power of visual imagery, and global concern for the Tiger.

The 'Signature Campaign' aims to create support for Tiger conservation and urge the Government to take immediate action. "Protecting Tigers in the wild is not only on the top of the agenda of a handful of conservationists and NGOs but is the also wish of the larger populace. This 'Signature Campaign' will help to reinstate this resolve that will go a long way in protecting the Tiger in the wild," adds Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India.

The guests of honor at the event were the frontline staff of the forest who patrol the protected areas with minimal equipment. This helped to draw attention towards the hundreds of key field positions including the forest guard positions that are lying vacant. In the past, there has been no or very little new recruitment which means that we have an ageing force fighting to protect our wildlife.

"Clearly, our government needs to be as effective towards on-the-ground measures as it was in lobbying at the global platform to save the Tiger and its landscapes. People, too must spread the word, and do their bit to save the Tiger," said Ravi Singh, Secretary General and CEO, WWF-India.

TRAFFIC India upscales its effort to curb illegal wildlife trade



In India, there is a stringent legal framework to curb illegal wildlife trade. However, poachers and traders are rapidly changing their modus operandi, thus posing new challenges for the Government and the enforcement agencies. TRAFFIC India whose mandate is to strengthen enforcement and protection has been working with the Forest Department and other enforcement agencies, by equipping them with skills to curb illegal wildlife trade.

Over the last few months, TRAFFIC India has organised four workshops on 'Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade with a special reference to 'Asian Big Cats' all across India. One such workshop was held in Gangtok, Sikkim on May 21 and 22, 2007; at Guwahati, Assam on May 24 and 25, 2007; at the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan on July 13 & 14, 2007 and in Mudumulai Wildlife Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu on July 27 & 28, 2007. These workshops were organised in association with the respective State Forest Departments.

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Traders convicted for bird trade

In the month of August 2007, a court in New Delhi sentenced a man to three-years of rigorous imprisonment for indulging in illegal trade of rare species of birds 15 years ago. The accused, a resident of Jama Masjid was found guilty under the Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972 and was also slapped a fine of Rs.25,000. He was arrested by sleuths of the Special Cell near Jama Masjid on September 17, 1992 and was in possession of 25 Rose-ringed Parakeets, seven Black-headed Munias and 73 other Munias.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Illegal trade in birds has become rampant in India. Parakeets, Munias, Weavers and Partridges top the chart of the most commonly traded wild birds in India.

This conviction might be perhaps one of the first time that a bird trader has been sentenced to three years of imprisonment for trading in endangered birds. This should now become an exemplary for similar cases involving bird trade in India.

In India, the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 prohibits hunting and trading of all Indian birds. In 1990, a ban was further imposed on the export of live birds from India and a year later local trade in birds was also banned. Presently, there is no restriction on the domestic sale of exotic species that have been bred in captivity in India. This is where the law is being brazenly flouted by some unscrupulous traders. Traders have devised ingenious ways of camouflaging endangered Indian birds in myriad colours so that they look exotic and pass off as captive-bred exotic birds.

<http://www.hindu.com/2007/08/06/stories/2007080651640300.htm>

The main focus of these workshops was to discuss wildlife trade issues from a local, regional and national perspective as well as for building capacity to curb wildlife trade.

Many a times the wildlife cases in India have failed to deliver desired results. One of the key reasons for this failure can be attributed to the lack of in-depth knowledge and understanding of the wildlife laws by the enforcement agencies.



Photo: Sina Subramaniam

Training was imparted on these legal and technical aspects that are required to strengthen legal standing on cases pertaining to wildlife. These workshops are an outcome of a 'Training Needs Assessment' meeting organised by TRAFFIC India in the month of March 2007 where representatives from Wildlife Institute of India, CBI, ITBP, CITES Management Authority, Police, Forest Department, military intelligence, Customs and LNIN National Institute of Criminology and Forensic Sciences had come together to

identify gaps in handling wildlife trade. The lack of capacity among the Forest Department and other enforcement agencies was identified as one of the main issues.

The response to these workshops was overwhelming. Over two hundred officials have been trained in these workshops. These include representatives from the Forest Department, Indian Army, ITBP (Indo-Tibetan Border Police) Customs and Police officials.

TRAFFIC India joins hands with Disney Adventures magazine



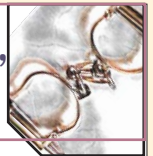
TRAFFIC India has collaborated with Disney Adventures magazine to spread awareness among children on issues related to illegal wildlife trade. This tie up will allow TRAFFIC India to reach out to over 40,000 children every month and especially in those areas where

wildlife trade and crime issues are at the centre stage. To encourage children's interest and participation, TRAFFIC India has also offered to give away prizes for a quiz on wildlife trade in every issue of this magazine for the coming six months.

A small alert on illegal trade in butterflies has already been featured in the August edition of Disney Adventures in India. The first issue of the TRAFFIC India's quiz in the magazine has also hit the stands.



TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Sea Horses seized in Chennai

Customs officials at the Chennai airport seized 32 kg of dried Sea Horses in March 2007. These were brought to the airport for despatch to Bangkok by a Thai Airways flight. As per CITES, the Sea Horse, belonging to *Hippocampus* species, is an endangered animal listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and any kind of trade in it is prohibited under international law.

Another big seizure of smuggled Sea Horses that took place was by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) in July of 2004. The Sea Horses were seized from a Singapore-bound vessel at Chennai port and were worth Rs 13.44 crore in the international market and Rs 2.68 crore in the domestic market. The quantity of seizure was a surprise to the authorities. This confirmed their doubt that the commercial exploitation of sea horses had increased.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Sea Horses from India find a ready market in many South-East Asian countries. They are poached along the Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar coasts and are illegally exported to South-East Asian countries, where people believe these have medicinal, particularly, aphrodisiac properties, apart from being a cure for asthma and kidney ailments. The volume of dried Sea Horse trade from India was estimated to be 9.75 t as derived from catch data in 2001, which was much higher than official statistics of 4.34 t during 2001-2002, suggesting the major part of the exports might be through non-conventional means and goes undeclared.

Many a times dried Sea Horses are smuggled along with dry chillies to curb its smell. Also they resemble closely to the dried chillies and are often traded illegally under the name of "guntur chilli".

As per CITES, the Sea Horse, belonging to species *Hippocampus*, is an endangered animal listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and any kind of trade in it is prohibited under the international law.

<http://www.wpsi-india.org/news/10042007.php>
<http://www.tribuneindia.com/2004/20040919/spectrum/main2.htm>
 Fisheries Management and Ecology, Volume 12 Issue 4 Page 269-273, August 2005 , K. R. SALIN, T. M. YOHANNAN, C. MOHANAKUMARAN NAIR (2005)

TRAFFIC and SACEP signal intention to curb illegal wildlife trade in South Asia



July 22, 2007: The South Asian Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with TRAFFIC, to enlist the wildlife trade network's assistance in building a regional network for ensuring the sustainability of legal wildlife trade and for tackling wildlife crime in South Asia.

The South Asian network will be modelled on the highly successful ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN), an inter-governmental initiative which has brought ten Southeast Asia governments together to combat wildlife crime. TRAFFIC is continuing to work with Wildlife Alliance (formerly known as WildAid), via a cooperative partnership with USAID, to provide technical assistance to government agencies that are implementing ASEAN-WEN.

"TRAFFIC was instrumental in helping establish the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network in Southeast Asia, and we're delighted to be able to call upon their assistance for building a similar network in South Asia," said Dr Arvind Boaz, Director General of SACEP.

"TRAFFIC is delighted to be working with SACEP on this important initiative in the South Asia region," said Steven Broad, Executive Director of TRAFFIC.

"It's gratifying to see the success of ASEAN-WEN leading to similar inter-governmental initiatives elsewhere in Asia. It's a model we hope will be adapted to fit regional contexts worldwide."



Steven Broad of TRAFFIC (left) and Arvind Boaz of SACEP signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations on managing wildlife trade in South Asia

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



French charged with wildlife theft of insects

Three French nationals were charged for violating wildlife laws in Gangtok, the North-Eastern state of Sikkim in July 2007. The trio were held with around 41 insects, including rare species of Butterflies and Moths. They also possessed equipments for collecting and catching insects. The three youths who claimed to be students from the University of Corte, Corsica, France, pleaded not guilty, saying they were not aware of local laws.

The authorities deported them to the West Bengal State after imposing a

fine of Rs. 25000. The government decided to "relax" the punishment purely on humanitarian grounds since the three were young and unaware of the law.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Recent seizures have indicated that the insects in the wild are not safe anymore. A large number of Butterflies and Moths are collected and smuggled to other countries. Many of these insects are protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and some even enjoy the same legal status as the tiger.

Insects are an important component of the diversity and wild gene pool. In the year 2001, two Russians entomologists were arrested in the Sikkim in India, for attempting to smuggle

endangered butterflies, moths and beetles out of India. The total weight of the insects seized from them was close to 21 kilograms. A rare butterfly in Europe could fetch up to \$ 400.

In the above cited seizure involving the French Nationals, it is important to understand that-

1. There is no provision in the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to 'relax' punishments. The case was compounded by the State Government.
2. Ignorance of the law is not an excuse.

<http://www.newkerala.com/nknews.php?action=fullnews&id=49364>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/southasia/1485855.stm>

IN FOCUS: Indian Star Tortoise



The Indian Star Tortoise *Geochelone elegans* has become one of the most commonly traded wildlife species. In India, hunting and trade of the species is banned under the Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The international trade of the species is also prohibited under the Appendix-II of CITES.

Commonly known as Tarewala kachua, Star Tortoises are threatened by poaching for trade and loss of habitat. Due to their small sizes, live tortoises can easily be carried around in baggage with fruits and vegetables. They are often wrongly declared as fish, crabs and souvenirs. Star Tortoises are either traded for their meat or for the live pet trade. A significant part of the trade is meant for the international markets.

Between 2001 and 2004 approximately 7,000 Star Tortoises were confiscated across India, while 19,000 were recorded to have been traded internationally with fraudulent papers. In 2005 the trade hit an all-time high of 9,480 animals. If these are the "legally" traded numbers worldwide, then the numbers smuggled illegally are definitely several times higher.

Another shocking seizure of the star tortoise in August 2007 is a grim reminder of the volume of this trade. The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized 2,016 Star Tortoises, which were being smuggled to Malaysia, at the Mumbai International Airport on August 24, 2007. The two arrested were booked under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and Customs Act, 1962. Reports suggest that the tortoises were sourced from coastal areas in Tamil Nadu and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and were being sent through Mumbai to Malaysia where they fetch a high price.

Over the years Bangalore, Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkatta, Pune, the Port City of Kandla in the Gulf of Kutch, the coast of Gujarat and Rajasthan have emerged as common trade points for smuggling the Indian Star Tortoise. Reports have also indicated three main international trade routes that is Bangalore-Kolkatta-Hongkong; Bombay to the Middle East and Saurashtra-Kutch-Kandla to the Middle East.



जान बची तो लाखों पाये



इन स्टार कछुओं को मुंबई स्थित राजस्व खुफिया निदेशालय के अधिकारियों ने तस्करो से बचाया है। अधिकारियों ने दो तस्करो के पास से करीब दो हजार स्टार कछुए के बच्चे बरामद किये हैं।

“A large number of seizures in the past indicate the magnitude of the illegal trade of Indian Star Tortoises,” says Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India. “The legal enforcement does not end with the offender being caught with the smuggled tortoises. It is necessary to set up intelligence to catch the king pins of this trade.”

<http://www.hindu.com/2007/06/02/stories/2007060202801300.htm>

<http://www.ptinews.com/pti%5Cptisite.nsf/All/ABE0FF6E0AB002FD652573410056363>

<http://www.mumbaimirror.com/net/mmpaper.aspx?page=article§id=35&contenti>

HEADLINES

It's not about dying lions for Gujarat; it's all about pride



The state refuses to relocate lions in the Gir sanctuary; environment ministry to take final decision soon

By Purnima Goswami

The Gir sanctuary in Gujarat is home to the last remaining wild Asiatic lions. The state government has refused to relocate the lions to a new sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh, as proposed by the central government. The Gir lions are a symbol of pride for the state and are a major attraction for tourists. The state government is concerned that the lions might be killed for their bones, which are used in traditional medicines. The Gir lions are also a symbol of the state's rich biodiversity and are a source of pride for the people of Gujarat.

Illegal wildlife trade thrives in India

NEW DELHI

INDIA'S illegal wildlife trade is growing with crime syndicates making millions of dollars from the killing, smuggling and selling of rare animals like tigers, the head of a wildlife watchdog said on Friday.

"The situation regarding the illegal trade in wildlife parts in India is very grim," Samir Sinha, head of 'TRAFFIC India', the wildlife trade monitoring arm of WWF said. "The tiger is facing the threat of extinction with early results from a new census suggesting there could be as few as 1,500 tigers left in India, compared to 2,000 in 2001. The tiger is facing the threat of extinction with early results from a new census suggesting there could be as few as 1,500 tigers left in India, compared to 2,000 in 2001. The tiger is facing the threat of extinction with early results from a new census suggesting there could be as few as 1,500 tigers left in India, compared to 2,000 in 2001."



Salman faces 5 years in jail

Loses appeal in Black Buck case, Jodhpur court issues arrest warrant



Salman Khan's appeal against a five-year jail term in the Black Buck case has been rejected by the Jodhpur court. The court has issued an arrest warrant for the actor. The case involves the killing of a black buck, a rare species of deer. The actor was accused of hiring a hitman to kill the animal. The court found the actor guilty and sentenced him to five years in jail. The actor has appealed against the sentence, but the court has rejected his appeal. The court has issued an arrest warrant for the actor. The actor is currently on bail.

Comeback of ivory trade?

Four pieces of ivory weighing over 100 kilograms seized in Kerala



Four pieces of ivory weighing over 100 kilograms were recently seized in Kerala. The ivory is expected to have come from the killing of three male elephants in the Nilgiri forests, where 65 percent of elephant deaths are caused by ivory poachers. The seizure was made by forest guards. The ivory was found in a hidden compartment of a vehicle. The forest guards were alerted to the vehicle by a dog barking. The forest guards searched the vehicle and found the ivory. The forest guards are now investigating the case. The forest guards are now investigating the case. The forest guards are now investigating the case.

A tiger killed every day

Massacre over 5 years leaves only 1,500 alive in wild

Cat Call
3,642
Number of tigers in India in 2006.

2,000
killed between 2001 and 2006.

PARTICIPATION OF
local population essential to protect the big cats.

Chetan Chauhan, New Delhi, August 3

IT'S OFFICIAL. And it's alarming. Between 2001 and 2006, we have lost more than one tiger every single day. As compared to 3,642 in 2001, the country's tiger population, according to a 2006 estimate, stands between 1,500 and 1,590. That's more than 2,000 tigers up in smoke.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests, which is headed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, has taken these outside protected areas. Especially these outside protected areas. The meeting of September 2006, there were 2,088 tigers outside reserves and most of these tigers fall prey to either poaching or man-animal conflict. However, the majority of 1,276 in protected areas, as per the 2001 Census, are safe.

Assam: Smugglers find new catch

3,000 bullfrogs seized near Kaziranga National Park

The police and CRPF men subsequently informed the KNP authorities who confirmed the bags contained over 3,000 Indian bullfrogs. Some 400 of these bullfrogs had already died of suffocation when the bags were opened.

According to chief wildlife warden M C Malakar, this was a significant seizure. "We have reasons to believe the bags were destined for France via Bangladesh," he said, adding a person was earlier arrested at the Guwahati railway station for illegally concealing 85 Indian bullfrogs in a container.

The Indian bullfrog (*Altiphylax agramma*) is the largest frog in the subcontinent, and grows up to six inches in length. It is either yellowish or olive green in colour and with dark irregular markings.

KNP director S N Barapokhai said a group of smugglers might have offloaded the bags from a vehicle in apprehension of being caught at the police checkpoints along the 60 km stretch of the highway adjoining the park.

"We were, in fact, expecting to catch smugglers ferrying tortoises from the park," he said. The seized bullfrogs were later released in a wetland within the KNP, which is a home to some 1,000 one-horned rhinos.

Meanwhile, a communist vigilante group from the Wildlife Trust of India said the bullfrog seizure was indicative of the extent of smuggling in the country. It added that bullfrogs are killed in Bangladesh, and their legs chopped off and frozen before being dispatched to France, where it is a delicacy.

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The World Conservation Union

WWF

TRAFFIC POST

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TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



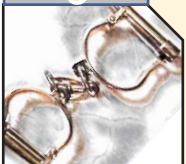
TRAFFIC INDIA
UPDATE

- “Wildlife Quiz” organised to launch Wildlife Week celebrations
- Wildlife Crime Control Bureau takes shape
- TRAFFIC India launches its Consumer Awareness campaign
- Trans-border training programme to curb illegal wildlife trade
- South Asia Wildlife Trade Initiative (SAWTI) - a new regional collaborative effort
- TRAFFIC invites information for ongoing Leopard trade study

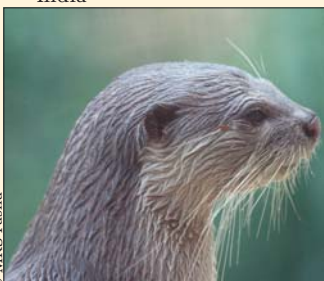


OUTPOST

- Pangolin trade racket busted in China
- Latest news on the alarming illegal wildlife trade trends in India



TRAFFIC
'ALERT'



© MKS Pasha

- Rhinos targeted: Kaziranga National Park



IN FOCUS



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From Roland Melisch, Global Programme Co-ordinator on “The making of a truly South Asian Programme of TRAFFIC”



TRAFFIC took its first step towards “the making of a truly South Asian Programme” by organizing a goal-setting workshop in New Delhi, India on 6 - 7 December 2007. Representatives from South Asian countries such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and India participated in this meeting.

Roland Melisch, the Global Programme Co-ordinator, TRAFFIC International, who is also leading this initiative, talks to TRAFFIC India about the programme and the illegal wildlife trade scenario.

What, according to you, are the key issues in illegal wildlife trade in India?

India is the world's third-largest exporter of medicinal and aromatic plants. It has a growing consumer market for the world's timber resources and is the world's second-largest shark-catching nation, despite having little provision for safeguarding these Tigers of the seas. The current management schemes are apparently not providing ample incentives to manage these resources sustainably. There also seems to be a lack of adequate federal structures to combat organized wildlife crime in India. It is to be hoped that this will change with the establishment of the National Wildlife Crime Bureau.

What is the purpose of this initiative, “Towards a region: the making of a truly South Asian Regional Programme”?

In the past, TRAFFIC has mainly concentrated its efforts in India and on cross-border trade issues between Nepal and India. Whilst India will always remain a centre of focus of our work, it is time to establish a more coherent approach at a regional level, encompassing a bigger proportion of the eight countries comprising South Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. During a recent visit to Pakistan, I have received very sincere signals inviting TRAFFIC to operate in that country.

What do you plan to achieve through this?

Countries neighbouring each other in South Asia face almost similar challenges and have a lot of problems and opportunities in common. Therefore TRAFFIC firmly believes that improving networking, co-operation and co-ordination among countries in South Asia will help to control wildlife crime. Exchange of experience and knowledge will help to enhance sustainability levels of trade in wildlife that is legal and crack down on the wildlife crime gangs operating across borders.

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

What, according to you, will be the priority for this programme?

There are certainly two imminent priorities for improving networking, cooperation and coordination in South Asia:

- a) The exchange of experiences with non-detriment findings for those species of wildlife that can legally be traded (will enhance the sustainability levels of legal trade)
- b) Better transnational co-operation to combat illegal trade effectively, maybe through a South Asian wildlife trade enforcement network but this will certainly be up to the governments to decide.

What do you think will be TRAFFIC India's role?

TRAFFIC India will certainly try to advise policy-makers on better biodiversity management schemes wherever needed in order to manage wildlife resources more effectively. They will also provide training and help build capacity of the enforcement and management agencies to curb illegal and unsustainable trade in wildlife that is flourishing in the main market hubs.

Is there any particular issue you would like to flag?

With my background in Asian otter ecology and conservation, I was puzzled to hear of and personally see the sheer amount of otter skins confiscated in the South Asian region, particularly in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nepal. These freshwater carnivores are already heavily threatened by wetland conversion and misuse of pesticides. I hope that improved implementation of national wildlife laws and better regional co-operation will at least help to minimize the threats posed by poaching and trade.

“Wildlife Quiz” organized to launch Wildlife Week celebrations



© TRAFFIC India

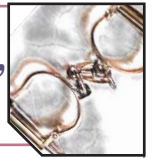
Students locked horns at a “Wildlife Quiz” jointly organized by the National Zoological Park, New Delhi, WWF-India and TRAFFIC India on 1 October, 2007. Over 20 schools from all across Delhi participated in the quiz competition that put their knowledge about nature and wildlife to the test. Spring Dales School, Dhaula Kuan was declared the winner while the team from Chinmaya Vidyalaya School, Vasant Vihar stood second. The winning team received a trophy and a

certificate from Shri S. Regupathy, Hon'ble Minister of State for Environment and Forests, Government of India at an awards ceremony organized on 3 October, 2007.

“The zoo is very happy to have welcomed our young guests during this competition as also at other events during the Wildlife Week” said Mr. D. N. Singh, Director, National Zoological Park, New Delhi. “We are hopeful that this quiz will encourage young adults to think about the future of our natural resources and become active participants in preserving them.”

The quiz was part of the awareness initiatives undertaken by TRAFFIC India in the year 2007 to sensitize young minds about illegal wildlife trade and its detrimental effect on our natural resources.

TRAFFIC ‘Alert’



Man held with Cobra venom

The police arrested a man, with 250 ml of Cobra snake venom worth INR 1.5 lakh on 19 August, 2007. Police said they had received a tip-off that a man from Gujarat with a large quantity of venom had come to the capital to sell it. They were also told that he was carrying it in a negligent manner, thereby endangering human life. Accordingly, a raid was conducted and the accused was arrested from Shakti Nagar Chowk, Roop Nagar in north Delhi. A bottle containing 250 ml of venom, worth INR 150 000 in international market was recovered.

On interrogation, Rathod revealed that he worked as a marketing agent for a detergent manufacturer in Gujarat, where he met a medicine dealer, who promised him a handsome margin if he obtained Cobra venom. Subsequently, he got in touch with another agent and procured the venom that was extracted from around 1000 snakes.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Such seizures indicate that there is an emerging illegal market for snake venom across the country. This is astonishing since the trade in snake venom is heavily regulated and has a very limited and niche market.

Snake venom is used to make anti-venom serum, the only cure for snake bites. The venom is extracted from mainly four snakes in India commonly known as the “Big Four”- cobra, krait, Russels Viper *Daboia russelii* and Saw scaled Viper *Echis carinatus*. The venom is injected into horses in increasing doses and then the blood is drawn and purified. This serum contains vital antibodies that help to combat invasion of venom. Romulus Whitaker in his book, “Snakeman” (1999) quoted “Venom is one of the most expensive natural resources on earth, five to a 1000 times more expensive than gold, depending on the species”.

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/rssarticleshow/msi-d-2296621_prtpage-1.cms
<http://www.deccanherald.com/Content/Aug212007/national2007082020383.asp>

Wildlife Crime Control Bureau takes shape



The newly constituted Wildlife Crime Control Bureau is in place. The Bureau was formed last year under the amendment of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 with a mission to curb illegal wildlife trade and to ensure better protection of wildlife in India. The Bureau now has a Joint Director, Mr. Ashok Pai, IFS and Deputy Director Mr. P. Subramaniam, IFS, who are working full time for the Bureau. It will soon open its office in Bikaji Cama Place, New Delhi.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests has also constituted an Advisory Committee to the Bureau, which includes representatives from various conservation organizations from all across the country. Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India, a member of the committee, attended the first two meetings that were held on 6 September 2007 and 5 December 2007.

Mr. Sinha adds, "It is important that the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau hits the ground running and makes a quick impact on addressing organized wildlife crime. We have offered to provide all possible support required to achieve these objectives."

TRAFFIC India launches its Consumer Awareness Campaign



On 24 October, 2007 during the 12th Kailash Sankhala Lecture held at WWF-India Secretariat in New Delhi, Mr. Mike Pandey a renowned filmmaker and conservationist, launched TRAFFIC India's "Consumer Awareness Campaign" with the release of the leaflet, "Are you committing a Crime? Think before you buy".

This communiqué is mainly targeted towards sensitizing tourists/buyers about the illegal wildlife trade that has endangered our wildlife.

TRAFFIC India is hopeful that wide distribution of this leaflet will spread awareness about the illegal wildlife trade that is threatening the survival of various species of flora and fauna in India.

"Since the leaflet is largely targeted at the tourists, both domestic and international, travelling across India, TRAFFIC India hopes to drive home the point that souvenirs derived from endangered species of wildlife should not be treated as mementos for carrying home but rather a symbol of the wanton destruction of our natural habitat." said Mr. Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India.

The leaflet is available in both English and Hindi. For copies of the leaflet please write to us at TRAFFIC India or download it from our website www.wwfindia.org/traffic



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TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Shahtoosh shawls seized

In one of the biggest hauls in recent history, a Central Bureau of Investigation team seized 57 shahtoosh shawls from three traders who were trying to sell them to a customer at an up market hotel in central Delhi in August 2007. The traders had brought the shawls from Kashmir to Delhi and had covertly advertised the products on the internet to attract foreign buyers.

Another seizure of shahtoosh shawls in Thailand, throws light on the international nature of the trade. A Bangkok luxury store owner, Mr Reyaz Ahmad Mir, an Indian national from Kashmir, pleaded guilty to charges of illegally importing and selling shahtoosh shawls. He was sentenced to two years probation and fined USD300. In this case, the shawls were worth atleast USD20 000.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/main.jhtml?xml=/earth/2007/08/23/eashah123.xml>
<http://www.worldwildlife.org/news/displayPR.cfm?prID=426>
<http://www.worldwildlife.org/news/displayPR.cfm?prID=426>

TRAFFIC India adds.....

This upsurge is alarming as it indicates that the traders are becoming bold. It implies greater threat for the Tibetan Antelope. A single shahtoosh, manufactured from the wool of the endangered Tibetan Antelope, or Chiru *Panthelops hodgsonii*, can fetch huge profits by the time it reaches affluent customers in Europe, Nepal or the United Arab Emirates.

The Tibetan Antelope has become a fashion victim. There have been reports confirming that there is unhindered supply of its wool for Kashmir's weavers who make these luxurious shawls. Perhaps three to five animals have to be killed to provide wool for one shawl. The very low penalty given to the trader found guilty of trading in shahtoosh shawls in Thailand demonstrates the challenges faced in curbing such organized international crimes. Unless punishment for such illegal wildlife trade is exemplary it will not deter others from following suit.

Trans-border training programme to curb illegal wildlife trade



TRAFFIC India along with WWF-India and the Uttar Pradesh State Forest Department organized a trans-border training programme in Dudhwa Tiger Reserve on 13, 14 and 15 December 2007. The main aim of the programme was to enhance the skills of the Forest Department and other enforcement agencies that are working to curb illegal wildlife trade and also foster closer cooperation amongst such agencies on both sides of the Indo Nepal border.



Participants learning to use "Deep Search Metal Detectors"

© TRAFFIC India

The participants included officials from India and Nepal. From India, there were representatives from the Forest Departments, Customs, SSB (Seema Suraksha Bal), Police and the Special Task Force and from Nepal there were officials from their Army and the Wildlife Department. Training was imparted on the legal and technical aspects of wildlife enforcement. The participants were also made aware of the use of technology to fight wildlife crime such as use of "Deep Search Metal Detectors" to locate leg traps in the forest.

South Asia Wildlife Trade Initiative (SAWTI) - a new regional collaborative effort



TRAFFIC International, in collaboration with South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), has launched the South Asia Wildlife Trade Initiative (SAWTI), aimed to enhance government action and collaboration on wildlife trade issues in the South Asia region, covering Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The Hon'ble Environment Minister^s of South Asian countries, at the 10th Governing Council of SACEP decided to incorporate this specific programme for combating illegal trade in wildlife and its products as a response to the growing threat of poaching and illegal trade to wild species, both flora and fauna in the region. The South Asia Wildlife Trade Initiative (SAWTI) is built on the 2004 Kathmandu wildlife trade workshops during which the delegates from the participating countries identified priority actions to be taken at national and regional levels to mitigate illegal wildlife trade and to enhance wildlife trade regulations, particularly CITES, in a region where trade is threatening the long-term survival of some of the world's rarest species, such as Great Indian Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis*, Tiger *Panthera tigris*, and Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsonii*. This programme will follow the lines of the ASEAN Wildlife Trade initiative.

SAWTI will have its first regional workshop in Kathmandu, Nepal 31 January - 1 February 2008. Mr. A.K. Mukerji, retired DG-Forests, Government of India, has been appointed as a full-time Senior Policy Advisor to co-ordinate the programme on behalf of TRAFFIC International. He will carry out his role from New Delhi in India.

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Ornamental fishes seized in Chennai

On 12 October, 2007, the Air Intelligence Unit of Customs seized about 150 ornamental fish that were being smuggled by a passenger from Kuala Lumpur. The passenger arrived by the Jet Airways flight to Chennai. After interrogation, the authorities found ornamental fishes such as Arowana, Red Flower Horn and Blue Parrot worth INR 3.75 lakh, in his two suitcases. On 16 October 2007, just a few days later, a similar seizure took place again in Chennai. Customs officials seized 191 ornamental fish, worth INR 3 lakh from two passengers who had arrived on a flight from Bangkok. The ornamental fishes of different varieties were found in their suitcases, packed in polythene covers filled with water. In both the cases, the passengers did not possess a licence to trade.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

It is interesting to note that Asian Arowana *Scleropages formosus*, one of the most expensive aquarium fishes in the world also commands a market in India. It is also commonly called the Asian Bonytongue or the Dragonfish and is declared as 'Endangered' by the 2006 IUCN Red List. The international trade in these fish is controlled under the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), under which it is placed in Appendix I, the most restrictive category. Captive-bred Asian Arowana can be traded if the specimen is tagged with a microchip. It must be at least be of second generation and the breeder must be registered with CITES.

The Financial Express reported that the global ornamental fish trade was estimated at USD 4 billion and was said to be a fast growing sector. Although India contributes a negligible amount to this trade, it has a lucrative market, as demand in exotic ornamental fishes is high. While the industry has accelerating economic activity, this growth needs to be monitored carefully to ensure that illegal trade in ornamental fishes does not adversely affect our precious marine ecosystem.

Continued on page 5

TRAFFIC invites information for ongoing Leopard trade study



© Axel Gebauer

In the last few years there has been an upward swing in the number of Leopard *Panthera pardus* skins seized across the country. Despite the precarious conservation status of the Leopard, not much information is available on its illegal trade. In view of this TRAFFIC India has initiated a study to analyse the extent of the Leopard trade in India.

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To assess spatial distribution and extent of Leopard poaching across the landscapes in India.
2. Identify causative factors, key

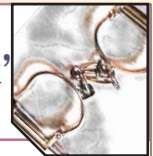
communities and other important players in Leopard trade.

3. Identify probable trade routes, mechanism of trade and other related information.

4. Evaluate existing strategies for combating Leopard trade and suggest ameliorative steps for the Forest Department and other enforcement agencies

Detailed information on dynamics of Leopard trade will help develop strategies for its conservation. **TRAFFIC India requests researchers, conservationists and others to come forward and share relevant data or findings related to Leopard poaching and trade in India.** Details can be sent at trafficind@wwfindia.net. Your support will be valuable for us.

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Continued from page 4

- <http://www.thehindu.com/2007/10/14/stories/2007101454090400.htm>
- <http://www.hindu.com/2007/10/17/stories/2007101761891400.htm>
- <http://www.financialexpress.com/news/Kerala-govt-plans-aqua-park-to-boost-ornamental-fish-trade/214533/>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_aronana

Thirty two otter skins seized, eight arrested

On 24 October 2007, officials of the State Wildlife Department apprehended eight persons in Panipat and confiscated 32 Indian otter skins from them. The suspects were intercepted near a hotel where they had allegedly come to sell the skins to unidentified buyers. A case has been registered and the wildlife officials are investigating to learn if the group are involved in illegal sale of other wild animal skins.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

There are three species of otters found in India - the Eurasian Otter *Aonyx cinerea*, Smooth-coated Otter *Lutra lutra* and Oriental Small-clawed Otter *Lutra perspicillata*. Eurasian Otter is listed under Schedule I and Smooth-coated Otter and Oriental Small-clawed Otter are listed under Schedule II Part II of the Wildlife Protection Act. This provides the species complete protection against hunting and trade. In addition, the Eurasian Otter is listed in Appendix I and the Smooth-coated and Small-clawed Otters are listed in Appendix II of CITES.

Despite the legal protection, the trade in otter skins continues. In fact, otter skins constitute the highest numbers in most multi species wildlife consignments that are apprehended. They are hunted for their highly prized pelts and smuggled out of India to the neighbouring territories, including Tibet and Nepal, where they are tailored into fur coats and garment trimmings. Most of the seizures of otter pelts have been in the states of Delhi, West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh.

- <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2007/20071025/haryana.htm#7>
- http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/India/Ten_leopard_skins_seized_from_smugglers_in_UP/rssarticleshow/2492049.cms

OUTPOST: Pangolin trade racket busted in China



The Xiamen Intermediate court of Fujian province in south-east China heard the biggest pangolin smuggling case ever on 6 November, 2007. The five accused have been charged with smuggling 68 000 kgs of Pangolin meat, 900 kg of pangolin scale, 2849 pangolins and 2600 geckos from Indonesia to Xiamen and then on to Guangzhou and Shantou in Guangdong province from September 2005 to May 2006. In just a period of eight months the amount of smuggling totalled an extraordinary sum of CNY 2938 million.



Processed pangolin scales for sale

© TRAFFIC

The case indicates the possibility of a well-organized nexus involving criminal gangs and foreign officers working together in a conspiracy to smuggle pangolins from Indonesia. Pangolins are considered endangered species and are included in Appendix-II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Till the year 2000, limited trade and transport of this species on the Appendix II list was allowed, at levels that were not deemed to affect the survival of wild populations.

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However, the high volume of mostly unregulated shipments of Southeast Asian pangolins to China, where the meat is considered a delicacy and the animal's scales are thought to have wide-ranging medicinal properties, brought about a total ban of trade in the species in the year 2000.

The court on Tuesday pronounced a death sentence, suspended for two years, to two of the five accused, immediately depriving them of any political rights and confiscating their personal property worth CNY1.5 million. Of the remaining three gang members, two men were sentenced to imprisonment for an unlimited period of time and their personal properties up to CNY1 million and CNY500 000, respectively confiscated. The last of the five accused was sentenced to imprisonment for 10 years with a penalty payment of CNY100 000.

"We are very concerned about the numbers of pangolins in trade," said Xu Hongfa from TRAFFIC's office in China, "The volumes of this little-known animal in trade are alarming and are not sustainable."

"We commend the Chinese Government for taking illegal wildlife trade seriously, evidenced by the number of significant seizures of species such as pangolins. However, as the trade continues to grow, so should the efforts of the law enforcement agencies", he said, adding that there was a likelihood that numbers of confiscated pangolins may only represent a fraction of the actual numbers circulating in trade.

Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India, adds, "There are two species of pangolins found in India- Indian Pangolin *Manis crassicaudata* found throughout India but rare in the north-east and Chinese Pangolins *Manis pentadactyla* found in north-east India excluding the high Himalayas. Trade in the species is banned in India and the international trade is prohibited under CITES. However poaching for trade continues to remain one of the potential threats to the species today. Pangolins are perceived to have medicinal properties and are smuggled to other countries for their use in traditional medicines. There are no concrete data on the proportion of this trade but given the overwhelming international demand in neighbouring countries, the threat to the species should be perceived as high. It is necessary to understand the status of the species in the country and take adequate steps to curb poaching and trade".
http://www.bangkokpost.com/News/14Nov2007_News19.php
<http://news.163.com/07/1107/05/3SM2O80K0001124f.html>

Three convicted for wildlife trafficking in the national capital

On 17 November 2007, a city court sentenced three foreigners- two Tibetans and one Nepali national- to five years of rigorous imprisonment for wildlife trafficking. The trio, Anand alias Tashi, Lobsang Phuntsok and the Nepalese citizen Jeet Bahadur were arrested on 6 April, 2007 with 45 Leopard skins and 15 otter skins. The seizure was made by the Delhi police from the old Tibetan Camp at Majnu ka Tilla on the information provided by the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI). Following the orders of the Supreme Court on a petition filed by the NGO, the investigation was then transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

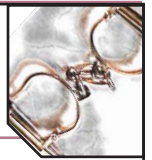
The accused are the first Tibetans in Exile to be convicted of a wildlife crime. Despite appealing four times in the higher courts the accused did not succeed in getting bail for the period of the trial. During the investigation, the accused confessed that they were working for a notorious wildlife trader from Nepal.

<http://www.hindu.com/2007/11/18/stories/2007111861400300.htm>

TRAFFIC India adds.....

This is probably one of the shortest trials under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. Hopefully such convictions will help set an example for other wildlife cases in India. It is also to be noted that wildlife offences in India have still not attracted the highest punishment prescribed, i.e. rigorous imprisonment of seven years, as against the five years awarded in this case.

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Dry orchids seized in Manas

On 6 November 2007, at least six tonnes of dry orchids were seized from Manas in Chirang district in Assam. No arrests were made since the culprits fled on seeing the Forest Officials. The dry *Dendrobium* orchids were stacked in nine bags on the bank of the Kuklong River. The 20-km stretch from Kuklong to Kanamakra is one of the richest orchid zones in the Bodoland area. Kuklong is only 30 kms from the Indo-Bhutan border. This has raised suspicions that the flowers were meant to be smuggled across the border to the Himalayan Kingdom.

This is probably the first time that dry orchids in such large quantities have been seized indicating that a well-organized trade of orchids in this area is prevalent.

<http://www.telegraphindia.com/1071109/asp/others/print.html>

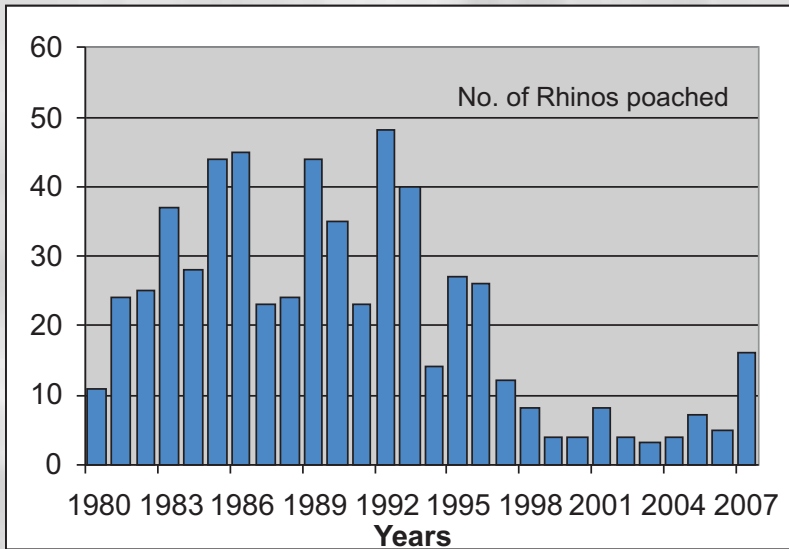
TRAFFIC India adds.....

The seizure of dried orchids in Assam comes as a rude shock. Orchids have always been a subject of fascination due to their unique and eye catching flowers. There are over 1600 species of orchids in India, of which the major varieties are found in north-east India. While live orchids and their plants have long been in trade, the seizure of dried orchids adds a new dimension to the trade. *Dendrobium* of the Orchidaceae family comes under the prohibited list of exports in India.

IN FOCUS:
Rhinos targeted - Kaziranga National Park



Kaziranga National Park in Assam has one of the most successful rhinoceros conservation histories in the world. Despite numerous problems, the Forest Department has been able to revive the population of the Great Indian Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* from a handful in the 1920s to about 1850 today. However this success has been threatened by the sudden spate of poaching in the year 2007. Official records indicate that 16 rhinos have been poached in Kaziranga National Park for their horns during this year.



Looking at the poaching status over the last two decades, it is clear that the poaching has gone down significantly. However, over the last three years there has been an upward swing in this trend. This can turn ugly and be very damaging for the species, given the circumstances and the history of poaching in the region. A similar state prevailed in Nepal in the year 2006 where a large number of Rhinos were poached in both Bardia and Chitwan National Park.

The Great Indian Rhinoceros is one of the five species of rhinos found in the world. It is poached for its horn which is used in traditional medicines in China, Taiwan,

South Korea and Japan. In Yemen, the horn is also carved into ceremonial dagger handles known as 'jambiyas'. The horns are usually traded as a single piece and can fetch 5-10 times the price of an African rhino horn. The major trade centres for this in India are Siliguri, in West Bengal, and Dimapur, in Nagaland from where the rhino horns are smuggled out to Nepal and Bhutan, and Myanmar, respectively. The contraband finally finds its way to south-east Asian countries.

Tariq Aziz, Associate Director, Species Conservation Programme, WWF-India said, "The poaching of rhinos in Assam is alarming and a cause of serious concern. Kaziranga may be able to absorb this loss but if a similar spurt of killings takes place in the neighbouring Pobitara or Orang it could be disastrous for the already struggling rhino populations in these areas."

Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India further added, "It is interesting to note the cyclic nature of the poaching trend between India and Nepal. In the year 2006, Nepal lost a large number of rhinos while India faced the brunt in the year 2007. The pattern of killings and the methods used is suggestive that the same nexus of poachers and traders is operating in both India and Nepal. Therefore, there is a need to undertake strong co-ordinated efforts by both countries to curb rhino poaching in this region."



© Earthcare Films

TRAFFIC India has committed its support to curb the rhino poaching in this region and is working with the Assam Forest Department on this.

HEADLINES

As you celebrated Diwali, thousands of owls were killed

By Arshad Durrani in New Delhi

AS YOU celebrated Diwali, the thousands of owls were killed... The owls were used in a variety of ways...



OWLS AT A FESTIVAL. Hundreds of owls were killed during Diwali.

DARK SECRETS

It takes up to 48 different operations... to make products because they are so expensive...

Arrested poacher killed 35 tigers in a year

UP Gang Bust A Huge Success, Say Experts

THE NEW YORK TIMES



A tiger in the forest. The poacher was arrested after killing 35 tigers in a year.

UP special task force officers say tiger treads and body parts... The poacher was arrested after killing 35 tigers in a year.

Banned Shahtoosh back in business in the Valley

New Delhi, November 25



ABOUT 100 goats... are used to produce Shahtoosh wool.

BANNED SHAHTOOSH always... has been back in business in the Valley... The wool is used for making shawls and scarves.

CHILLING FACTS... Shahtoosh is made from the underbelly of the goat... It is a highly prized and expensive material.

U.P. new nerve centre of illegal wildlife trade

State a haven for organised crime syndicates

Ally Khan

U.P. has emerged as a global wildlife trade... The state is a haven for organised crime syndicates.

Illegal wildlife trade... is on the rise in U.P. due to the presence of organised crime syndicates.

J&K destroys world's 'largest' fur stockpile

By Sudeep S. Shukla

The huge cache of animal skins... was destroyed in J&K... The stockpile was the largest in the world.

The total haul is worth millions of dollars... The skins were used for making fur coats and other products.

Eighty five ducks illegally smuggled into city caught

Ducks were brought from Allahabad, Kolkata

By OUR CORRESPONDENT

Mumbai, Oct 2... Eighty five ducks were illegally smuggled into the city... They were caught by the police.

The ducks were brought from Allahabad and Kolkata... They were used for illegal trade.

975 star tortoises rescued, sent to Sanjay Gandhi park for care

NITYA KAUSHIK

Over 900 more to take care of... The tortoises were rescued from illegal markets... They are being sent to Sanjay Gandhi National Park.

The tortoises were rescued from illegal markets... They are being sent to Sanjay Gandhi National Park for care.

The tortoises were rescued from illegal markets... They are being sent to Sanjay Gandhi National Park for care.

The tortoises were rescued from illegal markets... They are being sent to Sanjay Gandhi National Park for care.

Dead cobra in whisky bottle on display

Forest officials raid club on Residency Road

Express News Service

Bangalore, Dec 15... A dead cobra was found in a whisky bottle... The bottle was on display in a club.

The cobra was found in a whisky bottle... The bottle was on display in a club.

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TRAFFIC the wildlife trade monitoring network is a joint programme of WWF and IUCN The World Conservation Union

TRAFFIC POST

the wildlife trade monitoring network

ISSUE 3
MARCH, 2008

TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



TRAFFIC INDIA
UPDATE



OUTPOST



TRAFFIC
'ALERT'



IN FOCUS

- **South Asia commits to regional co-operation** in controlling wildlife trade
- **'Don't buy trouble'**- TRAFFIC India launches new awareness campaign
- **Indo-Bhutan 'Wildlife Enforcement Training Workshop'** organised by TRAFFIC India
- **Peacock tail feather trade study** conducted by TRAFFIC India
- TRAFFIC India launches **'International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants'** in Uttarakhand

- **Indonesia tightens tortoise trade regulations**
- **Latest news** on the trends in illegal wildlife trade in India



© Samir Sinha

- **Indian Tiger's survival under threat**- Illegal wildlife trade one of the major driving factors



© MKS Pasha

South Asia commits to regional co-operation in controlling wildlife trade

The first Regional Workshop on the South Asia Wildlife Trade Initiative (SAWTI), organised by the Nepal's Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology, SACEP, WWF-Nepal and TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, was held in Kathmandu, Nepal, from 31 January - 1 February 2008.



© Samir Sinha

The workshop was attended by participants from all eight South Asian countries - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, who agreed to a series of joint actions as part of a South Asia Wildlife Trade Initiative (SAWTI), including the establishment of a South Asia Experts Group on Wildlife Trade and the development of a South Asia Regional Strategic Plan on Wildlife Trade (2008-2013). They also called upon the international community to support action in South Asia by providing financial and technical assistance in the implementation of the regional plan.

Following SACEP's (South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme) Governing Council Decision, participants in Kathmandu agreed that the South Asia Wildlife Trade Initiative (SAWTI) and its South Asia Regional Strategic Plan on Wildlife Trade will focus on a number of key areas of work. These include co-operation and co-ordination; effective legislation, policies and law enforcement; sharing knowledge and effective dissemination of information; sustainability of legal trade and livelihoods security; intelligence networks and early warning systems; and capacity building.

SACEP Director-General Dr Arvind A. Boaz emphasised that regional co-operation can provide the best solution for regional problems. "The agreement reached on SAWTI puts in place the foundations for a co-operative effort to crack down on illegal trade and to improve the management of wildlife species that can be legally traded under national laws in the region," Boaz said.

TRAFFIC's Global Programme Co-ordinator, Roland Melisch said that international co-operation and, in particular, regional co-operation is absolutely essential in tackling the challenges of wildlife trade.

The Senior Officer, Anti-smuggling, fraud and organized crime, at the CITES Secretariat, Mr John Sellar, very much welcomed this Initiative. "We look forward to co-operating with SAWTI, which we believe offers considerable potential in combating illegal trade in wildlife, whilst also working to ensure that legal trade in wildlife is

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sustainable and benefits local communities in this part of the world."The decisions taken at this workshop will be presented for endorsement at the Ministerial level at the Eleventh Meeting of the Governing Council of SACEP taking place later this year in New Delhi, India.

For more information, please visit: www.wwfindia.org/traffic or www.traffic.org

'Don't buy trouble' - TRAFFIC India launches new awareness campaign



TRAFFIC India has launched its latest awareness campaign with the release of four eye-catching posters that advise tourists to be careful of what they buy as souvenirs during their travels. These have been designed with support from WWF-India and show models handcuffed next to confiscated wildlife goods. The four posters are: **Shawls of Shame** (Crime Wearing a Shahtoosh shawl without an ownership certificate); **Blood Ivory** (Crime Buying ivory products); **Skinned Fashion** (Crime Carrying a reptile skin handbag made from a protected species in India); **Marine Plunder** (Crime Possessing protected marine products such as Giant Clams, seashells, corals etc. that are illegal in India.)



Targeted mainly at domestic and foreign tourists, the posters convey a clear message that it is not only the poachers and traders who are liable for punishment under India's Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, but also those who purchase and use such products. The end consumer is as much a partner in wildlife crime as the trader or the offender is liable to hefty imprisonment.

If found guilty, the fines and up to seven years of imprisonment. Ignorance of the law can not be taken as an excuse.

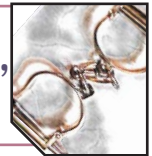


The campaign has received extensive media support and the posters have appeared on the front pages of national newspapers. Currently, TRAFFIC India is in the process of disseminating these posters through various state tourism offices across the country.

TRAFFIC India plans to put these up at strategic locations for better visibility and high impact.

To download the posters, please visit www.wwfindia.org or www.traffic.org

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Corals worth INR 25 lakh seized

In January 2008, a CID officer raided a marine products business house in Bangalore and recovered reef-building corals weighing 180 kg worth INR 25 lakh or approximately USD 62 000.

The business house raided was Amity Aquatech Pvt. Ltd. in BTM Layout. The caretaker Jimmy George (27) was arrested while the owner Sabastian John is still at large. The head office of the company is in Kochi.

Corals were also seized in Bangalore city in August from two marine stalls at Sringer Complex on MG Road and another shop in JP Nagar.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

All reef-building corals Scleractinians, Black corals Antipatharians, Organ Pipe coral *Tubipora musica*, Fire coral *Millipora* and Sea Fans *Gorgonians* are protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. Under this, any form of extraction, exploitation or trade of these species is prohibited. All reef building corals, Black corals, Organ Pipe coral and Fire corals are listed in Appendix II of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

Despite the legal protection, such reports suggest that the trade in many coral species continues in India. The hard corals are exploited for use in construction, production of lime and for other industrial purposes while soft corals are sold as curios and for making ornaments and other decorative items. Besides the clandestine market for corals in India and other countries, many protected species are also sold openly at beaches especially in south India.

Coral exploitation and trade can be very hard to curtail because corals are often collected in offshore areas seldom patrolled by national authorities.

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Indo-Bhutan 'Wildlife Enforcement Training Workshop' organised by TRAFFIC India



TRAFFIC India with support from WWF-India, Bodoland Territorial Council and the Assam Forest Department organised an Indo-Bhutan 'Wildlife Enforcement Training Workshop' at Manas Tiger Reserve from 7-9 January 2008. The main aim of the workshop was to enhance skills of the enforcement agencies working to curb illegal wildlife trade and to improve cross-border co-operation and co-ordination between the two countries on such issues.

Participants included officials from the Manas Tiger Reserve and the various Forest Divisions of Assam in India. From Bhutan, there were officials from the Forest Divisions, Royal Manas National Park, Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park and their Nature Conservation Division.

Training was given on the legal and technical aspects of fighting wildlife cases and curbing illegal wildlife trade through a series of case studies, group discussions and presentations. Mr. Sangay from the Nature Conservation Division-Bhutan, shared information about the nature and scale of wildlife trade issues in his country.

Such joint training programmes are an important means to strengthen regional co-operation and collaboration to fight the trans-national illegal wildlife trade in the region.

Peacock tail feather trade study conducted by TRAFFIC India



A boy selling fans and other products made out of peacock tail feather

On behalf of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, TRAFFIC India undertook a short study on the trade in Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus* tail feathers in India. This survey was conducted between August - October 2007 in Delhi, some parts of Rajasthan and Agra in Uttar Pradesh. An additional one-week survey was undertaken in January 2008 in Ahmedabad and Bhuj in Gujarat. The principal investigator was Abrar Ahmed, a well-known ornithologist. The detailed report was submitted to the Ministry in March 2008.

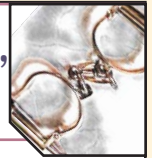
The main focus of the study was to identify the source of peacock tail feathers in trade in India. Many reports across the country had suggested that peacocks were being killed for their feathers which

were then used to make fans and other decorative items. There were also reports of poaching of the species for meat.

The Indian Peafowl is the national bird of India and is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. Under this, poaching of the species is prohibited but there is an exemption on the domestic trade in naturally shed peacock feathers and articles and trophies made from them. However, export of feathers or articles made from them is completely banned.

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TRAFFIC 'Alert'



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When raw coral enters the market, it is difficult and sometimes impossible to identify particular species. Once the coral is dried and processed, identification becomes even more difficult. They are often combined with other goods or marine products (especially shells) in official customs statistics. Mixed consignments of shells and corals might be labeled as "shell" on trade permits and documents.

Presently, there is no concrete information on the level of coral trade in India and much research is needed to understand the latest trends and trade routes.

Source:

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Cities/Bangalore/Corals_worth_Rs_25_lakh_seized/articleshow/2744724.cms

21 Trade in Corals by Fahmeeda Hanfee ; <http://www.fao.org/docrep/X5627E/x5627e0r.htm>

Alleged Tiger poacher arrested for smuggling 600 Tiger skins

Abdul Khader Chaudhury (69) and two other wildlife traders from Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh, were arrested by the Karnataka State CID Forest Cell in February 2008 in Hyderabad for allegedly smuggling around 600 Tiger skins outside the country over a 20 year period.

Prabhakar Keshav Gajakosh, a politician and timber contractor, earlier registered with the Forest Department from Hubli, was arrested for alleged wildlife crimes last year. Gajakosh said he used to visit Chaudhury to buy or sell wildlife pelts and had known Chaudhury for 25 years. Chaudhury is one of India's oldest wildlife traders along with Sansar Chand.

Chaudhury's name also figured when the Special Task Force, Uttar Pradesh, arrested Shabeer Hasan Qureshi along with his sons Siraj and Sarfaraz, from Allahabad in December last year. Qureshi was trading skins with Gajakosh and Chaudhury.

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Based on data emerging during the study and from other relevant literature and reports it was learnt that Agra, being the centre of the trade in peacock tail feathers in India, has an entire community involved in this trade. Peacock feathers were however on sale in every location surveyed. It was estimated that around 20 million peacock tail feathers are in trade annually in the areas surveyed.

No evidence was found to suggest that peacock tail feathers were being collected for trade through poaching of birds. Three distinctive communities, the Harries, Kanjars and Khatkis, are associated with the trade in peacock feathers and are said to be dependent on it for at least part of the year.

This study concluded that the present trade in tail feathers of Indian Peafowl in India is not a threat to the species. However, there is a need to undertake detailed investigation into the poaching of the species for meat and other

TRAFFIC India launches 'International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants' in Uttarakhand



On 28 February 2008, TRAFFIC India organized a workshop to introduce the International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (ISSC-MAP) at Dehradun in Uttarakhand. This was the first initiative of its kind in the country to standardize collection and utilisation of medicinal and aromatic plant species from the wild. The workshop was attended by a diverse audience of over 80 people, including key policy makers; Forest Department officials both serving and retired; officials from the Indian Forest Research Institute, State and National Medicinal Plants Board; MAP cultivators and collectors, traders, WWF-India and other NGOs.

As an important source of valuable medicinal plants, Uttarakhand in the Western Himalayan region was identified as one of the first five target areas for the implementation of the project. The others are Karnataka in India, Nepal (Eastern Himalayan region), Cambodia (Greater Mekong region), Brazil (Amazon region) and Lesotho (Southern Africa).

The ISSC-MAP wild collection standard has been drawn up following extensive consultation with plant experts and the herbal products industry worldwide and was developed by WWF Germany, in co-operation with the IUCN/SSC Species Survival Commission Medicinal Plant Specialist Group (MPSG), TRAFFIC and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN).

ISSC-MAP promotes appropriate management of wild plant populations to ensure those used in medicines and cosmetics are not over-exploited. ISSC-MAP is based on six principles: maintaining wild MAP resources, preventing negative environmental impacts, legal compliance, respecting customary rights, applying responsible management practices, and applying responsible business practices.

Speaking at the project's launch, Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India, commented: "Now that a standard for sustainable use of valuable wild plants has been established, TRAFFIC India is delighted to be at the forefront of putting its recommendations into practice.

Continued on page 5

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Continued from page 3

Chaudhury, an iron worker and a dealer of skins of domestic animals, is a resident of Indiranagar, Mushrafabad, Hyderabad.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

If convicted, Chaudhury's arrest could prove to be a breakthrough in combatting illegal wildlife trade rackets operating across the country. The enforcement agencies are to be commended for taking wildlife crime seriously.

Source:

<http://deccanherald.com/Content/Feb192008/state2008021953047.asp>

Five rare Clouded Leopard skins seized in West Bengal

The Wildlife Division- 3 of the West Bengal Forest Department, seized five skins of the endangered Clouded Leopard on the Indo- Bhutan border on 25 February 2008. The illegal haul comprised skins of three adult Clouded Leopards and two cubs.

Acting on a tip off, the District Forest Officer Cooch Behar, Manindra Biswas, conducted the raid and arrested a resident of Jaigaon while he was on a bus to Siliguri, from where he intended to slip into Nepal. According to senior Forest Department personnel, the accused is said to be one of the most wanted wildlife traders on the Indo-Bhutan border.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Clouded Leopard *Neofelis nebulosa* enjoys the same protection status as the Tiger in India. It is also listed in Appendix I of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). All domestic and international trade in the species and its derivatives is prohibited.

Kristin Nowell & Peter Jackson in their report 'Status Survey & Conservation Action Plan: Wild Cats' released in 1996 reported "Clouded Leopard pelts were the most commonly available felid pelts in a survey of black market wildlife traders in southeastern China (Low 1991).

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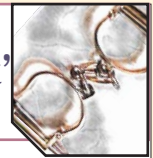
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Sri G.A. Kinhal of the Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT) and a Member of the Decision Group of the ISSC MAP explained the ISSC MAP guidelines in detail and the key steps forward for its field level implementation.

Sri B. S. Sajwan, CEO-National Medicinal Plants Board, Govt. of India described the new project as an important initiative not only in Uttarakhand, but also for the whole of India.

In India, ISSC-MAP is being implemented by TRAFFIC India in co-operation with the Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT). The National Medicinal Plants Board, Govt. of India is overseeing the implementation. The project is funded by the German government's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Continued from page 4

Taiwanese were the main buyers. In Taiwan, where Clouded Leopards are now either very rare or extinct, Nowell (1990) reported that small numbers of imported pelts are sold to aborigines to make traditional ceremonial jackets. Pelts have also been reported on sale in urban markets from Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Nepal, and Thailand (Salter 1983, Chazee 1990, Humphrey and Bain 1990, MacKinnon 1990, Van Gruisen and Sinclair 1992; R. Salter, TRAFFIC Southeast Asia in litt. 1993). Clouded Leopards have been featured on the menu of restaurants in Thailand and China, which cater to wealthy Asian tourists (Anon. 1988)".

In India, the Clouded Leopard is found in north Bengal, Sikkim, Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. Given the low density of the species in India, it is shocking to learn that five Clouded Leopard skins were seized from a single trader.

Sources:
http://www.headlinesindia.com/state/index.jsp?news_code=71398

Four hundred live mongooses sold at a fair in Orissa

The illegal trade in mongooses is continuing unabated in Orissa, and 16 were seized from a fair in Bhubaneswar in March 2008.

Forest officials seized the animals close to a Shiva temple at Paramhansa village near Cuttack town. The sale of wild animals and birds is at its peak in the area around the festival of Shivratri.

As in previous years, around 400 live mongooses were sold at Paramahansa fair in March at prices ranging from INR 50 to INR 60 each. Traditional bird and animal trappers known as 'kelas' were found with stocks of live mongooses, Grey Hornbills and parakeets that were being sold as pets.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

It is disturbing to learn that live mongooses are being sold in such large numbers in a fair in Orissa every year.
 Continued on page 6

OUTPOST: Indonesia tightens tortoise trade regulations



© Chris R. Shepherd/TRAFFIC Southeast Asia

Indian Star Tortoises

In response to TRAFFIC's report- An overview of the regulation of the freshwater turtle and tortoise pet trade in Jakarta, Indonesia released early this year, the Indonesian Government acted swiftly to tighten up regulations on import of exotic species of tortoises and turtles into the country.

The report highlights the rampant illegal trade in tortoises and turtles in the pet markets of the nation's capital, Jakarta. TRAFFIC investigators found 48 species of freshwater turtles and tortoises for sale, more than half of them exotic species, and the vast majority illegally obtained, including five non-native species listed in Appendix I of CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). Incidentally CITES Appendix I listing prohibits commercial international trade in a species.

Following the revelations, Indonesia has written to the CITES Management Authorities (those government agencies responsible for implementing CITES regulations) in India, Madagascar, China, USA, Brazil, Peru, Chile, Equador, Guatemala and to the CITES Secretariat.

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From 1 March 2008, all specimens of CITES-listed freshwater turtles and tortoises exported to Indonesia will require an import permit and those without will be disposed of. Under CITES, no import permit is needed for Appendix II-listed species unless required by national law. Countries of origin will also need to notify Indonesia before issuing export permits.

“This is the kind of swift and decisive action that is needed to stamp out the illegal trade in threatened tortoise and turtle species,” said Azrina Abdullah, Director of TRAFFIC Southeast Asia. The government has also announced the introduction of a CITES Management Authority registration scheme for privately owned tortoises and turtles already in Indonesia.

One of the commonest exotic species at the Jakarta market is the Indian Star Tortoise *Geochelone elegans*. Although listed in Appendix I of CITES, it is completely protected in its range States of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka and therefore specimens sold in Jakarta are likely to be ones illegally smuggled from these countries.

The full report can be downloaded at <http://www.traffic.org/home/2008/2/14/indonesia-tightens-tortoise-trade-regulations.html>

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Thirty eight kilograms of ivory seized in Karnataka

A forest mobile squad comprising officials of the Sakleshpur Forest Department and Sakleshpur police arrested three people on 11 January 2008 and seized two elephant tusks together weighing 38 kg, in Hassan district in Karnataka. Two others escaped as the police stopped the vehicle. The ivory was reportedly being transported to Bangalore. The accused appeared before a court in Hassan and were remanded in judicial custody.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

This is one of the many seizures reported from across the country over the last few months. In February 2008, a shopkeeper was arrested in Delhi for openly trading in ivory products. Similarly, two full-sized tusks were seized in Dahisar, Mumbai, in March 2008 from individuals who were searching for prospective customers at a bus depot.

A TRAFFIC report released in 2003 indicated that illicit trade in Elephant ivory continues in India despite a national ban since the 1970s. In 2007, TRAFFIC India recorded more than 250 kgs of ivory seized from across the country.

The Indian Elephant *Elephas maximus indicus* is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 under which poaching of the species or trade in ivory is totally prohibited. The species have been declared Endangered by IUCN and international trade in elephant parts is banned under CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

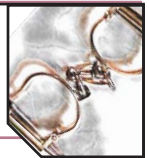
Sources:

<http://www.hinduonnet.com/2008/01/12/stories/2008011260640800.htm>

<http://www.dnaindia.com/report.asp?newsid=1155225>

<http://ads.indiatimes.com/ads.dll/clickthrough?slotid=1456> <http://epaper.timesofindia.com/Daily/skins/TOI/navigator.asp?Daily=CAP&login=default>

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Continued from page 5

This is despite the fact that all mongoose species found in India are protected under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

Mongoose play a significant role in the well-being of our ecosystem and this incident only confirms the threats they face today. Found both in forest areas and around open cultivated fields, mongooses prey on rats, mice, snakes, lizards, frogs, insects and other small animals. Due to their predatory diet, mongooses are considered the farmer's friend.

There are three species of mongoose recorded in wildlife trade in India - the Small Indian Mongoose *Herpestes auropunctatus*, Striped-necked Mongoose *Herpestes vitticollis* and the Indian Grey Mongoose *Herpestes edwardsii*. Until 2002, slaughter of mongooses for their hair to make paint brushes, for meat to be eaten by tribes and for taxidermy, was extensive. However today, the taxidermy trade in mongoose species is believed to have declined.

Numerous evidence and reports indicate that mongooses continue to be killed for their hair. In December 2007, a CNN-IBN special investigation team went undercover to expose the on-going trade in mongoose hair paint brushes in the national capital. Based on their information, 2000 paint brushes made from the mongoose hair were seized from a shop in *Nai Sadak* and from a paint brush manufacturer in Delhi.

Furthermore, Indian Grey Mongoose is reported to be used by snake charmers and madaris for street performances.

Sources:

http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/Planet_SOs/Flora_Fauna/Illegal_mongoose_trade_continues_in_Orissa/articleshow/2854897.cms

<http://www.wii.gov.in/envis/envisdec99/p113-115.htm>

http://www.wildlifetrustofindia.org/html/news/2002/021210_ban_mongoose.htm

IN FOCUS:

Indian Tiger's survival under threat- Illegal wildlife trade one of the major driving factors



© Samir Sinha

The long-awaited report on the status of tigers, co-predators and prey in India, released on 11 February 2008 by the Government of India, showed the country at high risk of losing its national animal. Surveys conducted in 2006/ 2007 indicate the Tiger *Panthera tigris* population in India is between 1165 and 1657. The current estimation appears to be more accurate than those undertaken earlier.

The Tiger today is threatened by a number of factors such as habitat loss due to agricultural and developmental activities, poaching for trade, Human-Wildlife conflict and others. However, illegal wildlife trade remains one of the main contributors for the declining Tiger numbers in the country. Reports have confirmed that almost every part of the Tiger's body is traded - Tiger skin is used to make robes and its head is used as trophies. Tiger bones and skull are used in traditional medicines in East Asian countries, particularly China and Tiger bones are also superstitiously used to scare away evil influences. Tiger bone wine is extremely popular in Japan, Tiger claws are used as talismans, Tiger fat is used in balms and potions, Tiger penis is used as an aphrodisiac and Tiger whiskers are thought to cure toothaches.

There is little demand for these products in India, so most of the poaching is done to supply to markets elsewhere. International markets for illegal Tiger parts exist despite the countries where the majority of the illegal trade occurs being signatories to CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora)..

Over the last year, TRAFFIC India recorded 27 seizures of Tiger skins from various parts of India, but given the clandestine nature of the trade, these seizures can only represent the tip of the iceberg. According to Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India, "Given the precarious number of Tigers left in the wild in India, it is necessary to step up protection measures and strengthen enforcement agencies to fight wildlife crime. It is also necessary to work with neighbouring countries to understand the trade routes and dynamics so that illegal trade in Tiger parts is curtailed."

Sujoy Banerjee, Director-Species Conservation Programme, WWF-India added "Besides protecting Tigers inside reserves it is also necessary to protect Tigers outside Reserves, National Parks and Sanctuaries. If attention is not paid to their conservation, we will lose Tigers altogether. The time has come for the government and all other institutions and agencies to show serious commitment to Tiger conservation if at all we wish to see Tigers in the wild in India in the future".

SIGNPOST: Other significant news stories to read

Sixty one poachers surrender in

Manas - A group of 61 poachers surrendered to authorities in Assam in February 2008 and also handed in 26 homemade weapons. The poachers had been operating in the vicinity of Manas National Park, placing its wildlife under extreme pressure. To read more log on to http://www.telegraphindia.com/1080226/jsp/frontpage/story_8949335.jsp#

From Tibet to Kashmir, shahtoosh smuggle thrives - Shahtoosh, the world's finest wool, is still being smuggled from Tibet to Kashmir, in defiance of a worldwide ban aimed at saving the highly endangered Tibetan antelope. To read more log on to <http://in.reuters.com/article/lifestyleMolt/idINS2221101520080222>

Thirty trucks of red timber confiscated in Imphal - In January 2008, as many as 30 truckloads of red sander wood were driven across six states before being stopped at the last frontier the Manipur township of Moreh, bordering Myanmar. The entire consignment would probably have been smuggled out to China via Myanmar had Assam Rifles personnel not detained it and asked the civil administration to verify the validity of the documents the drivers were carrying. To read more log on to http://www.telegraphindia.com/1080111/jsp/northeast/story_8767689.jsp

74 leopards rounded up in '07 outside Gir forest area- In 2007, a total of 74 leopards were caught from the revenue area surrounding Gir forests following complaints from the general public. To read more log on to <http://www.indianexpress.com/story/256731.html>

Snake venom smuggling on the rise in Kerala - Kerala is fast turning into a hub of snake venom smugglers. In the last three months alone the forest officials have caught four gangs and they say this is just the tip of the iceberg. To read more log on to <http://www.ndtv.com/convergence/ndtv/story.aspx?id=NEWEN20080042565&ch=2/28/2008%208:38:00%20AM>

HEADLINES

Rhinos to find a safe home in Manas soon



By Murali Dubey in New Delhi

There are plans to relocate 20 rhinos to the Manas National Park, Assam, a project set to conclude

Forest Act comes into force, green activists cry foul

After 60 years, the Centre has restored the rights of tribal, but the new Forest Act, which is set to come into force on March 2, has been widely criticised by green activists. The new act is seen as a step back for the environment, as it gives more powers to the government and less to the people. It also allows for the acquisition of land for forest purposes, which is a major concern for tribal communities. The act is expected to be implemented in the coming months.

TIGER TIGER FADING FAST. Bitter Truth: The tiger population in India has fallen by 96% since 1973. The 2002 census figure of 1,411 tigers was a 96% drop from the 4,061 tigers recorded in 1973. The tiger is the national animal of India. It is found in the forests of India, Nepal, and Bangladesh. The tiger is a big cat and is known for its stripes. It is a carnivore and eats meat. It is a predator and kills other animals. It is a scavenger and eats dead animals. It is a scavenger and eats dead animals. It is a scavenger and eats dead animals.

Kerala hub of global snake venom 'racket'



Worldwide demand for snake venom has led to a racket in Kerala, India. The venom is used for various purposes, including the production of antivenom. The racket involves the illegal trade of venom, which is often sourced from wild snakes. The trade is controlled by a few powerful individuals who profit from the high demand for venom. The government has taken steps to regulate the trade, but the racket continues to operate in the shadows.

50 jackals poisoned to death in Lakhimpur Kheri

In Lakhimpur Kheri, India, 50 jackals were found dead after being poisoned. The incident is believed to be the result of a conflict between the jackals and the local farmers. The jackals were poisoning the sugarcane crops, which led to the farmers poisoning them. The incident highlights the need for a sustainable solution to the conflict between humans and wildlife. The forest department is investigating the case and has taken steps to protect the remaining jackals.



WILD WORK: Dead Jackals in UP district

A PRECIOUS LIFE GONE WASTE



MAN VERSUS NATURE: Children sit near the body of a female leopard, killed by the local residents, in Guwahati on Monday

81 lions dead in 2 years

In Gir National Park, India, 81 lions have died in the last two years. The deaths are attributed to a combination of factors, including poaching, disease, and natural causes. The population of lions in the park has declined significantly, which is a major concern for conservationists. The government has taken steps to protect the remaining lions, but the decline continues. The park is a natural habitat for lions and is home to many other species of animals.

Watery grave for gharialys. The famed Indian cousin of crocodiles are dying in scores in the Chambal Sanctuary to an illness that's not even known, leaving behind a remedy. The gharial is a large crocodile-like animal that is found in the Chambal River in India. It is a critically endangered species and is being hunted for its skin and bones. The gharial is also being killed by pollution and habitat loss. Conservationists are working to protect the remaining gharials and to restore their natural habitat.

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TRAFFIC the wildlife trade monitoring network is a joint programme of WWF IUCN

TRAFFIC POST

the wildlife trade monitoring network

ISSUE 4
JULY, 2008

TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



TRAFFIC INDIA UPDATE

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- **TRAFFIC India accelerates implementation of ISSC-MAP in India** Pg 2
- **TRAFFIC India scales up its capacity building programme; workshops held to strengthen law enforcement** Pg 4
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- **Metal detectors help strengthen security at Kanha** Pg 6

© Forest Department, Kanha Tiger Reserve



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OUTPOST



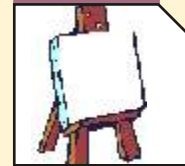
CITES UPDATE



IN FOCUS



TRAFFIC ALERT



SIGNPOST

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© Samir Sinha

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© WWF-Canon/ Jeff FOOTT

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South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) established



During the Eleventh Meeting of the Governing Council of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) held in Jaipur in May 2008, eight member countries pledged to work together to tackle illegal wildlife trade in the region.

In a Ministerial statement, known as the “Jaipur Declaration”, countries in the region supported the establishment of a South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN). The countries also endorsed a South Asia regional strategic plan on illegal wildlife trade that will focus on certain key areas of activity, including co-operation and co-ordination; effective legislation, policies and law enforcement; sharing knowledge and effective dissemination of information; intelligence networks and early warning systems; and capacity building.

Environment Ministers and senior delegates from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka present at this meeting issued a Joint Statement stressing the importance of mutual networking and technical support to address the needs of the region in combating illegal wildlife trade. “Regional co-operation can provide the best solution for regional problems,” the Ministers said.

Dr Arvind A. Boaz, Director-General of SACEP, an inter-government organisation established in 1982 for promoting regional co-operation in South Asia in the environment field, said “This is the first comprehensive wildlife trade initiative of its kind in South Asia and SACEP is confident it will lead to further commitment in the region, and even closer South-South co-operation to address illegal wildlife trade problems effectively”.

The Head of TRAFFIC India, Samir Sinha, who was also present at this meeting said that regional co-operation was absolutely essential in tackling the challenges of wildlife trade. “TRAFFIC warmly welcomes the initiative by all eight countries of South Asia in taking this important step of coming together and seeking to address poaching and illegal trade as a region. We look forward to helping make this initiative a conservation success”.



Distinguished delegates from various South Asian countries along with His Excellency Shri S.K. Singh, Governor of Rajasthan and Smt. Vasundhara Raje, Chief Minister of Rajasthan

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TRAFFIC India accelerates implementation of ISSC-MAP in India



TRAFFIC India is helping implement the International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (ISSC-MAP), which promotes appropriate management of wild plant populations to ensure those used in medicines and cosmetics are not over-exploited. ISSC-MAP is based on six principles: maintaining wild MAP resources, preventing negative environmental impacts, legal compliance, respecting customary rights, applying responsible management and business practices.

The ISSC-MAP wild collection standard was drawn up following extensive consultation with plant experts and the herbal products industry worldwide and was developed by WWF Germany, in co-operation with the IUCN/SSC Species Survival Commission Medicinal Plant Specialist Group (MPSG), TRAFFIC and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN).

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© MKS Pasha

TRAFFIC staff interacting with visitors at the international herbal Summit

In India, ISSC-MAP is being implemented by TRAFFIC India in co-operation with the Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT). Dr G A Kinhal, Joint-Director FRLHT and Member of the Decision Group of the ISSC-MAP is guiding the launch and implementation of ISSC-MAP in India.

The National Medicinal Plants Board, Government of India is supporting the implementation. The project is funded by the German government's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

ISSC-MAP promoted at International Summit: TRAFFIC India, supported by WWF-India, helped promote ISSC-MAP at an International Summit on Medicinal and Aromatic Products and Spices organized by ASSOCHAM (The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India) in New Delhi, India, from 4-6 April 2008.

The Summit brought together cultivators, traders and manufacturers of medicinal and aromatic plants and spices to showcase continental, regional and local competencies in

this field; and to promote worldwide the upcoming business of herbals and spices. The principal guest at the summit was Smt. Panabaaka Lakshmi, Honorable Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

TRAFFIC India used the Summit as an opportunity to introduce the ISSC-MAP standard to a large national and international audience. Dr G A Kinhal of FRLHT spoke of the protocols that govern the export and import of medicinal and aromatic plants and the need for standardizing sustainable harvesting procedures. He then introduced ISSC-MAP and urged all stakeholders to implement it in their respective States. The presentation was very well received by the diverse cross-section of stakeholders of MAP trade.

ISSC-MAP launched in Karnataka: Following the successful launch of ISSC-MAP at Dehradun, Uttarakhand in February 2008, the standard was introduced to a workshop in Bangalore, jointly hosted by FRLHT, TRAFFIC and the Karnataka Forest Department on 30 May 2008. Mr A.K. Verma, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), Karnataka, inaugurated the workshop which was attended by over 40 participants, including key policy makers, Forest Department officials both serving and retired, officials from the Institute of Wood Science and Technology (IWST), Peace Institute, educational institutes, pharmaceutical companies, MAP cultivators and collectors, traders and others.

The Bangalore-based FRLHT, a recognized scientific and research organization, is leading the ISSC-MAP initiative in Karnataka. The Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India has designated FRLHT as a National Centre of Excellence for medicinal plants and traditional knowledge.

As an important source of valuable medicinal plants, Karnataka was identified as one of the first five target areas for the implementation of the project. The others are Uttarakhand in India, Nepal (Eastern Himalayan region), Cambodia (Greater Mekong region), Brazil (Amazon region) and Lesotho (Southern Africa).

Two sites have been selected in Karnataka and two species identified at each site for the implementation of ISSC-MAP. At Shirgungi village in Katgal Range, Honnavar Forest Division, the species selected are *Salacia chinensis* and *Embelia tsjeriam-cottam* and at Illemanne village in Tirthahalli Range, Shimoga Forest Division, the species selected are *Ailanthus triphyssa* and *Myristica malabarica*.



TRAFFIC India's banner on resource security

TRAFFIC India scales up its capacity building programme; workshops held to strengthen law enforcement



TRAFFIC has identified 'Capacity Building' as one of the significant components of its overall strategy in India. Under this programme, TRAFFIC provides training and inputs to a diverse group of officials working on wildlife enforcement related issues. The programme aims to improve understanding amongst the enforcement agencies about wildlife laws and their implementation. Recently, TRAFFIC India has conducted several capacity building workshops for key stakeholders. Some of these are as follows:

Workshops on wildlife conservation for the Judiciary: TRAFFIC India and WWF, in partnership with Karnataka Judicial Academy and Karnataka Forest Department, held a two day orientation programme on wildlife conservation for the Judiciary in Karnataka.

The workshop was held at the Karnataka Judicial Academy, Bangalore, from 7-8 June 2008 and was inaugurated by the Honorable Chief Justice of Karnataka Cyriac Joseph. Honorable Justice SR Bannurmah, Judge-High Court of Karnataka and President -Karnataka Judicial Academy presided over the inaugural function, which was graced by 18 other Senior Judges of the Karnataka High Court.

The workshop's principal aim was to sensitize the Judiciary to issues related to wildlife conservation. The Judiciary plays a significant role in championing the cause of forest and biodiversity conservation, and the workshop provided a timely update on the status of Forest and Wildlife legislations, International Conventions on related issues and enforcement of wildlife laws in India.

A total of 55 members of the Karnataka Judiciary and 10 Senior Officials of the Karnataka Forest Department participated from across the State.

Honorable Chief Justice of Karnataka Cyriac Joseph said, "Judges should be sensitised to various provisions of the Wildlife Protection Act and forest offences. This would help them to handle cases better". He further said, "The judiciary has always been supportive of wildlife and the environment".



© MKS Pasha



© MKS Pasha

Participants in training at the Wildlife Institute of India

The workshop was successful in generating interest among the participants about curbing illegal wildlife trade and the implementation of wildlife laws. Immediately after this, a request was made to TRAFFIC India to conduct a similar workshop for the Honorable Judges of the Karnataka High Court.

Enforcement training workshop for officials from the Government of Nepal: TRAFFIC India and the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, organized an enforcement training workshop for officials from the Government of Nepal. The workshop was held at the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun, from 13-14 May 2008 and was followed by a field trip to Corbett Tiger Reserve.

The objective of the workshop was to strengthen cross-border co-operation and sharpen the skills required by the participants to curb illegal wildlife trade in their country.

Continued from page 4

The training included modules on wildlife forensics, role of CITES, evaluating the scene of wildlife crime, setting up and handling information networks, conducting search and seizure investigations and developing documentation required for successful prosecution in a court of law. Eleven officials from various Protected Areas of Nepal and the CITES Management Authority, Government of Nepal participated in the training.

The faculty for the workshop included Mr P R Sinha and Dr S P Goyal from the Wildlife Institute of India, Mr M P Singh, retired DIG from the Central Bureau of Investigation, Mr Kumar Vishwajeet IPS, Uttarakhand Police, Mr SK Mukherjee (ex-Director WII), Mr Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India, Mr Khalid Pasha, Co-ordinator for TRAFFIC India and Mr James Compton, Asia/Pacific Programme Co-ordinator for TRAFFIC International.

The training was followed by a visit to Corbett Tiger Reserve where participants had the opportunity to share experiences on patrolling, fire protection, habitat management and visitor management. This exchange programme was made possible through the initiative and support of the WWF Nepal office.

Enforcement training workshop held at Pench Tiger Reserve: TRAFFIC India with support from WWF-India collaborated with the National Tiger Conservation Authority, Government of India and the Forest Department, Madhya Pradesh, to conduct a wildlife enforcement training workshop in Pench Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh, from 24–25 May 2008. The workshop was attended by 35 officials from the largest tiger-bearing forests of India, spread across 12 protected areas encompassing the states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

Resource persons included Mr P R Sinha and Dr S P Goyal from the Wildlife Institute of India; Mr Mahendra Vyas, Advocate-Supreme Court and member of the Central Empowered Committee; Mr Keshav Kumar IGP-CID, Gujarat; Mr Sandeep Mittal, Zonal Director - Narcotics Control Bureau, New Delhi and Mr Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India.

During the workshop, knowledge and skills on wildlife forensic techniques, implementation of wildlife laws and policies were shared with field managers. The participants were also given a taster of the latest tools and technologies for curbing illegal trade. A hands-on training session on the use of deep-search metal detectors for locating metal traps inside forest areas was also conducted.

TRAFFIC 'Alert' 

India has the caviar, covertly

Despite a red alert on caviar trade from the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), lack of co-ordination between India's Wildlife Crime Bureau and the Customs department has ensured that imports continue.

Most five-star hotels in Mumbai serve or use caviar in their kitchens. A 30 g serving of caviar, which two friends can polish off over a quick drink, costs around INR10 000 (USD230) at these hotels.

“We serve caviar as a dish and as a garnish, but you will not find it on the menu,” said a spokesperson for Leela Kempinski in Mumbai. The same was the case at the city's J.W. Marriott. The iconic Taj Mahal Hotel in Mumbai, however, has caviar on its menu and its Melba toasts.

The customs department, in a letter to the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, has admitted that it never tried to stop or check import of the contentious item because it did not have sufficient information about the red alert.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Illegal caviar trade has had a devastating effect on the populations of sturgeon species in the wild. The main threats are over-fishing and poaching. In the last 15 years the Caspian Sea sturgeon population has been reduced by 40%.

Caviar, one of the most expensive foods in the world, is the processed, salted eggs of certain species of fish, especially the sturgeon, found in sub tropical and sub-Arctic waters of North America and Eurasia.

In 1998, all 27 sturgeon species were listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and since then, international trade in caviar and other sturgeon products can only take place with the relevant permits.

Continued on page 6

TRAFFIC India steps up awareness campaign; launches film on illegal wildlife trade



TRAFFIC India launched a five minute film on illegal wildlife trade in India to a diverse audience during an event organized by WWF-India and Nokia in Mumbai to announce their partnership for a programme on the conservation of Tigers in India.

The event took place on 18 May 2008 and was attended by many eminent personalities including Priya Dutt, Honourable Member of the Parliament, Jamshed N Godrej, Trustee - WWF and well-known Bollywood & television stars such as Vivek Oberoi, John Abraham, Farouque Sheikh, Dr Anuj Saxena, Mini Mathur, Kabir Khan and Kumar Gaurav.

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TRAFFIC India's film has been produced with support from WWF-India and is an integral component of TRAFFIC's consumer awareness programme entitled Don't buy trouble. The film gives viewers a snapshot of the current trends in illegal wildlife trade and the detrimental effect it has on India's ecosystem. It also looks at domestic and international legislation that protects Indian wildlife.

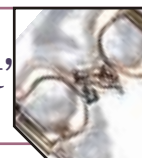
Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India, and James Compton from TRAFFIC International helped distribute copies of the film and encouraged the audience to use them in spreading awareness about illegal wildlife trade.

Compton said, "It is truly rewarding to see the positive response of the audience towards the film."

The film was made by well-known filmmaker, Mr Himanshu Malhotra, and TRAFFIC India plans to release a Hindi version soon.

For a copy of the new film, please contact the TRAFFIC India office in New Delhi.

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Continued from page 5

However in January 2006, CITES imposed a worldwide ban on the trade in caviar and all products of the wild sturgeon, from which the caviar is obtained, after the nine major caviar producing countries failed to convince CITES that their populations of wild sturgeons were sustainable. This ban did not, however, affect caviar produced from farmed sturgeon which is usually prized much less.

This ban was lifted one year later after the Secretariat of CITES confirmed that the main producer states of caviar: Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan agreed to cut the combined catch quotas for sturgeon.

Currently, under CITES Resolution Conf. 12.7, all sturgeon caviar containers in domestic and international trade have to be sealed with non-reusable labels containing details about the source and country of origin of the caviar. This labelling system helps to ensure that all caviar entering the market is from legal sources.

In India, there is a need to raise awareness about the illegal aspects of the caviar trade amongst key enforcement agencies and buyers. With its high value, relatively low bulk, and ease of transportation, caviar offers ample scope for unscrupulous traders to cater to the market demand unmet by restricted legal supplies. Therefore there is a need to build awareness and create a mechanism that will help check the illegal caviar trade which has threatened sturgeon species in the wild.

Source:
<http://www.hindustantimes.com/storypage/storypage.aspx?id=5ae12ff4-999b-431d-ae8-436dc7264e94&&Headline=India+has+the+caviar%2c+covertly>
http://assets.panda.org/downloads/Sturgeon_factsheet.pdf
http://www.nhm.ac.uk/about-us/news/2006/jan/news_7416.html
http://www.panda.org/news_facts/newsroom/news/index.cfm?uNewsID=91220
<http://www.wwf.org.uk/filelibrary/pdf/organisedcrime.pdf>
http://assets.wwf.ch/downloads/2005_12_labeling_leaflet.pdf

Metal detectors help strengthen security at Kanha



© Forest Department, Kanha Tiger Reserve

Forest staff learning to use the metal detectors

TRAFFIC India has donated two deep search metal detectors to the Forest Department at Kanha Tiger Reserve to help them fight poaching activities. The detectors are used to locate metal traps used by poachers to trap wild animals and have been in use by the Forest Department in Kanha since December 2007.

Mr S Sen, Deputy Director of Kanha Tiger Reserve, said, "Two groups of the Forest Department have been trained to use this equipment, which is used for about four hours every day in all kinds of terrain. Though no traps have been located so far, the very presence of detectors acts as a deterrent to the use of metal traps by poachers."

TRAFFIC India will soon make available more such detectors to various Tiger Reserves across the country.

New member joins TRAFFIC India



Col. N. G Sithou joined TRAFFIC India on 15 May 2008 as Officer on Special Duty (on deputation).

Col. Sithou is a serving Indian Army officer and brings with him rich experience of over 29 years in the field. He is the recipient of the 'Chief of Army Staff Commendation Card' for distinguished service.

Col. Sithou can be contacted at nsithou@wwfindia.net

OUTPOST:

Indian Star Tortoises prominent in illegal freshwater turtle and tortoise trade in Bangkok market



© Chris R. Shepherd/TRAFFIC Southeast Asia

Indian Star Tortoise *Geochelone elegans*

Thailand is a major hub for the illegal international trade in freshwater turtles and tortoises and Indian Star Tortoise *Geochelone elegans* ranks high in this trade. This was highlighted in a new TRAFFIC report: *Pet freshwater turtle and tortoise trade in Chatuchak Market, Bangkok, Thailand* released in April by TRAFFIC Southeast Asia.

Surveys at Chatuchak Market (also known as the JJ or Weekend Market) by TRAFFIC investigators found that 25 out of 27 freshwater turtle and tortoise species for sale were non-native, the vast majority

of them illegally imported into the country. The most commonly observed species at Chatuchak was the Radiated Tortoise *Astrochelys radiata*, a species endemic to Madagascar and listed in Appendix I of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), meaning that all commercial international trade in wild Radiated Tortoises is prohibited.

Indian Star Tortoise *Geochelone elegans* was the second most heavily imported CITES II-listed species recorded between 2000–2005, with all 1800 of those imported into Thailand reported to have originated in Lebanon and Kazakhstan and said to be captive bred (with the exception of 150 where no origin is reported, only that they were re-exported from Lebanon).

In 2004-2005 alone, 1700 Indian Star Tortoises were imported into Thailand, allegedly captive bred in Kazakhstan and re-exported via Lebanon, a country which is currently a non-Party to CITES. This is cause for concern and requires further investigation as no export of this species has ever been reported from any CITES affiliated countries to Lebanon or Kazakhstan since the inception of CITES in 1975. Furthermore, Indian Star Tortoise is totally protected in its three Range States, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and export is prohibited from these countries. Furthermore, while it is possible to breed this species in captivity, it is highly unlikely that it is bred in such quantities.

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TRAFFIC 'Alert'



RPSF seizes turtles from Bengal bound train

Over 190 tortoises were seized by Railway Protection Special Force (RPSF) personnel from the Farakka Express at Danapur, Patna in Bihar, on 5 June 2008. The tortoises were being smuggled from Uttar Pradesh to West Bengal. The person carrying the tortoises was arrested while the seized tortoises were sent to the local Sanjay Gandhi Biological Park.

Sources said that RPSF escort personnel were carrying out a routine search of the Farakka Express bogies when they stumbled upon some gunny bags in which the reptiles were kept. Although the person with the tortoises was arrested, the alleged kingpin of the gang managed to escape. The tortoises were to be delivered to a person in West Bengal for onward smuggling to Bangladesh where their flesh is used to make medicines to cure impotency.

This is not a one off case. Earlier, 45 tortoises were seized by the RPSF from the same train at Danapur on 20 May 2008. They were also en route to West Bengal.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

In India, there are 28 species of tortoises and freshwater turtles and 7 species of marine turtles. Almost all of these are protected under the Wildlife Protection Act 1972, under which their trade is totally prohibited.

Despite the legal protection, many species of turtles and tortoises are traded illegally across the border to neighbouring countries. They are either sold as pets or for meat, and traditional Chinese Medicines also use them as an integral ingredient. China is believed to be one of the largest markets for this trade as its native turtle species populations have been depleted dramatically, so they are sourced from countries such as India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal.

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“Dealers stated openly that many specimens were smuggled into and out of Thailand,” said Chris R. Shepherd, Senior Programme Officer for TRAFFIC Southeast Asia. “They even offered potential buyers advice on how to smuggle reptiles through customs and onto aeroplanes.”

Buyers from other parts of Asia, particularly Japan, Malaysia and Singapore, are known to purchase and smuggle large numbers of freshwater turtles and tortoises from the dealers in Chatuchak Market for retail in their respective countries.

Dealers were heard trying to sell the most endangered species on the basis of their rarity value.

“It is a sad day when people use a species's risk of extinction as a selling point,” said Dr Jane Smart, Head of IUCN's Species Programme. “We urge governments and law enforcement agencies to use the information contained in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species to stop this kind of behaviour before it is too late.”

The report recommends amending current national legislation to close loopholes relating to the possession of CITES-listed species. It also encourages enforcement authorities at international border crossings to be more vigilant in preventing the trade in prohibited species through Thailand, and recommends increased co-operation with concerned countries to crack down on the highly organized illegal pet freshwater turtle and tortoise trade.

OUTPOST:

Ninth meeting of the COP to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) held in Germany



The ninth Conference of the Parties (COP 9) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was held from 19–30 May 2008, in Bonn, Germany. More than 4000 delegates representing parties and other governments, UN agencies, inter-governmental, non-governmental, indigenous and local community representatives, academia and industry participated.

The CBD was negotiated under the auspices of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and adopted on 22 May 1992, although it became operational only on 29 December 1993. There are currently 191 parties to the Convention, which aims to promote the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. India became a signatory to the CBD in June 1992 and was one of the most pro-active countries in the formulation of the CBD.

During COP 9 to the CBD, India shared its valuable experiences regarding the major initiatives undertaken by it in a number of areas including: (i) joint forest management; (ii) eco-development committees in protected areas; (iii) access and benefit-sharing regime; (iv) plant breeders and farmer's rights, and (v) social recognition and awards.

According to India, the top priority for the CBD should be to design and implement incentive measures. For this, India suggested undertaking public awareness campaigns on social scarcity values of critical environmental goods; improving market access for non-timber forest resources and strengthening the link between their management and Joint Forestry Management; introducing market-based instruments such as taxes or subsidies when the goods and services are traded or tradable etc.

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TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Continued from page 7

Most of the trade occurs through porous international borders and there is need to sensitize border Paramilitary Forces to the levels of the illicit trade and to strengthen their enforcement actions against it.

Source: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Cities/Patna/RPSF_seizes_turtles_from_Bengal-bound_train/articleshow/3101007.cms
Asian Turtles Are Threatened by Extinction, Pro Wildlife e.V., Germany

Rhino poachers want horn, and tails too

Following reports that fake rhino horns are being circulated in the illegal wildlife market, smugglers are asking poachers to authenticate the horn by providing additional rhino body parts. According to some non-governmental organisations, nails, ears and hoofs are sometimes removed to authenticate the horn.

Assam wildlife officials confirmed they had received similar reports, and knew of a case where a rhino's tail had been removed to confirm the horn was genuine. In April 2008, the Forest Department discovered two rhino carcasses lacking their horns, nails and tails.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

The Great Indian Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* is one of five rhino species found worldwide. It is poached for its horn which is used in traditional medicines in East Asia. In Yemen, the horn is also carved into ceremonial dagger handles known as jambiyas. The horns are usually traded as a single piece and can fetch 510 times the price of an African Rhino horn. The major trade centres in India are Siliguri in West Bengal, and Dimapur in Nagaland, from where the horns are smuggled out to Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar, respectively. The contraband finally finds its way to South-East Asian countries.

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Overall COP 9 to CBD adopted 37 decisions on a wide range of items such as agricultural biodiversity, including biofuels and biodiversity; the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation; invasive alien species; forest biodiversity; incentive measures; the ecosystem approach; progress in implementation of the Strategic Plan towards the target to reduce significantly the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010 and relevant Millennium Development Goals; financial resources and the financial mechanism.

For more details on the summary of decisions undertaken at COP 9, please visit <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/cop/cop-09/official/cop-09-12-en.pdf> or <http://www.iisd.org/2008/06/iisd-rs-summary.html>

CITES UPDATE



This section brings to you latest updates on CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) with a special focus on India-specific issues.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was established as a response to growing concerns that over-exploitation of wildlife through international trade was contributing to the rapid decline of many species of plants and animals around the world. The Convention was signed by representatives from 80 countries in Washington DC, USA, on 3 March 1973, and entered into force on 1 July 1975. There are currently 173 parties, with Oman joining as the 173rd party on 17 June 2008.

The 17th meeting of the Plants Committee and 23rd meeting of the Animals Committee of CITES were held in Geneva, Switzerland from 15–24 April 2008. In session, discussion was as follows:

- 1. *Pterocarpus santalinus*:** IUCN proposed categorizing this Indian species as ‘urgent concern’, noting that an NDF (non-detriment finding) has not been completed and that the species is Endangered. Malaysia noted their confiscation and disposal of three illegal shipments of the species originating in India. The Secretariat said that a major problem with this species is that trade is not being reported, but that this issue does not fall within the purview of NDFs.
- 2. *Rauvolfia serpentina*:** IUCN proposed categorizing the species from Thailand as “least concern”, and those from India and Myanmar as “possible concern.” Thailand noted that it is moving towards carrying out an NDF for the species.
- 3. *Taxus wallichiana*:** IUCN proposed to categorize the species from India as “possible concern”, noting that the export of wild specimens is prohibited, but that this does not appear to apply to cultivated specimens or finished products.

The Plants Committee finally recommended that *Pterocarpus santalinus* and *Rauvolfia serpentina* from India be categorized as “urgent concern”; and that within three months the Management Authority of India should clarify the legislative status of exports of these species and the level of artificial propagation, and that if exports of wild origin are to continue, within two years India should carry out a preliminary inventory of standing stock, establish a revised conservative export quota, and report to the Secretariat.

Additionally, it recommended that *Taxus wallichiana* from India should be categorized as “urgent concern”, and within three months India should confirm that it does not allow export of wild harvested species, and if exports are confirmed the Scientific and Management Authorities of India should confirm with the Secretariat that the existing policies provide an adequate basis for the formulation of NDFs.

Source: <http://www.iisd.ca/download/pdf/enb2162e.pdf> and www.cites.org

TRAFFIC ‘Alert’



Continued from page 8

Reports indicate that six Rhinos were killed in Assam between January and June 2008, and the threat from poaching is rising.

In Africa, the last four Northern White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum cottoni* remaining in the wild are feared to have been killed for their horns by poachers and the subspecies is now believed to be extinct in the wild. Only a few are left in captivity but they are difficult to breed and the number is so low that the subspecies is regarded as biologically unviable. This is a clear indication that the trade in rhino horn if left unchecked can have a disastrous affect.

Source:

<http://www.deccan.com/nation/nationalnews.asp#Rhino%20poachers%20want%20horn,%20tail>

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/environment/article4152951.ece>

Foreigners arrested in Darjeeling for smuggling insects

Two men from the Czech Republic were arrested on 22 June 2008 in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal, after they were found in possession of hundreds of live beetles, butterflies and their larvae.

Forest officials picked up the duo after keeping track of their activities when they toured Srikhola and Rimbick, about 70 km from Darjeeling. The two have been handed over to the police.

More than 200 live beetles and an equal number of butterflies and larvae were found in their possession, along with tools used for trapping the insects. The foreigners will face charges under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Insects are an important component of biodiversity, but seizures like the above clearly indicate that even insects in the wild are not safe anymore.

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TRAFFIC 'Alert'



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Many of these insects are protected under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and some even enjoy the same legal status as the Tiger. Even though the species of butterflies and beetles seized in this case are not clear from the report, the fact that trained scientists are apparently engaging in "bio-piracy" is cause for serious concern.

This is not an isolated case: in July 2007, three French nationals were found with rare species of butterflies and moths in Gangtok, Sikkim. In 2001, two Russian entomologists were also arrested in Sikkim, for attempting to smuggle endangered butterflies, moths and beetles out of India. The total weight of insects seized from them was close to 21 kg.

Source:

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1080623/jsp/nation/story_9449984.jsp

<http://www.newkerala.com/nknews.php?action=fullnews&id=49364>

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/1485855.stm

Endangered wild animal skins found in illicit wildlife haul

In April 2008, Indian authorities arrested two suspected smugglers who were trying to ship eight Tiger, eight Leopard, three Snow Leopard and three python skins to Nepal. Acting on a tip off, the police recovered the 22 skins from the baggage of a retired Indian army soldier and a civilian accomplice in Pratapgarh, a town southeast of Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh.

Since one of the men involved was a retired army officer, the police are investigating the possibility that other army personnel in northern India may be involved in the smuggling ring.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Tiger *Panthera tigris*, Leopard *Panthera pardus*, Snow Leopard *Uncia uncia* and all species of pythons found in India are listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. Under this, hunting or trade in these species is prohibited. Furthermore, international trade in these species is also banned or strictly regulated under CITES.

All the above are endangered in India and because there is little demand for the skins in India, the majority are intended for markets elsewhere.

Many similar seizures have taken place in Uttar Pradesh previously. In January 2000, police with support from TRAFFIC India, seized 4 Tiger skins, 70 Leopard skins, 221 Blackbuck skins, 18 000 Leopard claws, 150 kg of Leopard and Tiger bone, 132 Tiger claws, 2 Leopard teeth and a dried Leopard penis from properties in Khaga in the north Indian State of Uttar Pradesh. This seizure was one the largest hauls of illegal wildlife products ever recorded in India, indicating a scale and level of organization unprecedented within the illegal wildlife trade nexus.

Similarly, on 4 December 2007, the Special Task Force of the Uttar Pradesh Police seized three Tiger skins and three Tiger skeletons in Allahabad. Sixteen people were arrested including wildlife trader Shabeer Hassan Qureshi who is also the prime suspect in the above mentioned Khaga seizure. This could prove to be a major break thorough against wildlife crime in India.

In another seizure, around 20 kg of Tiger bones were recovered from a house in Gurgaon in Haryana on 8 July 2008. The accused in this case is believed to be part of the international network dealing in smuggling of prohibited animal body parts and is active in Uttar Pradesh. The investigating officers suspect that the bones were of a large Tiger from either the state of Uttarakhand or Uttar Pradesh . The seizure was led by the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau.

Source:

<http://edition.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/asiapcf/04/16/tiger.smuggling.ap/>

<http://www.eia-international.org/cgi/reports/reports.cgi?t=template&a=11>

<http://bayturtle.com/wlx/>

<http://www.indianexpress.com/story/332755.html>

Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 8 July 2008

IN FOCUS:
Yarsa Gumba–The Keera Ghaas



Yarsa Gumba *Cordyceps sinensis*, commonly known as Keera Ghaas (insect-grass) in India is becoming a quiet victim of massive exploitation in the country. Originally known only from Nepal, Tibet and Sichuan, Qinghai, Xizang and Yunnan provinces of China, Yarsa Gumba was collected and exported through both regulated and unregulated channels. It is only during the last few years that it has been found in the higher reaches of Arunachal Pradesh and more recently in the Garhwal and Kumaon Himalayas in India.



© Chandra S. Negi

Collected specimens of Yarsa Gumba *Cordyceps sinensis*

Yarsa Gumba is an entomophilus fungus found primarily in subalpine regions, from 3200 m to 4000 m altitude. It is considered a miracle ingredient in many traditional medicines and practitioners believe it helps to enhance lung function, bolster the kidney's yang energy, relieves coughing, poor vitality, impotency, spermatorrhea,

asthma, aching joints, and reduces sputum and the general debility caused by long term illness.

The parasitic fungus grows on several species of caterpillars, deriving its nutrients from the caterpillar itself. In late autumn, fungal spores are released that infect the caterpillar. By early summer of the following year, the fungal infestation has killed the caterpillar and the fruiting body can be seen protruding from the caterpillar's head. Since it resembles a grass sprout, it is called Yarsa Gumba meaning "winter insect summer grass".

June is the peak month for the collection of the fungus, with collecting extending into the second half of July. On average, one person collects approximately 3500-3800 mummified caterpillars weighing about 1 kg per day. In the border town of Dharchula in Pithoragarh District, Yarsa Gumba fetches INR80 000-90 000/ kg, the product is transported through Nepal to markets in China. It is estimated that 400-500 kg of Yarsa Gumba is illegally trafficked into Nepal from Dharchula every year. Reports in the past indicate that many cross-border traders who sell Yarsa Gumba also trade in illegal wildlife products such as skins and body parts of Tiger, Leopard and other endangered wildlife.

Yarsa Gumba is not listed under the Wildlife Protection Act 1972, nor under the EXIM policy of India. Therefore, there is hardly any regulation of its collection or trade. Furthermore, this species is also not listed under CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India commented, "Currently there is very little information regarding the trade of Yarsa Gumba from India. People go to various extremes to collect this fungus. This large scale collection of the species in such a short span can have devastating effect on this fragile alpine ecoregion. Furthermore, there are growing reports from various agencies suggesting that the money that comes from the fungus is also believed to sustain trafficking in protected species. There is an urgent need to understand the prevailing trends and build suitable mechanisms to regulate and check such wildlife trade."

Source:Habitat Ecology,Bio-chemical analysis and Pharmacognosy of Yar Tsa Gumba (*Cordyceps sinensis* Berk.) Unpublished paper. Chandra S. Negi, Department of Zoology, Government Postgraduate College, Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand
http://www.wildlifetrustofindia.org/html/news/2003/030618_yarsagumbu.htm
<http://www.wwfchina.org/wwfpress/publication/lhasa/05ABCWorkshop.pdf>

SIGNPOST:
Other significant news stories to read

Trade in mammoth ivory flourishes in Russia - An article, *Trade in mammoth ivory, helped by global thaw, flourishes in Russia*, by Andrew E. Kramer, in the International Herald Tribune, Europe, 25 March 2008, throws light on the on-going mammoth ivory trade across the region. The trade, bolstered recently by global warming, which has melted the tundra and exposed more frozen remains, is not only legal but actually endorsed by conservationists, says the article. To read more please visit <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2008/03/25/europe/mammoth.php>

Nepal nails famed US explorer for illegal treasure trove - A famed American explorer and writer, whose books on Tibet opened the forbidden former Buddhist kingdom to Western eyes, has been named most wanted by Nepal Police for possessing an illegal treasure trove of wildlife parts and ancient archaeological artefacts. The police discovered a sizeable cache of ancient idols, Tibetan paintings, Tiger skins, bones of endangered animals and other illegal animal parts in two apartments rented by him in the capital. To read more please visit <http://www.zeenews.com/articles.asp?aid=444814&sid=SAS>

Police uncover huge wild animal smuggling case - In March 2008, police in Shantou, a coastal city in the east of Guangdong province, China, revealed details of a massive smuggling case involving more than 7000 animals destined for dinner plates across the province. Three suspects were detained, while the hunt goes on for several others who escaped. The police confiscated 5776 Monitor Lizards, 1170 cobras, 260 Malaysian Box Turtles and 370 Giant Asian Pond Turtles. To read more please visit http://www.china.org.cn/environment/news/2008-03/22/content_13290738.htm

Another rhino killed in Kaziranga - Another rhino in the Kaziranga National Park in Assam, India, was shot by poachers, taking the total number of rhinos killed in the forest since last year to 24. To read more, please visit <http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/002200806061655.htm>

Eighty eight threatened bird species in India - The much-anticipated IUCN Red List 2008, released on 19 May 2008, features India as among the 10 countries in the world having the largest number of threatened species of birds. Brazil tops the list with 141 while India is ranked seventh with 88 species. To read more, please visit <http://www.thehindu.com/2008/05/22/stories/2008052257322200.htm>

HEADLINES

Indian vultures may be gone in 10 yrs



Indian vultures, once common across the country, are now facing a dire future. Conservationists warn that without immediate action, these birds could be extinct within a decade. The population has plummeted due to the use of veterinary drugs containing diclofenac, which is highly toxic to vultures.

Wild Indian birds face climate heat



Wild Indian birds are facing a significant threat from climate change. Rising temperatures and altered weather patterns are disrupting their natural habitats and food sources. Conservationists are working to identify and protect vulnerable species.

WCCB to start security audit of wildlife reserves across India

Wildlife Conservation Commission (WCCB) is set to launch a comprehensive security audit across all national parks and wildlife sanctuaries in India. The audit aims to identify vulnerabilities and strengthen law enforcement efforts to protect these critical habitats.

Tiger, leopard skins seized, 3 held



Authorities have seized a large quantity of tiger and leopard skins, along with three individuals involved in the illegal trade. The skins were found in a hidden location, and the suspects are being held for further investigation into the poaching network.

Turning star turtle



The star turtle, once considered a common species, is now facing a decline. Conservationists are working to protect its nesting sites and ensure the survival of this unique species. The turtle's distinctive star-shaped pattern on its shell is a key identifying feature.

World Bank now on the tiger trail

The World Bank has announced a new initiative to support tiger conservation efforts across Asia. This includes funding for habitat protection, law enforcement, and community-based conservation programs. The goal is to increase the number of tigers in the wild and ensure their long-term survival.

Foreigners threaten Afghan snow leopards



The snow leopard population in Afghanistan is under increasing threat from poachers and illegal trade. Foreign demand for leopard skins and bones is driving poaching activities, putting the species at risk of extinction. Conservationists are working to protect these elusive big cats.



7 rhino poachers held near Kaziranga



Seven rhino poachers have been arrested near the Kaziranga National Park in Assam. The poachers were caught with illegal weapons and rhino horns. This is a significant victory in the ongoing effort to protect the Indian rhinoceros from poaching.

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TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



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© Chris HAILS / WWF-Canon



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© Abrar Ahmed



TRAFFIC ALERT

TRAFFIC Alert (Latest news on the trends in illegal wildlife trade in India):

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SIGNPOST

© MKS Pasha



SIGNPOST- Other significant news stories to read such as: On the red sandalwood trail (India Today), In the gun-sights: Leopards (Business Standard), Insect appeal (India Today) etc..... Pg 11

National Tiger Conservation Authority and TRAFFIC India come together to work for Tiger conservation



© Martin HARVEY / WWF-Canon

On 13 October 2008, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and TRAFFIC India had signed a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) to pool their efforts on issues related to wildlife conservation and enforcement in India, particularly those on Tigers *Panthera tigris*. The MOU was signed by Dr Rajesh Gopal, Member Secretary & IGF, National Tiger Conservation Authority and Mr Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India at the NTCA office in New Delhi. Shri S.P Yadav, Joint Director, NTCA was also present.

Under the newly signed agreement, NTCA and TRAFFIC India will work together to stop the illegal trade of Tiger parts and derivatives and also to strengthen protection of Tigers in the wild.

“Wildlife crime in India has taken a heavy toll on our precious flora and fauna especially Tigers, our national animal. This collaboration with TRAFFIC India will give us an edge in combating such crime and we are looking forward to working together on these issues” said Dr Rajesh Gopal, Member Secretary, NTCA.

Mr. Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India commented, “This collaboration will lead to better on the ground support for conservation of Tigers in India and will help curb illegal trade in Tigers.” He further added, “As the largest wildlife trade monitoring

network, TRAFFIC actively monitors and investigates wildlife trade and provides its information to a diverse audience world-wide, as a basis for effective conservation policies and programmes. TRAFFIC will bring to this partnership its experience on tackling such issues”.

TRAFFIC India supports State Forest Departments in curbing illegal wildlife trade



TRAFFIC India has supported the efforts of several state forest departments across the country in conducting wildlife seizures in recent few months. Seizures were undertaken following the inputs and support provided by TRAFFIC India and with the help of local police. In many cases, the Indian Army also assisted. An overview of some of the seizures conducted with support from TRAFFIC India is given below:

- One Point 303 rifle and one Point 22 rifle recovered from Dalgaon in district Darrang, Assam, and one person arrested on 15 March 2008.
- One person arrested from Dalgaon in district Darrang, Assam, on 1 May 2008, although no items recovered.
- One person was arrested from Dalgaon in district Darrang, Assam, on 2 June 2008, although no items recovered.
- One Point 303 rifle recovered from Dalgaon in district Darrang, Assam, and one person arrested on 2 June 2008.
- One Point 303 rifle with 17 rounds of ammunition recovered from Lalpool in Udalguri district, Assam, and one person arrested on 24 June 2008.
- One person arrested in Howraghat in Karbi Anglong district, Assam, on 24 June 2008, although no items recovered.
- One Point 303 rifle with 17 live rounds of ammunition recovered in Morigaon, Assam, and one person arrested on 29 July 2008.
- Ivory reportedly worth INR 300 000 (USD 6100) seized in Gundlpet Taluk, Karnataka, and two persons arrested on 2 September 2008.
- One AK-47 rifle with 25 rounds of ammunition and an Italian made pistol with 1 magazine were recovered in Guwahati, Assam, and one person was arrested in this connection on 13 September 2008.

Continued on page 3

Continued from page 2

- One Point 303 rifle recovered in Kaziranga, Assam, on 20 September 2008, although the alleged owner escaped.
- Two rhino horns, one of them fake, seized and two persons arrested in Kohora Range in Karbi Anglong District, Assam, on 25 September 2008.
- One Leopard skin seized and three people arrested in Choladi in the Bitherkad range near Gudalur district, Tamil Nadu, on 1 October 2008.
- One country made gun and a search light was recovered in Bospara area of Mudumulai Wildlife Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu, on 16 October 2008 while the accused managed to escape.

Indian Army and TRAFFIC India join hands to curb illegal wildlife trade

The Indian Army and TRAFFIC India have joined hands to curb poaching and illegal wildlife trade across the country. This partnership will hopefully lead to better coordinated efforts, especially at sensitive border areas, in curbing such illegal trade. The Indian Army has a very successful ongoing collaboration with WWF-India, working on various environmental issues across the country. This association with TRAFFIC on wildlife trade issues is taking this relationship a step forward.

Senior Enforcement Officials share experiences on combating wildlife crime



TRAFFIC India, with support from WWF-India, organized an experience sharing meeting of Senior Enforcement Officials from across the country on 26 July 2008 at the WWF-India Secretariat in New Delhi.

Shri Ved Marwah, former Governor of Manipur, Mizoram and Jharkhand, chaired the meeting. Participants included Mr Nandan Dubey, ADGP-CID, Madhya Pradesh Police; Miss Reena Mitra, Addl. Director- Wildlife Crime Control Bureau; Mr Keshav Kumar, IGP- Gujarat Police; Miss Tanuja Srivastav, DIG-CBI; Mr Amitabh Yash, SSP- Special Task Force, Lucknow, Dr A.K. Bapuly, Director, Forensics Department- Govt. of Jharkhand; Dr S.P. Goyal, Scientist- Wildlife Institute of India and other senior officials from the Narcotics Control Bureau, Madhya Pradesh Forest Department, NICFS (National Institute of Criminology and Forensic Science), and NGOs including the Ranthambore Foundation and the Wildlife Trust of India.

The purpose of the meeting was to provide a platform for enforcement officials to discuss their experiences and find a way forward to combat wildlife crime. Organized crime needs an organized response was the unequivocal statement of the participants at the meeting.

Shri Ved Marwah commented: "Wildlife crime is growing to become one of the most serious crimes in India and must be tackled immediately. There is a need to create awareness not only among the top enforcement officials but also among those working in the field. Creating a databank of information related to wildlife crime and making it available to agencies on the ground at all times should prove to be one of the strongest tools for curbing illegal wildlife trade".

The meeting was successful in generating ideas on co-operation and collaboration that will further help to curb wildlife crime. Developing a mechanism to share data related to wildlife crime at the institutional level, identifying key forensic experts from across the country and using their expertise to collect scientific evidence in wildlife cases and co-ordinating efforts of various agencies, were some of the key action points discussed at the meeting.

TRAFFIC India hopes that this commitment and collaboration will motivate on the ground efforts to combat wildlife crime.



© Dr. Bibhab Talukdar / Aaranyak

Release of a poster on “Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles of India”



During an experience sharing meet of Senior Enforcement Officials on 26 July 2008 at WWF-India Secretariat, Shri Ved Marwah former Governor of Manipur, Mizoram and Jharkhand released TRAFFIC India and Wildlife Institute of India’s latest poster on Tortoises and freshwater turtles of India. The poster is a pictorial guide that will help enforcement officials such as the Forest Department, Customs, police and others to identify various turtle and tortoise species that are illegally traded in India and across India's borders. Identification of the species and knowledge of their legal status will help such agencies take stricter legal action.

Amongst the threats turtles and tortoises face today, one of the most serious is the uncontrolled trade for food and traditional medicine in South Asia. Recent studies conducted by TRAFFIC in prominent markets in Indonesia and Thailand found that the Indian Star Tortoise ranks in the top three of the most commonly traded species of tortoises. The poster was produced in response to this growing threat to turtles and tortoises in India and has been well received by the enforcement agencies all across the country.

A copy of the poster can be downloaded at http://www.traffic.org/species-reports/traffic_species_reptiles14.pdf

Implementation of ISSC-MAP moves ahead in Uttarakhand



TRAFFIC India and Wildlife Institute of India (WII), in collaboration with the Industries Association of Uttarakhand (IAU), organized a one day orientation workshop at the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun on 26 August 2008 to encourage various stakeholders, including traders, cultivators, collectors and others, to implement the International Standard for the Sustainable Wild Collection of Wild Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (ISSC-MAP) in Uttarakhand.

Workshop sessions were chaired by Mr Pankaj Gupta, President-IAU and Dr S. Farooq, MD-The Himalaya Drug Company was the chief guest. This workshop was a follow up on the launch workshop that took place in Dehradun on 28 February 2008, details of which are available on <http://www.traffic.org/home/2008/2/28/sustainable-use-of-wild-plants-project-launched-in-india.html>

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Himalayan Yew *Taxus Wallichiana* - A popular species in trade

© Samir Sinha

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Dr S. Farooq expressed his concern about the current threats to medicinal plants and the decline in availability of many important species. His company, The Himalaya Drug Company, has a huge manufacturing unit for herbal health care products in Uttarakhand but only procures 1% of the raw material from that state, mainly because of the low and disorganized supply of raw materials from the region. He pledged the support of his company for the implementation of ISSC-MAP and for taking this initiative to a larger forum.

Orientation Programme on Wildlife Laws organized for the Judiciary in Assam



© Samir Sinha

TRAFFIC India and WWF-India, in collaboration with Assam Forest Department and the Assam High Court, organized a two day orientation programme on wildlife conservation laws for the Judiciary in Assam. The programme was conducted on 20-21 September 2008 at Guwahati.

The programme was inaugurated by Honorable Justice Chelameswar, Chief Justice- Guwahati High Court. The Guest of Honour was Sri

Rockybul Hussain, Minister-Environment & Forest, Government of Assam. The programme was attended by more than 60 judicial officers from the states of Assam, Tripura and Mizoram.

The main purpose of the programme was to sensitize the Judiciary about various issues related to wildlife conservation. The Judiciary plays a significant role in championing the cause of forest and biodiversity conservation, and this workshop provided a necessary update on the status of Forest and Wildlife legislation, International Conventions on related issues and enforcement of wildlife laws in India.

Hon. Chief Justice Chelameswar in his inaugural address appreciated the efforts of TRAFFIC India and WWF-India in organizing the programme and asked the Judicial Officers to make maximum use of this opportunity to get acquainted with wildlife laws.

Sri Rockybul Hussain, Hon'ble Minister Environment and Forest, Government of Assam spoke of the rich wildlife in Assam: "The North East region has been identified as one of the 25 biodiversity hotspots in the globe and hence it has become our responsibility to protect and conserve the rich biodiversity for our future generations". He further added "I hope this workshop will deliberate on all aspects of conservation, including the necessity for conservation, the pressure being exerted on our natural resources; its consequences and steps needed to be taken to counter such pressure".

This is part of the on-going work of TRAFFIC India to work with the country's judiciary officials and to seek their wider support for wildlife conservation.

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Three arrested for trading in ivory in Uttar Pradesh

In October 2008, three people were arrested for trading in elephant molar teeth and ivory in Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh. A joint team of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) along with Uttar Pradesh police and Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) seized 10 kg of molar teeth from the accused.

Trade in molar teeth clearly indicates that the Elephant was either poached or was dead since the molar teeth cannot be extracted from a live Elephant. A case has been registered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

The recent seizure of ivory in Bijnor and the numerous other seizures of ivory and its products in India in recent months are a grim reminder of the illicit ivory trade threatening the survival of the Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus*.

The Asian Elephant is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, under which poaching of elephants or trade in ivory is prohibited. The species is listed as Endangered in the IUCN Red List and its international trade is banned under CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

China, Japan and Thailand are the main markets where the raw or semi-worked ivory is smuggled. Other emerging ivory trade centres are Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan. Ivory is used to make bangles, bracelets, statues, artefacts, chessboards, etc. Powdered ivory is sometimes used for medicinal purposes.

Source:

http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/Flora_Fauna/Three_arrested_for_trading_elephant_molar_teeth_and_ivory/articleshow/3592738.cms

“Don't Buy Trouble” Campaign at the Domestic and International Airport



Poster at Delhi International Airport

TRAFFIC India has partnered with TIMES OUT OF HOME, a unit of TIMES INNOVATIVE MEDIA LIMITED for displaying the “Don't buy Trouble” series of posters at both domestic and international airports in Mumbai and Delhi.

Through this partnership, TRAFFIC India aims to reach out to a large number of domestic and international tourists on issues related to illegal wildlife trade. The TRAFFIC posters will advise tourists to be careful of what they buy as souvenirs during their travels. The message conveyed is that souvenirs

derived from endangered wildlife species should not be treated as mementos, but rather as examples of the wanton destruction of our natural heritage.

The first set of posters was put on display in October 2008 at Delhi International airport.

Commemorating Wildlife Week 2008



TRAFFIC India in collaboration with WWF-India organised two special events to commemorate Wildlife Week 2008. These are as given below:

Wild Wisdom - an environmental quiz for school children was jointly organised with the National Zoological Park, New Delhi, on 1 October 2008 at the WWF-India Secretariat in New Delhi. The quiz received a tremendous response with nearly 40 schools from Delhi and adjoining areas participating in the programme. After several interesting rounds, Air Force Bal Bharti School, Lodi Road emerged as the winner followed by Gyan Bharti School, Saket and then Springdales School. The winning teams won a trip to a Marine Camp at Beyt Dwarka in Gujarat.



Mr. Ravi Singh, SG and CEO, WWF-India addressing the participants

Continued on page 7

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Lion skin seized in Chhattisgarh

In September 2008, a suspected member of an inter-state gang of poachers was arrested with a Lion's skin in Raipur, Chhattisgarh. Atmaram was arrested following a tip off received while he was waiting for a customer to sell the skin. The skin was stuffed in a bag.

He was arrested in Dudhwa forested locality in Kanker district, some 220 km south of Raipur. Police believe he was a member of an inter-state gang of poachers active in the district for about three years.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

This is probably the first time a skin of an Asiatic Lion *Panthera leo persica* has been seized in India from a trader, indicating a new emerging trend in the illegal wildlife trade. Asiatic Lion, also known as the Indian Lion, is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, under which poaching and trade in the species is banned and punishable by law. It is listed in Appendix I of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) under which the international trade in the species is prohibited. The species is listed as Critically Endangered in the IUCN Red List of threatened species.

Wild populations of Asiatic Lion are restricted to Gir forests in the state of Gujarat. Besides loss of habitat and human-wildlife conflict, the species appears to be increasingly threatened by illegal wildlife trade. It was recently reported that a tribe of poachers camped next to the Lion sanctuary and were believed to be the same individuals responsible for killing Tigers in India. Lions have been in demand for their bones, claws and teeth; however, the seizure of a Lion skin indicates a new emerging market for the species.

Source:
<http://www.aol.in/news-story/man-held-with-lion-skin-in-chhattisgarh/2008092812239012000034>

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“Expressions of Wilderness” - a unique photo exhibition was officially inaugurated by Mr Ravi Singh, Secretary General and CEO, WWF-India on 2 October 2008 at WWF-India Secretariat in New Delhi. It displayed images from many renowned wildlife photographers such as Akashendu Das, Satpal Gandhi, Bhumesh Bharti, Amritpal Singh, Md. Aslam Warsi and Rajeev Mehta. The pictorial spread covered a wide variety of animals, birds, plants and insects, aesthetically presented.



© TRAFFIC India

A visitor at the wildlife photo exhibition

The exhibition was on display from 2-7 October 2008 and received considerable response from the general public. The exhibition featured charismatic species of wildlife such as the Tiger and the Elephant, and also many rare and less popularly known species of birds and butterflies.

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Wildlife racket operating on Internet networking sites busted

In August 2008, the Special Task Force of Uttar Pradesh along with the Forest Department conducted a raid in Meerut and busted a gang that used Orkut and other popular networking sites for illegal wildlife trade. The team also seized many threatened wildlife such as peacocks, parakeets and a rare albino civet.

Mahesh Chandra, Wildlife Warden of Meerut, said the accused have been sent to jail on 26 August 2008 after being charged under the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

The effort of the Special Task Force and the Forest Department in busting this internet trading gang is truly laudable. Hopefully, the investigations should provide guidance for other related cases.

Internet trading of threatened wild species is not a new phenomenon and has been well publicized previously. TRAFFIC has earlier raised concerns about these virtual markets that allow buyers and sellers to connect with ease and speed. In January 2008, TRAFFIC released findings of a study conducted to survey popular auction websites, Yahoo and eBay, in addition to several independent websites with wildlife trade themes in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan that were offering endangered wildlife species. Details of this study can be viewed at <http://www.traffic.org/home/2008/1/28/il-legal-wildlife-trade-flourishing-on-the-chinese-language-i.html>

In 2004, TRAFFIC released *Tackling the ivories: The status of the US trade in elephant and hippo ivory* which revealed for the first time the active Internet trade in elephant ivory from sellers based in China who routinely shipped ivory to the USA.

OUTPOST: Paper Tigers? The role of the U.S. captive Tiger population in the trade in Tiger parts



© Martin HARKVEY / WWF-Canon

TRAFFIC and the World Wildlife Fund released a first ever comprehensive report on captive tiger regulations across the United States entitled, *Paper Tigers? The role of the U.S. captive Tiger population in the trade in Tiger parts*, on 31 July 2008 in Washington, USA.

The report found that there are no reliable regulatory mechanisms to keep track of captive tigers in the United States. The U.S. government has no way to determine how many tigers there

are in captivity within its borders, where they are, who owns them, or what happens to their body parts when they die. Captive tigers include animals bred in zoos, used for entertainment in carnivals or promotional exhibits, housed at rescue facilities, and those privately owned. In many states there are no controls on individuals keeping Tigers as pets. Current estimates indicate that there are more than 5 000 tigers in captivity in the United States, more than exist in the wild worldwide. While the report shows no evidence that these Tigers are currently a supply source for the international black market in Tiger parts, these weak U.S. regulations could leave them vulnerable to illegal trade unless the issue is immediately addressed. Tiger populations are fast declining worldwide due to poaching for illegal trade and due to habitat and prey loss. One of the leading threats to the species's survival is the global demand for their bones, skins and other body parts for use in fashion and traditional forms of Asian medicine.

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CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) agreed to a series of Decisions and Resolutions instructing its 173 member governments to implement measures to protect tigers from illegal trade. In 2000, a Resolution agreed upon by all CITES member countries, including the United States, urged governments to ensure they have effective management and controls in place to stop captive Tiger parts from entering illegal trade. The U.S. lacks a comprehensive management system for captive Tigers, which means that the U.S. has not implemented the CITES Resolution it agreed to, according to WWF and TRAFFIC.

A registration scheme for all captive Tigers and a means to monitor disposal of dead Tigers is urgently needed, according to the report. WWF and TRAFFIC recommend that, among other steps, the federal government rescind exceptions to laws that exempt certain categories of captive U.S. Tigers from regulation, specifically under the Captive-Bred Wildlife Registration system, and that all persons or facilities holding USDA licences for exhibition or breeding and dealing in Tigers report annually on the number of Tigers held, births, mortality and transfer or sale.

To download this report please visit, http://www.traffic.org/species-reports/traffic_species_mammals39.pdf

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Continued from page 7

Other NGOs have reported similar findings. In 2005, IFAW published *Caught in the web: Wildlife trade on the internet*, revealing the findings of an intensive investigation into the online trade in wildlife. In 2007, IFAW released a similar report called, *Bidding for extinction*, that revealed how the rampant trade in elephant ivory being carried out across eBay's global network of auction sites was enabling consumers to literally bid for the extinction of the world's largest land mammal.

The trend seems to have caught on now in India, and could have damaging impacts on our wildlife. It is necessary to implement effective internet monitoring for wildlife trade in addition to the usual policing of physical markets.

Source:

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Earth/Internet_wildlife_racket_busted/articleshow/3411489.cms

www.ifaw.org

Tiger trade racket busted in north India

In September 2008, the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) unearthed an international racket in Tiger parts that led to the arrest of three alleged poachers.

A raid was conducted at the house of one of the accused in Gurgaon, Haryana, where a complete skeleton of a Tiger, a penis, two testicles, Tiger fat, two Cheetal horns and a number of traps were recovered from the house. The accused managed to escape.

This racket is believed to have connections with Narayan, brother of notorious poacher Sansar Chand. The racket was busted following a five-month operation in four north Indian states. Three key gang members Dariya, Pema Gytso, Omprakash were arrested in different states, most recently Omprakash in Haldwani, Uttarakhand.

Continued on page 9

CITES UPDATE: CITES gives green light to one-off ivory sales



African savanna elephant *Loxodonta africana africana*

During a CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) meeting held on 16 July 2008, the CITES Standing Committee gave a go-ahead to the one-off sale of ivory that was agreed in principle in June 2007. Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe have now been authorized to make a single sale of a total of 108 tonnes of government-owned ivory. The following quantities of raw ivory have been approved: Botswana: 43 682.91 kg, Namibia: 9209.68 kg, South Africa: 51 121.8 kg, and Zimbabwe: 3755.55 kg.

The Committee also agreed to designate China as an importing country. Japan had already been allowed to import ivory in 2006. Both countries assured that they would closely monitor their domestic markets. All the proceeds of the sale are to be used exclusively for elephant conservation and local communities living side-by-side with elephants.

The request to trade African Elephant ivory was originally approved at the CITES Conference of the Parties in 2002 and then modified to include new conditions at the meeting in 2007. The CITES meeting in July was given the task of deciding whether China could be approved as a trading partner. To gain approval, China had to convince CITES that it had put in place adequate measures to manage regulated sales and tackle any illegal domestic ivory trade.

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"The Secretariat will closely supervise this sale and evaluate its impact on elephant population levels throughout Africa. We will continue monitoring the Chinese and Japanese domestic trade controls to ensure that unscrupulous traders do not take this opportunity to launder ivory of illegal origin", said the Secretary-General of the Convention, Mr Willem Wijnstekers.

CITES banned the international commercial ivory trade in 1989. In 1997, recognizing that some southern African elephant populations were healthy and well managed; it permitted Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe to make a one-time sale of ivory to Japan totaling 50 tons. This sale took place in 1999 and raised about USD 5 million for elephant conservation.

This legal sale of ivory will be from existing stocks gathered from elephants that have died as a result of natural causes or from problem-animal control. Today, the elephant populations of southern Africa are listed in Appendix II of the Convention (which allows commercial trade through a permit system), while all other elephant populations are listed in Appendix I (which prohibits all imports for commercial purposes).

Source: www.cites.org

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Continued from page 8

TRAFFIC India adds.....

The efforts of the newly formed Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) in busting wildlife trade rackets operating across the country are truly commendable. This is one of many seizures undertaken by the WCCB after its establishment following the amendment of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 in 2006. The leads from cases such as these should lead to further enforcement actions against illegal wildlife traders operating in India.

Source:

<http://www.sahasasamay.com/samayhtml/articles.aspx?newsid=104967>

Star Tortoises seized from an air passenger in Chennai

On 2 August 2008, Custom officials at Chennai airport seized 950 live Star Tortoises from a passenger travelling on a flight bound for Bangkok via Colombo.

The tortoises were found in the baggage of Ibramsa Abubacker, a resident of Chennai, when the officials intercepted him based on specific intelligence.

He admitted that he was lured by an offer of INR 3000 (USD 60), made by an unknown person for carrying the bag containing the tortoises. Abubacker was handed over to the wild life authorities along with the tortoises for further investigation.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

The seizure of 950 Indian Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* at Chennai airport is not an isolated case. Previously, there have been many large hauls of this species in India, especially at this airport. Two recent investigations undertaken by TRAFFIC at wildlife trade markets in Thailand and Indonesia clearly indicate the Indian Star Tortoise is in the top three tortoise species traded.

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CITES UPDATE:

CITES issues a deadline for submission of a report on Tiger-breeding operations



On 8 October 2008, under notification no 2008/059, CITES has directed all parties that have Tiger-breeding operations to submit a report describing such operations by 28 February 2009. This report will further be presented during the 58th meeting of the Standing Committee for review. This followed a Decision 14.69 that was adopted during the 14th Conference of the Parties (CoP14), held in The Hague, The Netherlands in 2007. This stated:

Parties with intensive operations breeding tigers on a commercial scale shall implement measures to restrict the captive population to a level supportive only to conserving wild tigers; tigers should not be bred for trade in their parts and derivatives.

Under this notification released in October 2008, the parties are encouraged to take the following issues into account during implementation of the decision and while reporting:

- a) The establishment of a national individual animal registration process, incorporating a marking system using, for example, microchips or DNA profiling;
- b) The segregation of sexes to prevent further breeding;
- c) The development of a strategic plan, incorporating deadlines, for the phasing-out of intensive breeding operations on a commercial scale or their conversion to operations devoted solely to the conservation of tigers; and
- d) The development of a policy with regard to what will happen to tigers currently in intensive breeding operations.

The Government of India, as a party to CITES since 1976, has been significantly instrumental in moving this notification and the National Tiger Conservation Authority was actively engaged with the CITES Secretariat. This announcement of a deadline for reporting the status of all tiger breeding operations is seen as a major step towards implementation of CITES decision 14.69 adopted at CoP 14. Decision 14.69 can be viewed at <http://www.cites.org/eng/dec/valid14/E14-Dec.pdf> while the notification can be viewed at <http://www.cites.org/eng/notif/2008/E059.pdf>

CITES UPDATE:

CITES endorses formation of an International Rhino Task Force



The Standing Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), in July 2008, endorsed the establishment of a Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force to counter rising levels of rhino poaching and illicit horn trade in Asia and Africa. Like other CITES Enforcement Task Forces, it will be co-ordinated by the CITES Secretariat.

The move follows a report from the CITES Secretariat expressing concerns over reports of increased poaching and illegal trade in rhinoceros horn and the highly-organized nature of these activities. The report noted that considerable profits appear to be involved in rhino poaching, with strong grounds to suspect the involvement of money-laundering.

Despite some noteworthy enforcement successes in southern Africa and South Asia, the plight of rhinos in Asia and Africa is becoming ever more alarming. In Asia, poachers have targeted rhinos in Indian national parks, with alarming number of Great Indian Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* being killed in and around Kaziranga National Park in Assam since 2007, and rhino populations in Orang also being poached. The sudden upsurge in rhino killings is a major challenge for regional enforcement agencies, and the Army has been called in for support. WWF and TRAFFIC are also co-ordinating emergency support.

Most rhino poaching is to supply horns for use in traditional Asian medicines, although there is growing evidence that the demand for horns (for use as traditional dagger handles) is re-emerging in the Middle East. A new trend in South Africa is for illicitly acquired horns to be claimed as legitimate sport hunting trophies and exported. Some Vietnamese citizens have been implicated, and Viet Nam is emerging as a key player in the illegal horn trade.

TRAFFIC and WWF welcomed the formation of the International Rhino Task Force and expressed confidence that this initiative will play a significant role in curbing organized illegal rhino horn trade.

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Continued from page 9

TRAFFIC India adds.....

In India, the species is included in Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 and trade in it is banned. International trade is also restricted as the species is listed in Appendix II of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). Despite its legal protection, trade in the species appears to continue unabated.

Over the years Bangalore, Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata, Pune, the Port City of Kandla in the Gulf of Kutch, and the coastal areas of Gujarat and Rajasthan have all emerged as centres for smuggling Indian Star Tortoises.

Source:

- http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Earth/TN_950_star_tortoises_seized/articleshow/3318785.cms
- <http://www.hindu.com/2007/06/02/stories/2007060202801300.htm>
- <http://www.mumbaimirror.com/net/mmpaper.aspx?page=article§id=35&contentid=35>

IN FOCUS:

Green Avadavat- A silent victim of illegal bird trade



Green Avadavat (Munia) *Amandava formosa*, one of seven species of munias found in India, is becoming a victim of illegal bird trade. According to TRAFFIC India's country-wide study on illegal bird trade undertaken by the author since 1992, munias contribute nearly 40% of the total bird trade in India (Ahmed 1997, 2002, 2004).

Munias are popular aviculture subjects worldwide. Being small in size and adored for their beautiful coloration, melodious calls, low-cost diet and easy captive-care, they are commercially exploited throughout their range. Although parakeets are the most popular pet birds in terms of preference and popularity, munias rank number one in terms of their sheer volume in bird trade (Ahmed 2001). Many bird traders have reported that for every wild parakeet sold almost four munias are traded.

While most Indian munia species are common and widely distributed throughout the subcontinent, the Green Avadavat is a globally threatened species, endemic to India, with a very local and uneven distribution in central India (BirdLife International 2000, Ali & Ripley 1983). The Green Avadavat is small, measuring about 10 cm, and olive-green above with a pale yellow throat and breast. The centre of the belly and undertail coverts are bright yellow whilst the flanks are barred olive-brown and white (Ali & Ripley 1983).

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Despite being listed in Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 and Appendix II of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) since 1997, under which both domestic and international trade in the species is controlled, Green Avadavat continues to be traded in clandestine markets. It is listed as Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List, mainly because of the growing threat from illegal bird trade compounded by habitat loss and degradation.



© Abrar Ahmed

Green Avadavat for sale at a local fair held in Kolkatta in July 2008

Green Avadavat has become a highly sought after cage bird both for domestic and international markets because of its rarity and aesthetic appeal. Although, little is known about the bird's habits in the wild, the species is rather delicate and difficult to acclimatize in captivity, especially in temperate countries. Since it is also difficult to breed in captivity, its continued presence in international markets suggests that birds caught from the wild are smuggled out of India (Ahmed 1998, 2002).

The maximum numbers of Green Avadavat are caught from the states of Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, largely by members of the Baheliya and the Mir-shikar community. Most records indicate the maximum trade of Green Avadavats is during May to August, indicating that the peak season for trapping is May/June, with most birds being sold off by September.

The Green Avadavat has a red bill and iris and a black tail; all features common to the Red Avadavat *A. amandava*. Consequently some traders colour female Red Avadavats with a light green dye and pass them off as Green Avadavats (indeed this practice has contributed to the trade name of Green Avadavats as hara lal or green-red) (Ahmed 1999, 2002). Traders benefit in two ways; firstly, by passing off Red Avadavat females as Green Avadavats, they can sell the otherwise drab coloured birds at a higher price; and secondly they also avoid being prosecuted for trading in a rare and protected species.

Most Green Avadavats enter the pet-trade under the name of "Tiger Finch" and are smuggled out of India through Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan (Ahmed *in prep*). Currently, the future of the species appears bleak, and there is a need to strengthen enforcement efforts to crack down on this illegal wildlife trade. There is also a need to undertake a comprehensive study on Green Avadavat to understand the biology of the species, its current populations levels and also the impact of trapping and trade in India.

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- Contributed by Abrar Ahmed, Consultant, Bird trade project, TRAFFIC India

SIGNPOST:
Other significant news stories to read

On the red sandalwood trail: The demand for the endangered red sandalwood has tempted poachers and smugglers to ramp up their clandestine operations. Smuggling by road from southern India to Nepal is the latest trend in the illegal trade. Trucks laden with red sandalwood from Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh drive to Kathmandu from where it is smuggled on to China, Japan and Singapore where the smugglers receive better prices for their goods. For more information, please visit http://indiatoday.digitaltoday.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=15998§ionid=22&issuueid=31&Itemid=1

IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2008 released: On 6 October, IUCN released the 2008 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. The Red List now includes 16 928 species that are threatened with extinction. Of these, 3246 are Critically Endangered i.e. in the highest category of threat; 4770 are Endangered and 8912 are Vulnerable to extinction. For more information, please visit <http://www.iucnredlist.org/>

In the gun-sights: Leopards: The rampant poaching of leopards in the wilds of Uttarakhand is as alarming as the earlier revelation about vanishing Tigers in protected areas. Some three dozen Leopards are said to have been killed in Uttarakhand in the last few months. Elsewhere, too, Leopards have been the target of animal hunters, as borne out by the recovery of 27 leopard skins from different parts of the country in the past two months. Some estimates place the total number of Leopards annihilated in this period as high as 120, with most incidents being reported from Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka. For more information, please visit <http://www.business-standard.com/india/storypage.php?autono=335696>

Insect appeal: Call it a beauty pageant with a difference. A small gathering of tribal youths queue up outside a nondescript hotel in a small town in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh holding plastic bags and ventilated clear plastic jars. What they're selling are huge, velvet-coated palm-sized tarantula spiders, stunningly beautiful, but with a bite that can kill a human. The youths tell a shaky hand-held camera exactly what they are doing there: trying to sell the spiders to a German tourist camping in the hotel. Each spider will fetch them between INR 500 (USD 10) and INR 5000 (USD 100). For more information, please visit http://indiatoday.digitaltoday.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&issuueid=31&id=17226&Itemid=1§ionid=36

HEADLINES

Rare avian species disappears



Endangered The bird has been reported to have disappeared from the region. The species is found in the hills of the Western Ghats. The bird is known for its vibrant colors and is considered a rare sight. Conservationists are worried about its future as its habitat is being lost to agriculture and human settlements.

2 Czech scientists convicted for poaching rare insects



Prague Two Czech scientists have been convicted for poaching rare insects. The court found them guilty of collecting and selling protected species. The insects are found in the mountains of the Czech Republic and are considered rare due to their specific habitat requirements.

After tigers, poachers now hunt for leopards



Madhya Pradesh Poachers are now targeting leopards in addition to tigers. The poachers are motivated by the high demand for leopard skins and bones in traditional Chinese medicine. Conservationists are warning that the leopard population is declining rapidly due to poaching and habitat loss.

The great shark hunt



Fishy tales A massive shark hunt is underway in the waters of the Indian Ocean. The hunt is aimed at reducing the illegal shark fin trade. Conservationists are concerned about the impact of shark finning on shark populations and the health of the ocean ecosystem.

700 storks die as tree falls in Assam village



Assam A massive tree fell in a village in Assam, India, resulting in the death of approximately 700 storks. The tree was a nesting site for the birds, and its sudden fall crushed many of the nests. Conservationists are investigating the cause of the tree's fall and the impact on the local stork population.

Great Indian Bustard fights for survival in Maharashtra



Maharashtra The Great Indian Bustard is fighting for its survival in Maharashtra. The bird is critically endangered due to habitat loss and poaching. Conservationists are working to protect the remaining individuals and their habitats. The bird is known for its large size and distinctive plumage.

Rail tracks a death trap in Bengal's wild corridors

Bengal Rail tracks are posing a significant threat to wildlife in Bengal's wild corridors. The tracks fragment habitats and increase the risk of collisions between animals and trains. Conservationists are calling for better planning and infrastructure to protect wildlife corridors.

Experts call for urgent reform as India flies to the top three in illegal bird trade





India Experts call for urgent reform as India has become a major hub for the illegal bird trade. The trade involves the capture and sale of wild birds for the pet trade and other purposes. Conservationists are concerned about the impact of the trade on bird populations and the environment.

Website offers tigers 'bred in India' for sale



India A website has been found offering tigers 'bred in India' for sale. The website is part of a larger network of illegal wildlife trade. Conservationists are warning that the trade is unsustainable and threatens the survival of tigers in the wild.

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the wildlife trade monitoring network

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TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



TRAFFIC INDIA UPDATE

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© Rahul Datta

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- **CITES directs Parties** to declare all stocks of rhinoceros horn and derivatives Pg 9



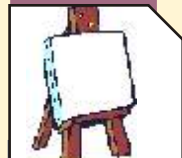
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IN FOCUS



TRAFFIC ALERT



SIGNPOST

- **Is 2009 a year of doom** for the Tiger? Pg 12



© Martin HARVEY / WWF-Canon

TRAFFIC Alert (Latest news on the trends in illegal wildlife trade in India):

- Forty- three jailed for smuggling animal parts in Madhya Pradesh Pg 6
- Sixteen jailed for poaching Lions in Gujarat Pg 7
- Tantrik who advised woman to sacrifice a rhino arrested Pg 8



© MKS Pasha

- Four arrested while trying to sell Leopard skin Pg 9
- Bears continued to be poached for bile Pg 10
- Twenty one monitor lizards seized from smugglers Pg 11

SIGNPOST- Other significant news stories to read such as: Pg 15

World's richest biodiversity hotspots are most war prone, Global CITES operation nets over 4500 specimens of endangered species in one day etc.....

OUTPOST



CITES UPDATE

India's wild medicinal plants threatened through over-exploitation



India is a hub for wild-collected medicinal plants in Asia, but key species have declined owing to over-collection for supply of domestic and foreign medicinal markets, and action needs to be taken to ensure the sustainability of supplies.



Kutki *Picrorhiza kurrooa*

Researchers from TRAFFIC and IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, examined the trade in seven medicinal plant species of conservation concern. These are Desert Cistanche *Cistanche deserticola*, Elephant's Foot *Dioscorea deltoidea*, Jatamansi *Nardostachys grandiflora*, Kutki *Picrorhiza kurrooa*, Red Sanders *Pterocarpus santalinus*, Snakeroot *Rauvolfia serpentina* and Himalayan Yew *Taxus wallichiana*. All of these species are protected under national legislation and international trade controls—the latter including listing in CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) which requires international trade to be maintained within sustainable levels. India emerged as a major destination for trade in all but two of the seven species studied—Desert Cistanche and Himalayan Yew. The findings of the study were revealed in a report released on 24 November 2009 at the WWF-India Secretariat, New Delhi.

Wild plant species form the foundation of healthcare practices throughout much of Asia, particularly traditional practices, such as traditional Chinese medicine, Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Tibetan medicines, whilst compounds such as reserpine from Snakeroot and paclitaxel from Himalayan Yew have important pharmaceutical uses in Europe, North America and elsewhere.

Some species are in demand for their aromatic properties, too, for example the use of Jatamansi oil dates back over a thousand years, whilst Red Sanders is also in demand for its timber and as a source of red dye. In India, collection and processing of medicinal plants contributes at least 35 million work days per year to the poor and under-employed, but rising demand is threatening this vital source of livelihood income both in India and elsewhere.

Many of the medicinal plants in trade in India are collected in alpine regions of neighbouring Nepal, where collection of species such as Jatamansi and Kutki runs to hundreds of tonnes of rhizomes, harvested by thousands of collectors who supply to middlemen who further supply to large-scale wholesalers in Nepal and India. Raw materials are often transported on to wholesale markets in Delhi, Amritsar and Kolkata for onward sale.

Although controls on the collection and trade in medicinal plants exist to bring harvesting levels within sustainable levels, their implementation is frequently poor. Cultivation is routinely promoted as a solution to dwindling supplies but this has its own repercussions. Some species are difficult to grow in artificial conditions and cultivation may be unprofitable for farmers, owing to the long gestation time between planting and commercial harvest.

The report released in New Delhi recommends regional, multi-stakeholder action to improve management of harvests and trade in a way that addresses conservation and development concerns. It promotes implementation of sustainable wild collection practices, which may be the only viable option to ensure sustainable supplies of some of these species. TRAFFIC, the Bundesamt für Naturschutz (BfN), the IUCN/SSC Medicinal Plant Specialist Group (MPSG) and WWF Germany recently launched a new standard on the sustainable collection of wild plants (International Standard for Sustainable Collection of Wild Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, ISSC-MAP), which is currently under trial at several projects worldwide including one in Uttarakhand in the Western Himalayas and one in Karnataka in the Western Ghats.

Under a new agreement in October 2008, the ISSC-MAP became hosted by the FairWild Foundation. In addition to the use of the ISSC-MAP by government institutions and authorities, the FairWild Foundation is developing an industry labelling system so products harvested using the sustainable ISSC-MAP criteria as well as social and fair-trade criteria can be readily recognised and certified. The further use of the standard—now called the FairWild Standard—will be promoted throughout the herbal products industry.

Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India, commented: "TRAFFIC India is delighted to be at the forefront of helping ensure the sustainability of medicinal plant supplies, which is to the benefit of healthcare within India and beyond, to India's plant industry and to many rural poor, who depend on the trade for vital household income."

The study was commissioned by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (Bundesamt für Naturschutz, BfN). The full report "Review of the Status, Harvest, Trade and Management of Seven Asian CITES-listed Medicinal and Aromatic Plant Species" can be downloaded at <http://www.traffic.org/non-traffic-papers/>

Sniffer dogs to help curb illegal wildlife trade



The first two graduates of TRAFFIC India's Sniffer Dog Training Programme have been successfully placed with the Forest Departments of Uttarakhand and Haryana, and are helping the forest staff to counter illegal wildlife trade.

TRAFFIC India has supported the training of dogs for tracking and detecting illegal wildlife products in India. The main purpose of initiating this programme was to bring in new ideas and techniques to assist enforcement agencies to address issues related to poaching and illegal trade.

Despite efforts, illegal wildlife trade continues to prevail and has evolved into an organized activity threatening the survival of many species in India. The current practices for combating illegal wildlife trade have not proved sufficient to curtail this. In order to curb this growing menace, it is necessary that the best enforcement practices are deployed. Using sniffer dogs for crime detection and prevention is one of the long proven practices TRAFFIC has experience of running in several countries.

This programme is less than a year old and has so far trained two sniffer dogs. The training of these dogs was conducted at the Basic Training Centre (BTC) of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) located at Panchkula, Haryana. The centre is the National Dog Training Centre for enforcement agencies such as the police, narcotics departments and bomb squads.

The dogs have been trained to detect hidden wildlife articles such as Tiger bone, Tiger skin, Leopard bone, Leopard skin and bear bile. They have been placed with the Forest Departments of Uttarakhand and Haryana and are being used by the staff in detecting illegal wildlife trade.

"Besides helping detect illegal wildlife products in trade, use of these dogs will also have a deterrent effect in the long run" said Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India.



© Rahul Dutta

Sniffer dogs being trained at BTC, Haryana

Enforcement agencies receive training on wildlife law enforcement



As part of the TRAFFIC India's 'capacity-building' programme, workshops were organized at Baripada, Orissa and Corbett National Park in Uttarakhand to help improve understanding amongst enforcement agencies about wildlife laws and their implementation. Training and inputs were provided to a diverse group of officials working on wildlife enforcement related issues. Details of these workshops are given below:

Simlipal Tiger Reserve, Orissa: TRAFFIC India, with support from WWF-India, collaborated with the National Tiger Conservation Authority to organize a two-day training workshop on wildlife enforcement for the officials of Orissa Forest Department. The workshops were held on 16–17 February 2009 and were attended by around 50 officials from Simlipal Tiger Reserve and other adjoining Forest Divisions. Dr S.P. Goyal, Head-Wildlife Forensics, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun; Mr Saurabh Sharma, Advocate, Delhi High Court and Mr B.K. Sharma, Commissioner of Police, Bhubaneswar were some of the key speakers at the workshop.

During the workshop, knowledge and skills on wildlife forensic techniques and implementation of wildlife laws and policies were shared with field managers. The participants were also given a taster of the latest tools and technologies available for curbing illegal trade. A hands-on training session on the use of deep-search metal detectors for locating metal traps inside forest areas was conducted. TRAFFIC India gifted two such metal detectors to Simlipal Tiger Reserve. Literature on wildlife laws was also distributed to the participants. The workshop was organized at the request of the Simlipal Tiger Reserve and was the first such comprehensive training held in Simlipal for the field staff.

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3



TRAFFIC India's poster "Munias of India in the illegal bird-trade" released at the workshop: TRAFFIC India's latest communiqué titled "Munias of India in the illegal bird-trade" has been produced to help enforcement agencies identify the various species of munias in illegal bird-trade in India.

India is home to eight species of munia, all of which are protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Munias are popular aviculture subjects worldwide. Being small in size and adored for their beautiful colouration, melodious calls, low-cost diet and easy captive-care, they are commercially exploited throughout their range. Although parakeets are the most popular pet birds in terms of preference and popularity, munias rank number one in terms of their sheer volume in bird trade (Ahmed, 2001).

Wildlife forensic kit developed: A Wildlife forensic kit has been jointly developed by TRAFFIC India and Forensic Cell, Wildlife Institute of India. The kit will help forest staff to collect samples in a standardized manner, analysis of which will lead to accurate investigation of the crime scene.

Often forensic samples from the wildlife crime scene are not collected in a standardized and appropriate manner. By the time they reach the forensic lab, they are damaged or have changed their nature, making it difficult for the scientist to provide accurate results. TRAFFIC India's forensic kit will help the forest staff in following a standardized protocol in collection of these samples. The kit contains most of the equipment required to collect samples such as surgical gloves, a plastic pouch, screw-capped vials, an injection syringe, a scalpel blade, forceps, scissors, a slide case, a glass slide, silica gel, filter paper, measuring tape, etc. Also, along with the kit, TRAFFIC India has produced a detailed manual on how to use the kit for collection of meat, skin, scat and blood samples of wild animals meant for forensic analysis.

TRAFFIC India has always encouraged use of forensic science in strengthening wildlife cases for effective conviction and has conducted many training programmes across the country regarding this. Now along with the training, TRAFFIC India is providing these kits to various Forest Divisions across the country.

Corbett Tiger Reserve: An enforcement training workshop was also held at Corbett Wildlife Training Centre at Kalagarh, Corbett Tiger Reserve for the forest staff of the Corbett Landscape. This workshop was organized by TRAFFIC India with support from WWF-India and in collaboration with the National Tiger Conservation Authority and Forest Department of Uttarakhand. The workshop was held on 21–22 February 2009 and was attended by over 50 officials from forest divisions in the Corbett Landscape including, Lansdowne, Terai West, Ramnagar and Haldwani. The key resource persons at the workshop were Mr. Ritwick Dutta, Advocate-Honourable Supreme Court of India; Mr. Vivek Sehajpal, Wildlife Forensics Scientist; Mr. DVS Khatri, Chief Conservator of Forests, Finance & Planning, Uttarakhand Forest Department; and Mr. Narendra Singh, Director-Corbett Wildlife Training Centre, Kalagarh.

Orientation programme on wildlife conservation for the Judiciary



TRAFFIC India and WWF, in partnership with Gauhati High Court and Assam Forest Department, held a two-day orientation programme on wildlife conservation for the Judiciary in Assam. This workshop was a follow-up of the previous workshops that were organized in Guwahati in 2008. The workshop was held on 14–15 March 2009 and was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Justice B.K. Sharma, Gauhati High Court. The programme was attended by 60 senior Judicial Officers from Assam, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura.

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The workshop's principal aim was to sensitize the judiciary to issues related to wildlife conservation. The judiciary plays a significant role in championing the cause of forest and biodiversity conservation, and the workshop provided a timely update on the status of forest and wildlife legislation, international conventions on related issues and enforcement of wildlife laws in India.

Hon'ble Justice B.K. Sharma said, "Judges must have in-depth knowledge about the various provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and forest offences. This will help them to handle cases better". He further urged the participating judges to exercise moral responsibilities while dealing with such cases. Mr M.C. Malakar, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF), Assam, presided over the workshop. He talked extensively about the rich biodiversity of north eastern states of India and the tough challenges that lie ahead in preserving it.

Other speakers at the workshop included Hon'ble Justice I.A. Ansari, Gauhati High Court; Dr Bibhav Talukdar, Head-Aranyak, Mr Sanjeev Chadda, Member-Central Empowered Committee (CEC), Mr Vivek Sahajpal, Wildlife Forensic Scientist, Mr Ritwick Dutta, Supreme Court Lawyer and Mr Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India. The workshop was successful in generating interest among the participants about curbing illegal wildlife trade and the implementation of wildlife laws. The participants have requested TRAFFIC India to organize such programmes periodically as it helps them to know about the new judgements and notifications in wildlife cases in India.

TRAFFIC India designs each such programme after careful interaction with the user agency and experts to ensure that the content and delivery of such programmes meet the expectations and requirements of the user agency. The customization of such programmes has been very useful as is borne out by the regular requests received for conducting more of these, including requests for repeat programmes by various agencies.

Deep search metal detectors to help find snares and traps in the forest



TRAFFIC India and National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) organized a training of the forest guards of Sariska and Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve on use of deep search metal detectors. These metal detectors help to locate snares set up by poachers to catch Tigers and other wild animals. The training was organized at Sariska on 8–9 January 2009 and at Bandhavgarh on 5–7 February 2009.

"Metal snares are often used to catch Tigers and other big cats, but they are almost impossible to find because they are cleverly camouflaged. However, by using deep search metal detectors, forest guards can now find even the most cleverly hidden traps", said Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India.

Over 35 forest officials were trained at Sariska Tiger Reserve and over 40 at Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve. TRAFFIC has provided a set of metal detectors to each of the Reserves for their day-to-day patrolling.

Deep search metal detectors are ideal for remote field operations because they are robust, simple to assemble and use, and do not require complicated maintenance or handling. The detectors can also be used during post-mortem examinations to see if snared animals have bullet wounds. This helps strengthen legal follow-up that leads to more effective prosecutions for poaching. The use of metal detectors is likely to have a deterrent effect in the long run, simply as poachers become aware that a new technology is in place to stop their efforts.

TRAFFIC India along with providing full training in the use of detectors has also developed a handy manual in English and Hindi to help field personnel.

"The feedback from trainees is very positive and they see many benefits from using the equipment", said Sinha. Senior officials are enthusiastic too, and several have contacted TRAFFIC to ask how they can obtain more detectors.

TRAFFIC India's metal detector programme, which is generously funded by WWF-UK and WWF-Germany, has provided equipment to various Tiger Reserves throughout India, including well-known ones such as Corbett, Ranthambore, Kanha, Pench, Simlipal, Bandhavgarh and Rajaji.



© Samir Sinha

Forest staff using deep search metal detectors at Sariska

Kudos to security forces for helping curb illegal wildlife trade



TRAFFIC India congratulates the Indian Army and other security forces for actively conducting wildlife seizures and helping to check illegal wildlife trade. The Army last year agreed to provide support to TRAFFIC India by sharing actionable information gathered by its Intelligence Units across the country on poaching and illegal wildlife trade, especially at the trans-boundary level. Some of the significant wildlife seizures made by these agencies since the beginning of 2009 are:

- Five hundred and eighty pangolin scales were recovered from a woman courier, by the Assam Rifles on 23 June 2009 at Bongyang checkpost, Chanded district, Manipur.
- Twenty tons of Red Sanders *Pterocarpus santalinus* were seized by the Assam Rifles on 22 June 2009 at Bongyang, Chanded district, Manipur.
- Two poachers were arrested and a .315 bore rifle and 15 detonators were seized at Marigaon district, Assam, on 4 May 2009, by the Mangaldai Wildlife Division with assistance from troops of 77 Mountain Brigade, Red Horns Division, Indian Army.
- Eighteen suspected poachers were detained inside the Chakrasila Wildlife Sanctuary, Assam, on 31 March 2009 by the army personnel of Red Horns Division. Arms and other lethal weapons were recovered from them.
- Two Tiger *Panthera tigris* skulls and paws, 16 kg of Tiger bone, 340 kg of pangolin scales and 191 deer antlers were seized by the Assam Rifles on 16 February 2009 at Bongyang. The seized items were found in a truck heading towards Moreh, Manipur (border town with Myanmar). This catch was followed up with two successive seizures of six kilogrammes of Leopard *Panthera pardus* bones and eight skulls of various other wild animal bones on 23 February 2009 and five kilogrammes of pangolin scales and 33 deer antlers on 24 February 2009.
- A Leopard skin and 4.5 kg of Tiger bones were seized by the Indo Tibetan Border Police on 13 February 2009 at Jaigaon, West Bengal, from a Bhutanese boy who was allegedly carrying these body parts.
- Thirty truck loads of Red Sanders *Pterocarpus santalinus* were seized at Bongyang in January 2009 by the Assam Rifles. The trucks were on their way to Myanmar and had come all the way from Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

MALAYSIAN ARMY TO BE TRAINED FOR WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT

TRAFFIC Southeast Asia (TSEA) in collaboration with WWF-Malaysia is engaging with the Malaysian Army on curbing illegal wildlife trade. TSEA has recently conducted a workshop with the Malaysian Army. Based on its experience of working together with the Indian Army, TRAFFIC India has also offered their support for this and has sent relevant training material and other details for this engagement.

TRAFFIC's network meeting organized in India



The TRAFFIC network WWF/IUCN Wildlife Trade Meeting was from 26—30 November 2008 at Ramnagar, Uttarakhand, India. TRAFFIC India was instrumental in organizing this meeting which had over 50 participants from all the TRAFFIC offices (Australia, Europe, East Africa, Central Africa, Southern Africa, South America, North America, East Asia and South-east Asia) and from TRAFFIC International, based in Cambridge, UK, and also from IUCN, the International Union for Conservation for Nature, and WWF, the global conservation organization.

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TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Disclaimer: The content for this section has been directly taken from news articles and website links which are reproduced below. TRAFFIC does not hold any responsibility regarding the authenticity of the information in these news articles.

Forty-three jailed for smuggling animal parts in Madhya Pradesh

In January 2009, 43 people were sentenced in Madhya Pradesh's Katni Forest Division for poaching and smuggling of animal parts. Minister of State for Forests (independent charge), Rajendra Shukla, said in an official statement that of these 43 people, 11 were sentenced to three years' imprisonment, 18 for two years and the remaining 14 for one year.

Prominent among those who were sentenced were international poachers like Shabbir Qureshi and Darya Singh, Shukla said. Both were arrested along with Ashok Pardhi, a known poacher, in June 2004 and seven Leopard skins were seized from their possession. All three have been sentenced to three years' imprisonment each. Property worth INR20 million was seized from Qureshi.

Darya Singh, who was arrested for smuggling Tiger and Leopard skins, had cases registered against him in Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

TRAFFIC India congratulates the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department and other enforcement agencies involved for being able to ensure strong conviction in this wildlife case. Even though the punishment can not replace the damage that has already been done to the wildlife by these notorious poachers, it will act as a deterrent for all those who continue to operate in this clandestine wildlife trade.

Source:
<http://www.dailytimesindia.com/2009/01/29866.htm>

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The main purpose of the meeting was to share experiences while highlighting the recent areas of progress, opportunities and challenges in various regions of work, enumerate the drivers of illegal and/or unsustainable trade and specify approaches to tackle these, and finally to set and plan programme goals for the years 2009—12. There was also a special session on overview of wildlife trade in India and South Asia which had additional participants from TRAFFIC India's partner organizations, State government, etc. The session was chaired by Dr R.B.S. Rawat, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests—Uttarakhand. Participants included Mr S. Chandola, Chief Wildlife Warden—Uttarakhand; Mr Brijendra Singh, Hon. Wildlife Warden, Corbett Tiger Reserve; Mr A. K. Mukerji, retired DG (Forests), Govt. of India; Mr Sanjeev Chaddha, Joint Secretary, Central Empowered Committee of the Supreme Court of India; Mr S.P. Yadav, Joint Director, National Tiger Conservation Authority; Ms Tania Plahey and Mr Arif Hussein, DEFRA (the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs); Mr Vinod Singhal, Field Director, Corbett Tiger Reserve; and representatives of The Corbett Foundation and Rainbow Friends of Nature.



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Mr Steven Broad, Executive Director-TRAFFIC said, "We are thankful to TRAFFIC India for helping us organize this meeting in India. We are hopeful that the learning here will culminate in on-the-ground action".

"At a time when illegal wildlife trade is taking a heavy toll on our precious flora and fauna, it is imperative to enhance our current work and initiate actions that will help curb this trade and regulate it in a manner such that it is not a threat to the conservation of nature. We are hopeful that the goals and targets set for 2009—12 during the meeting will help us achieve this" he added.

OUTPOST: ASEAN countries make major progress on wildlife, habitat conservation



The Government of Thailand, with support from the World Bank, ASEAN-WEN, the Save the Tiger Fund, TRAFFIC, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the FREELAND Foundation, held an important meeting to strengthen regional co-operation to curb illegal wildlife trade. This meeting, "A Forgotten Crisis: Arresting Wildlife Depletion through Strengthened Partnerships and Regional Cooperation", was held from April 10—12 in Pattaya, Thailand. It concluded with strong commitments by Asian governments and international partners to co-ordinate enforcement efforts in a concerted effort to halt wildlife crime and habitat depletion.

ASEAN-WEN is the region's largest environmental law enforcement network. It links scores of environmental agencies, police organizations, Customs bureaus and members of the judiciary from all 10 ASEAN member countries to share intelligence, conduct investigations, and train officers to combat wildlife trafficking and implement international and national laws regulating wildlife trade.

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TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Sixteen jailed for poaching Lions in Gujarat

On 26 February 2009, a Gujarat court sentenced seven women and nine men to five years in jail for poaching specimens of the rare Asiatic Lion *Panthera leo persica*. They were also fined INR2000. This was the third and final round of sentencing in the notorious poaching case. The accused were arrested for poaching six Asiatic Lions from Gir in Gujarat and illegal possession of wildlife articles. Two Lion claws too were recovered from the main accused Kuntar Singh and Nanaka Singh during their arrest in April 2008.

These 16 were convicted under sections 120 & 429 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) which carries a maximum of four years' imprisonment and a INR1000 fine. They were also convicted under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 which carries a sentence of five years and a INR1000 fine. Both the sentences, however, will run concurrently.

"What is notable is that this judgement is the third consecutive conviction in the Lion poaching case. In all the three cases it was the same gang. What held true in the earlier two cases held true in this one too", said Inspector General of Police (Prisons) Keshav Kumar. "One of the accused, Prabhakar Keshav Gajakosh, a politician and timber contractor was also sentenced. He was the international link for the Indian wildlife mafia and was arrested by Karnataka police on tip-off by the Gujarat police. Twenty three Tiger skins, 20 Leopard skins and 23 other skins were seized from him".

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Asiatic Lion, also known as the Indian Lion, is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, under which poaching and trade in the species is prohibited and punishable by law. It is listed in Appendix I of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) under which international commercial trade in the species is illegal.

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With illegal trade in wildlife estimated at over USD10 billion across Asia, second only to weapons and drug smuggling, participants at the conference made a call to action, with agreement on a new wildlife manifesto, "Combating Wildlife Crime in Asia," supported by ASEAN Secretary-General Surin Pitsuwan, Thailand Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, H.E. Suwit Khunkitti, and World Bank President Robert Zoellick.

Mr Zoellick, in his message, said, "ASEAN members, other interested countries in Asia, and a powerful coalition of partners in civil society with strong support from the World Bank have come together today to tackle wildlife crime head on and to take smart steps—immediate steps—to co-ordinate a regional law enforcement response to protect endangered species and protect habitats".

James Compton, Asia-Pacific Programme Co-ordinator of TRAFFIC, presented the study "What's Driving the Wildlife Trade?" at this international workshop. This study is a review of expert opinion on economic and social drivers of wildlife trade and trade control efforts in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam. All four of these countries are among the South-east Asian countries that act as major sources of wildlife in trade. The trade examines the factors that influence wildlife trade in South-east Asia, and in particular trade that is illegal and/or unsustainable. To view the report please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2008/10/3/new-study-on-whats-driving-the-wildlife-trade-in-south-east.html>

"Since its inception in 2005, ASEAN-WEN has become a model for regional cooperation in transnational law enforcement on illegal wildlife trade. We are hopeful that South Asian countries will similarly come together to set up a

regional mechanism for trans-boundary enforcement. TRAFFIC is already working with South Asian countries towards this" said Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India.

For more information visit www.asean-wen.org



James Compton(R) & Samir Sinha - TRAFFIC, presenting "What's Driving the Wildlife Trade?" in Pattaya

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



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Lions are victims of habitat loss and human-wildlife conflict in India, as well as victims of illegal wildlife trade. Strong and timely convictions such as those in the Gujarat Lion poaching case mentioned above have set a benchmark for effective investigations and prosecutions to curb illegal wildlife trade in India. The Gujarat Police must be complimented for their efforts.

Source: <http://www.headlinesindia.com/state-news/gujarat/16-jailed-for-five-years-for-poaching-lions-in-gujarat-7797.html>

Tantrik who advised woman to sacrifice a rhino arrested

In March 2005, the Mumbai police arrested a 36-year-old tantrik who took nearly INR300 000 from a 30-year-old woman and duped her into believing that sacrificing a rhinoceros would help her find a match. The accused, Farid Shah, even promised to go to Uttar Pradesh to catch a rhino!

The victim came across an advertisement in a vernacular daily stating that performing a certain puja would solve all their problems. The woman, a computer engineer and employed as manager in a city-based software company, immediately called up Shah and sought an appointment, the police said. "After listening to my problem, Shah asked me to perform a puja and sacrifice a hen or goat. Later, he told me to sacrifice a buffalo, after which, he claimed, I would start getting marriage proposals within 20 days," she said in her complaint.

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CITES UPDATE:

Bosnia and Herzegovina join CITES



Bosnia and Herzegovina, situated in south-eastern Europe, bordering Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, joined CITES as its 175th Party.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is home to nearly 90 species listed in the CITES Appendices, in particular many species of orchid and birds of prey. CITES trade with Bosnia and Herzegovina comprises mainly medicinal plants (exports) and reptile leather products (imports). The Convention entered into force in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 21 April 2009.

CITES UPDATE:
Qatar to host the next CoP



The 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP 15) will be held in Doha, Qatar. The Government of Qatar had earlier agreed to organize this meeting in January 2010 and later requested the CITES Secretariat for more time in order to prepare for this meeting. Finally, both the host country and the CITES Secretariat have agreed in principle that the meeting will be held in Doha from 13—25 March 2010. The Secretariat will soon make a formal announcement to confirm these dates.

CITES UPDATE:
CITES directs Parties to declare all stocks of rhinoceros horn and derivatives



Rhinoceros horn in ivory piles, Kruger National Park, South Africa

Under the *Notification to the Parties* of 25 May 2009, CITES has directed all the member countries to provide status of their stocks of rhinoceros horn and derivatives to the Secretariat in a prescribed format. The Parties have been asked to declare their stocks before the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP 15), due to be held in Doha, Qatar, in March 2010.

This decision was a follow-up of the request that was made under the *Notification to the Parties* of 16 December 2008, asking all member countries to report all seizures of rhinoceros specimens (whether horns or

other rhinoceros products) using the Ecomessage format that was designed by Interpol (see *Notification to the Parties* No. 2008/068 of 16 December 2008 for further details). Any incidents of illegal trade in rhinoceros specimens should also be reported, as should any rhinoceros poaching incidents where persons are detained or suspected. Earlier at its 57th meeting (Geneva, July 2008), the CITES Standing Committee had agreed that a CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force should be convened to address illegal trade in specimens of this species. A Task Force, consisting of representatives from mainland China, Hong Kong S.A.R., Kenya, India, Mozambique, Nepal, South Africa, Thailand, Viet Nam, Yemen and Zimbabwe, together with the CITES Secretariat, ICPO-Interpol and the Lusaka Agreement Task Force, was set up. The task force met in Nairobi, Kenya, on 18 and 19 November 2008.

The Task Force agreed that poaching of rhinoceroses and illegal trade in rhinoceros specimens had reached serious levels in some countries. It was noted that a number of individuals appeared to have engaged repeatedly in poaching of rhinoceroses, dealing in their horns and the smuggling of specimens from one continent to another. However, it was also noted that information regarding such individuals has not been widely shared, collated centrally or effectively analysed. The Task Force was of the firm opinion that opportunities to bring such people, and their associates to justice had been missed. Following this, all member countries were asked to declare not only the stocks of rhinoceros horn and derivatives but also report in future any seizures of rhinoceros horn and derivatives.

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She visited Shah again after 20 days, when she was told to sacrifice a rhino. After Shah became non-traceable, the victim lodged a complaint with the police.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

From time immemorial, tantriks and other witchcraft practitioners have been using wildlife in some form or other in their occult practices. In order to make some easy money, they prescribe sacrificing wild animals and sometimes consuming their body parts as a remedy for people's ailments and their other problems. Among other wildlife, owls are one of the most exploited groups of species for this practice. Tantriks and rural medicine men prescribe, among other remedies: owl-eye broth for night vision, owl claws as good luck charms, owl feathers to repel evil spirits, owl meat as aphrodisiac and owl torture for directions to hidden treasure.

Indian Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* is a highly endangered species. It is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and its international trade is banned under CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

Source:
<http://madraswanderer.blogspot.com/2009/03/miseries-of-being-owl.html>;
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Mumbai/Police-nab-tantrik-who-duped-woman-of-Rs-3L/articleshow/4311582.cms>

Four arrested while trying to sell Leopard skin

On 13 April 2009, four persons were arrested while trying to sell a Leopard skin in Udthagamandalam, Tamil Nadu. A team of forest officials pretending to be buyers had established contact with the gang. When the culprits turned up for the transaction they were nabbed.

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TRAFFIC India adds.....

TRAFFIC India congratulates the Tamil Nadu Forest Department for cracking this case. The information regarding the sale of the Leopard skin was anonymously sent to TRAFFIC India and was further passed to the Forest Department. The Department immediately acted on it and detained the poachers. More arrests and recoveries are likely after investigation.

Source:

www.thehindu.com/2009/04/15/stories/2009041554330400.htm

Bears continue to be poached for bile

In May 2009, a gang of poachers struck again in the forests of Vidarbha, Maharashtra. They poached two Sloth Bears and decamped with their paws and bile. The incident took place at Gangazari in Tiroda. Mukesh Ganatra, Deputy Conservator of Forests, Gondia said, "It is a clear case of electrocution. The matter came to light on May 19 when locals reached their farms in the morning". The bodies were found in farmland. The bears were estimated to be three years old. Sources said that the modus operandi strikingly resembled that of the Katni gang of poachers from Central India.

The wildlife in Vidarbha is reeling under severe threat of poaching after the poisoning of two deer and other animals near Bhandara, and fears of nearly 20 Tigers having been poached outside Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve.

TRAFFIC India adds.....



© WWF-Canon / Y.-J. REY-MILLET

There are four species of bear found in India—Himalayan Black Bear *Selenarctos thibetanus*, the Himalayan Brown Bear *Ursus arctos*, Sun Bear *Helarctos malayanus* and the Sloth Bear *Melursus ursinus*. The Brown Bear, Sun Bear and the Sloth Bear are protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 while the Himalayan Black Bear is protected under Schedule II, Part II. Hunting and trade in all four species is banned under this Act. Furthermore, international commercial trade in these species is prohibited under CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

In India, populations of all the bear species have suffered significantly due to illegal trade of bear gall bladders and bile. Bear bile is used in medicines in countries like China, Japan and South Korea and is also used occasionally in Ayurvedic and Tibetan medicines. South Korea is believed to be the largest consumer of bear parts in the world. Gall bladders and bile extracts are often smuggled out as frozen food and cannot be easily distinguished from those of cows, sheep or pigs, thus making detection extremely difficult for the enforcement agencies. Bear paws, meat, and fat are also traded alongside and are considered a delicacy in many Asian countries.

Source:

<http://www.dnaindia.com/report.asp?newsid=1257906>

<http://www.animalalliance.ca/kids/anipart1.htm>

<http://www.animalsasia.org/index.php?UID=G7C61FB6ZY89>

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Twenty one monitor lizards seized from smugglers

In June 2009, 21 monitor lizards were rescued from the clutches of smugglers at Suhelwa wildlife sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh. Sources said that these lizards were on their way to China via Nepal. The forest team arrested smugglers and handed them over to Sirsia police. The accused were residents of Badalpur village.

According to forest officers, monitor lizards are boiled and their oil is extracted for purported medicinal purposes. Their meat is also in demand in India, Nepal, China and many other countries. Their skin is also used for making shoes, purse, bags and other items.

Last year in October 2008, the Tamil Nadu Forest Department seized two monitor lizards from a canteen at Villianur, Puducherry. The lizards were kept for preparing meat dishes at the canteen, said officials of the Department.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

There are four species of monitor lizard found in India—Bengal Monitor *Varanus bengalensis*, Yellow Monitor *Varanus flavescens*, Desert Monitor *Varanus griseus* and Indian Water Monitor *Varanus salvator*. All of these are protected under the Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, under which hunting and trade of the species is banned. Indian Water Monitor Lizard is listed in Appendix II of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) while all the other three species are listed in Appendix I. The international trade of all four species to and from India is prohibited.



© Hartmut JUNGIUS / WWF-Canon

Monitor lizards are victims of habitat loss as well as targets of the illegal reptile skin trade. Live monitors are also seen in India during festivals and in fertility rites. Their eggs are considered a delicacy and the entire animal is also eaten; oil extracted from fat is used in the treatment of failing eyesight and in cooking. Monitor fat is used as an aphrodisiac and the excretion is used in the treatment of eye and skin diseases. Travelling *hakims* in India also exhibit a variety of drugs and tonics derived from these animal sources.

Source:

http://www.zsienvs.in/endb/end_reptilia/reptilia_data/varanus_salvator.htm

http://www.zsienvs.in/endb/end_reptilia/reptilia_data/varanus_bengalensis.htm

<http://envfor.nic.in/divisions/re/ta5p5.html><http://www.expressbuzz.com/edition/print.aspx?artid=0s1fPYCUMak=>

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Allahabad/Smugglers-arrested-with-monitor-lizards/articleshow/4609882.cms>

<http://www.hindu.com/2008/10/31/stories/2008103150730200.htm>

IN FOCUS:
Is 2009 a year of doom for the Tiger?



45 tigers killed so far this year

Experts cite govt failure in curbing poaching, increasing human presence

Gyan Varma, NEW DELHI

The government has been making all the right noises about its efforts to save the tiger. But the results, so far, have been little to roar about — 2009 has, in fact, been the

deadliest in recent years for the big cats. There is also a worrying trend of tiger deaths due to man-animal conflict, and not just poaching.

Despite millions being pumped into saving tigers and interventions at the highest level, as many as 100 tigers

have been killed in the past three years. Sources in Project Tiger, set up by the ministry of environment and forest, also confirm that the first six months of 2009 accounted for 45 of those deaths. In the past two years, government statistics show 28 tiger deaths in 2008 and 27 in 2007. Two years ago, Madhya Pradesh's Panna reserve boasted at least two dozen tigers. Now it has none.

"The government has been unable to control poaching," said Sunita Narain, chairperson, National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), the empowered committee appointed by the government. She says though NTCA had submitted a report to the government, cautioning it about the increasing number of deaths this year, no action has been taken.

"There is no dearth of funds



IN ALL: 100 deaths over last three years

THIS YEAR: 45 and counting

POISONED: At least 12 confirmed cases

with the government. But it is unable to protect the tigers because the guards are too old and cannot run around the reserves to break the nexus of poachers," said Narain, adding that recruitment is handled by the states and the centre has not much say in it.



exclusive

Daily News & Analysis, Ahmedabad
29 June 2009, Page 7

The recent spate in Tiger mortality reported from across the country has left most conservationists wondering about the future of Tigers in India. Over 45 Tiger deaths have been reported since the beginning of 2009. The Tiger is a victim of habitat degradation, illegal wildlife trade and human-wildlife conflict. Unless concerted efforts are taken to save the species in the wild, the future appears bleak for the Tiger.

The Tiger *Panthera tigris* is an endangered species and is listed under the Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. It is also India's National Animal.

This Act gives it protection against hunting/poaching and trade of skins, bones and other body parts. Any person who commits such an offence is punishable with an imprisonment of not less than three years, extending up to seven years, along with a fine of not less than INR50 000 which may extend up to INR200 000. In the event of a second or subsequent conviction, an offender can receive imprisonment for a term of not less than seven years and a fine of not less than INR500 000 that can vary up to a maximum of INR5 000 000.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) presently, renders international commercial trade in Tiger parts illegal. India has been a signatory to this convention since the year 1975.

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Besides habitat degradation and loss and human-wildlife conflict, illegal trade in Tiger bone, skins and other body parts has been one of the primary threats to the survival of the species in the wild. However, with support from the international community, efforts have been directed to curb this trade. For example, at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP 14), the ban on international trade in Tiger parts and derivatives was reinforced and China was asked to phase out its privately run "Tiger farms" that presently house over 4000 of these big cats. Owners of these farms have been pressurising the Chinese government to allow legal trade in Tiger parts. Finally, the CITES Parties adopted a strong Tiger trade decision by consensus. "Tigers should not be bred for their parts or derivatives" was the unequivocal message from the forum.

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The news of Panna Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh having lost all its Tigers is not only alarming, given the small number of wild Tigers that remain today but also embarrassing for the country. In 2004, when Sariska was declared Tiger less, it was an extremely sad time in the history of conservation. Now for Panna to happen a few years down the line shows we have not learnt our lesson. What is even more disturbing are the signals suggesting that there could be several other Tiger Reserves in a similar situation.

Even though the National Tiger Conservation Authority has issued a series of advisories to strengthen the protection of wild Tigers in India but it remains to be seen how these are implemented at the ground level.

Mr Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India said, "Leadership in protection of Tigers is clearly to emerge at the field level. Every single wild Tiger irrespective of where it is found is under threat. All Tiger bearing areas must put in place effective planning for strengthening security for wild Tigers and carry out periodic audits of such security measures including by independent evaluators. TRAFFIC has offered its support and commitment to state forest departments and other enforcement agencies for handling this crisis".

Continued on page 14

Survey finds 'no signs' of tigers in Panna

NEHA SINHA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 3

FOR THE FIRST time, Panna tiger reserve lost all its tigresses to poachers. Now, it may have lost its tigers as well.

According to sources at the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) tracking the camera-trapping evidence, there are now no signs of tigers in the once densely populated reserve.

While Madhya Pradesh continues to deny that Panna may have lost all its tigers, it has interestingly asked the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests for permission to translocate a tiger to the reserve, calling it part of a "long-term plan". The ministry has so far not cleared its request.

Panna had between 16-24 tigers till 2006 and close to 40 tigers in 2002. However, a WII survey using 42 cameras found 'signs' of a maximum of two tigers in December-January in Panna, with two of the pictures belonging to the same tiger. However, since then, the continuous camera trapping has not shown any signs of the animals, WII scientists say.

Calling this serious, tiger scientist Raghu Choudhary, who has worked extensively with WII and is an expert on Panna, says: "This is a situation worse than Sariska because Panna had more than 40 tigers. This is complete and total loss."

The WII survey also confirmed that Panna had no more tigresses, a charge Madhya Pradesh had denied till the findings. To deal with this, the state is in the process of acquiring two tigresses, one each from Bandhavgarh and Kanha. In fact, to hurry up the process, the state has even ditched the elaborate aerial route and a tigress is right now on its way from Bandhavgarh by road to the reserve. The second tigress is likely to be moved from Kanha soon. Originally, a helicopter was to do the translocation and a rescue of Panna had been carried out for this purpose.

Dr H Paha, Chief Wildlife Warden, Madhya Pradesh, says the request that a tiger be translocated as well is part of the same plan. "There are male tigers in Panna," he says, "but the population is scattered. When the females are translocated here, they might not find tigers to mate with. Thus we have a long-term plan of translocating a tiger too."

A senior official from the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests said the question of agreeing to Madhya Pradesh's request for a tiger "does not arise" at the moment. "No permission has been given so far to translocate a male tiger in addition to translocating the two females.

Experts are demanding an investigation. "If there is indeed a male tiger or two male tigers in Panna, they should be radio-collared and monitored. If Madhya Pradesh claims that it still has male tigers, then they shouldn't have to ask for another tiger translocation," says Choudhary.

*The Indian Express, New Delhi
3 March 2009, Page 4*

Continued from page 13

AN OVERVIEW OF TIGER DEATHS SINCE THE BEGINNING OF 2009:

S. NO	DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER OF TIGER DEATHS
1	19 June 2009	Bor Dam, Pipalparao Forest Range, Terai Central Forest Division, Uttarakhand	1
2	12 June 2009	Bandipur National Park, Karnataka	1
3	4 June 2009	Nagarhole National Park, Karnataka	1
4	2 June 2009	Vanvihar National Park, Bhopal	1
5	30 May 2009	Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary, Goa	1
6	27 May 2009	Ramnagar Forest Division, Uttarakhand	1
7	23 May 2009	Ramnagar Forest Division, Uttarakhand	1
8	14 May 2009	Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan	1
9	13 May 2009	Outskirts of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra	1
10	7 May 2009	Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	1
11	6 May 2009	Chiroli, Chandrapur	1
12	25 April 2009	Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary, Orissa	1
13	24 April 2009	Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	1
14	18 April 2009	Kaziranga National Park, Assam	1
15	13 April 2009	Keri Forest, Goa	1
16	12 April 2009	Gangaram village, Narsampet, Warrangal, Andhra Pradesh	1
17	12 April 2009	Kanha Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	1
18	10 April 2009	Panna Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	1
19	4 April 2009	Pench Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	1
20	4 April 2009	Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan	1
21	2 April 2009	Van Vihar National Park, Bhopal	1
22	25 March 2009	Adhyalmendha lake, Chandrapur, Maharashtra	1
23	24 March 2009	Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra	1
24	23 March 2009	Kaziranga Tiger Reserve, Assam	1
25	18 March 2008	Bhadravati, Chandrachur	1
26	17 March 2009	Corbett Tiger Reserve, Uttarakhand	1
27	10 March 2009	Corbett Tiger Reserve, Uttarakhand	1
28	7 March 2009	Corbett Tiger Reserve, Uttarakhand	1
29	4 March 2008	Kanha Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	1
30	26 February 2009	Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra	1
31	26 February 2009	Corbett Tiger Reserve, Uttarakhand	1
32	24 February 2009	Faizabad district, Uttar Pradesh	1
33	22 February 2009	Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra	1
34	13 February 2009	Kaziranga Tiger Reserve, Assam	1
35	8 February 2009	Pilibhit, Uttar Pradesh	1
36	31 January 2009	Kanha Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	1
37	29 January 2009	Corbett Tiger Reserve, Uttarakhand	1
38	29 January 2009	Kanha Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	1
39	23 January 2009	Tadoba-andhari Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra	1
40	21 January 2009	Kaziranga Tiger Reserve, Assam	1
41	20 January 2009	Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	1
42	18 January 2009	Kanha Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	1
43	10 January 2009	Kaziranga Tiger Reserve, Assam	1
44	7 January 2009	Kanha Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	1
45	5 January 2009	Kaziranga Tiger Reserve, Assam	1
46	3 January 2009	Kanha Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	2
47	3 January 2009	Kaziranga Tiger Reserve, Assam	1
48	2 January 2009	Bhandara, Maharashtra	1

Please note: Atleast 11 Tiger skins and other derivatives have been recovered from over 18 seizures conducted since the beginning of 2009.

SIGNPOST: Other significant news stories to read



World's richest biodiversity hotspots are most war prone: More than 80 percent of the world's major conflicts have taken place in the most biologically rich and diverse places on earth, a new study says. These hotspots are considered top conservation priorities because they house more than half of all plant species and at least 42 percent of all vertebrates, and are highly threatened. For more information, please visit <http://www.fastnews.in/world-news/worlds-richest-biodiversity-hotspots-are-most-war-prone>

Global CITES operation nets over 4500 specimens of endangered species in one day: The summary result of an intensive global one-day CITES operation carried out by 90 Customs administrations across the globe on 15 January 2009 reveals seizures totalling 4630 live specimens of endangered species as well as products and derivatives. These seizures included specimens from as many as 80 kinds of species, including ivory tusks, musk, Tiger derivatives, caviar, rhinoceros horns, lynx, snow lotus, and Lion skins with many of the species regarded as critically endangered and at the edge of extinction. For more information, please visit <http://www.cites.org/eng/news/sundry/2009/WCO-cites-operation.shtml>

Dead Tigers to be frozen, studied: In a bid to fix accountability and check the practice of showing unnatural Tiger deaths as natural, the National Tiger Conservation Authority in India has decided that each dead Tiger will be deep-frozen, stored and studied by an independent team to ascertain how it died. A team formed for this purpose will include an official from the Authority, a State veterinary doctor and a non-governmental Tiger expert nominated by the chief wildlife warden of the State. They will treat injured Tigers too. For more information, please visit <http://www.physorg.com/news163646477.html>

Pink or red? experts debate corals' future: Coral experts met in March 2009 in Hong Kong to discuss ways to stop the over-exploitation of pink and red corals in the world's oceans. Millions of items and thousands of kilogrammes of red and pink coral those in the genus *Corallium* are traded internationally each year as jewellery and in other collectables. For more information, please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2009/3/23/pink-or-redexperts-debate-corals-future.html>

Thousand new species in Greater Mekong: Over 1000 new species have been discovered in the Greater Mekong Region of South-east Asia since 1997, says a new report by WWF. Among the most incredible finds documented in First Contact in the Greater Mekong are the Lao Rock Rat, thought to have gone extinct 11 million years ago but discovered in a Lao food market; the hot-pink "dragon millipede" that produces cyanide in self-defence; the world's largest huntsman spider, which has a leg span of over 30 centimeters; and a new species of purple banana from Southern China. For more information, please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2008/12/17/1000-new-species-in-greater-mekong.html>

Myanmar emerges as ivory trade and elephant smuggling hotspot: Around 250 live Asian Elephants have been smuggled from Myanmar in the past decade, mostly destined for "elephant trekking" tourism activities in neighbouring Thailand, a new report by TRAFFIC has revealed. Meanwhile blatant illegal ivory trade continues in Myanmar, with TRAFFIC surveys of 14 markets and three border markets in Thailand and China finding 9000 pieces of ivory and 16 whole tusks for sale. For more information, please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2008/12/10/myanmar-emerges-as-ivory-trade-and-elephant-smuggling-hot-sp.html>

Corrigenda

In the November 2008 issue of the TRAFFIC Post, under the TRAFFIC Alert section on page 6, it was stated that "Lion skin was seized in Chhattisgarh". This was on the basis of newspaper reports. It has since been pointed out that what was seized was not a Lion skin but a Tiger skin.

Also on page 8, under the TRAFFIC Alert section, it stated that the Tiger trade racket was busted in north India in September 2008. Please note that the seizure actually took place in July 2008. These errors are regretted.

HEADLINES

SHAHTOOSH SHAWLS WORTH CRORES SEIZED AT DELHI AIRPORT

Customs officials have seized 100 shawls worth crores of rupees at Delhi airport...



Police and Customs officials seized 100 shawls worth crores of rupees at Delhi airport...

Leopard count down by 69 in eight weeks

At Least 36 Big Cats Were Poisoned, Trapped Or Died Of Accidents Between January 1 & February 25

Wildlife officials have reported a sharp decline in the leopard population...

LEOPARD TOLL



Wildlife officials have reported a sharp decline in the leopard population...

Wildlife officials have reported a sharp decline in the leopard population...

Over 50 blackbucks die in Rajasthan wildlife sanctuary

Bikaner (Rajasthan) June 2: Over 50 blackbucks recently died out of a flock...

Census counts 1572 croes in Bhitarkanika

Wildlife officials have reported a sharp decline in the leopard population...



POACHERS ENDANGER TURTLES

Endangered turtles are being hunted for their shells...



Endangered turtles are being hunted for their shells...

93 lions have died in Guj in 3 yrs

Wildlife officials have reported a sharp decline in the leopard population...

ROAR'S GONE

Table with 4 columns: Year, Count, etc.



Wildlife officials have reported a sharp decline in the leopard population...

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TRAFFIC POST

the wildlife trade monitoring network

ISSUE 6
JUNE, 2009

TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



TRAFFIC INDIA UPDATE

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- **Sniffer dogs** to help curb illegal wildlife trade Pg 3



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- **Enforcement agencies receive training** on wildlife law enforcement Pg 3
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- **Bosnia and Herzegovina** join CITES Pg 8
- **Qatar** to host the next CITES CoP Pg 9
- **CITES directs Parties** to declare all stocks of rhinoceros horn and derivatives Pg 9



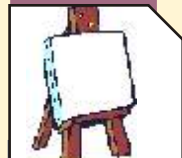
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IN FOCUS



TRAFFIC ALERT



SIGNPOST

- **Is 2009 a year of doom** for the Tiger? Pg 12



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TRAFFIC Alert (Latest news on the trends in illegal wildlife trade in India):

- **Forty- three jailed** for smuggling animal parts in Madhya Pradesh Pg 6
- **Sixteen jailed** for poaching Lions in Gujarat Pg 7
- **Tantrik who advised woman to sacrifice a rhino arrested** Pg 8



© MKS Pasha

- **Four arrested** while trying to sell Leopard skin Pg 9
- **Bears continued** to be poached for bile Pg 10
- **Twenty one monitor lizards** seized from smugglers Pg 11

SIGNPOST- Other significant news stories to read such as: Pg 15

World's richest biodiversity hotspots are most war prone, Global CITES operation nets over 4500 specimens of endangered species in one day etc.....

OUTPOST



CITES UPDATE

India's wild medicinal plants threatened through over-exploitation



India is a hub for wild-collected medicinal plants in Asia, but key species have declined owing to over-collection for supply of domestic and foreign medicinal markets, and action needs to be taken to ensure the sustainability of supplies.



© Rahul Dutta

Kutki *Picrorhiza kurrooa*

Researchers from TRAFFIC and IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, examined the trade in seven medicinal plant species of conservation concern. These are Desert Cistanche *Cistanche deserticola*, Elephant's Foot *Dioscorea deltoidea*, Jatamansi *Nardostachys grandiflora*, Kutki *Picrorhiza kurrooa*, Red Sanders *Pterocarpus santalinus*, Snakeroot *Rauvolfia serpentina* and Himalayan Yew *Taxus wallichiana*. All of these species are protected under national legislation and international trade controls—the latter including listing in CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) which requires international trade to be maintained within sustainable levels. India emerged as a major destination for trade in all but two of the seven species studied—Desert Cistanche and Himalayan Yew. The findings of the study were revealed in a report released on 24 November 2009 at the WWF-India Secretariat, New Delhi.

Wild plant species form the foundation of healthcare practices throughout much of Asia, particularly traditional practices, such as traditional Chinese medicine, Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Tibetan medicines, whilst compounds such as reserpine from Snakeroot and paclitaxel from Himalayan Yew have important pharmaceutical uses in Europe, North America and elsewhere.

Some species are in demand for their aromatic properties, too, for example the use of Jatamansi oil dates back over a thousand years, whilst Red Sanders is also in demand for its timber and as a source of red dye. In India, collection and processing of medicinal plants contributes at least 35 million work days per year to the poor and under-employed, but rising demand is threatening this vital source of livelihood income both in India and elsewhere.

Many of the medicinal plants in trade in India are collected in alpine regions of neighbouring Nepal, where collection of species such as Jatamansi and Kutki runs to hundreds of tonnes of rhizomes, harvested by thousands of collectors who supply to middlemen who further supply to large-scale wholesalers in Nepal and India. Raw materials are often transported on to wholesale markets in Delhi, Amritsar and Kolkata for onward sale.

Although controls on the collection and trade in medicinal plants exist to bring harvesting levels within sustainable levels, their implementation is frequently poor. Cultivation is routinely promoted as a solution to dwindling supplies but this has its own repercussions. Some species are difficult to grow in artificial conditions and cultivation may be unprofitable for farmers, owing to the long gestation time between planting and commercial harvest.

The report released in New Delhi recommends regional, multi-stakeholder action to improve management of harvests and trade in a way that addresses conservation and development concerns. It promotes implementation of sustainable wild collection practices, which may be the only viable option to ensure sustainable supplies of some of these species. TRAFFIC, the Bundesamt für Naturschutz (BfN), the IUCN/SSC Medicinal Plant Specialist Group (MPSG) and WWF Germany recently launched a new standard on the sustainable collection of wild plants (International Standard for Sustainable Collection of Wild Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, ISSC-MAP), which is currently under trial at several projects worldwide including one in Uttarakhand in the Western Himalayas and one in Karnataka in the Western Ghats.

Under a new agreement in October 2008, the ISSC-MAP became hosted by the FairWild Foundation. In addition to the use of the ISSC-MAP by government institutions and authorities, the FairWild Foundation is developing an industry labelling system so products harvested using the sustainable ISSC-MAP criteria as well as social and fair-trade criteria can be readily recognised and certified. The further use of the standard—now called the FairWild Standard—will be promoted throughout the herbal products industry.

Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India, commented: "TRAFFIC India is delighted to be at the forefront of helping ensure the sustainability of medicinal plant supplies, which is to the benefit of healthcare within India and beyond, to India's plant industry and to many rural poor, who depend on the trade for vital household income."

The study was commissioned by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (Bundesamt für Naturschutz, BfN). The full report "Review of the Status, Harvest, Trade and Management of Seven Asian CITES-listed Medicinal and Aromatic Plant Species" can be downloaded at <http://www.traffic.org/non-traffic-papers/>

Sniffer dogs to help curb illegal wildlife trade



The first two graduates of TRAFFIC India's Sniffer Dog Training Programme have been successfully placed with the Forest Departments of Uttarakhand and Haryana, and are helping the forest staff to counter illegal wildlife trade.

TRAFFIC India has supported the training of dogs for tracking and detecting illegal wildlife products in India. The main purpose of initiating this programme was to bring in new ideas and techniques to assist enforcement agencies to address issues related to poaching and illegal trade.

Despite efforts, illegal wildlife trade continues to prevail and has evolved into an organized activity threatening the survival of many species in India. The current practices for combating illegal wildlife trade have not proved sufficient to curtail this. In order to curb this growing menace, it is necessary that the best enforcement practices are deployed. Using sniffer dogs for crime detection and prevention is one of the long proven practices TRAFFIC has experience of running in several countries.

This programme is less than a year old and has so far trained two sniffer dogs. The training of these dogs was conducted at the Basic Training Centre (BTC) of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) located at Panchkula, Haryana. The centre is the National Dog Training Centre for enforcement agencies such as the police, narcotics departments and bomb squads.

The dogs have been trained to detect hidden wildlife articles such as Tiger bone, Tiger skin, Leopard bone, Leopard skin and bear bile. They have been placed with the Forest Departments of Uttarakhand and Haryana and are being used by the staff in detecting illegal wildlife trade.

"Besides helping detect illegal wildlife products in trade, use of these dogs will also have a deterrent effect in the long run" said Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India.



© Rahul Dutta

Sniffer dogs being trained at BTC, Haryana

Enforcement agencies receive training on wildlife law enforcement



As part of the TRAFFIC India's 'capacity-building' programme, workshops were organized at Baripada, Orissa and Corbett National Park in Uttarakhand to help improve understanding amongst enforcement agencies about wildlife laws and their implementation. Training and inputs were provided to a diverse group of officials working on wildlife enforcement related issues. Details of these workshops are given below:

Simlipal Tiger Reserve, Orissa: TRAFFIC India, with support from WWF-India, collaborated with the National Tiger Conservation Authority to organize a two-day training workshop on wildlife enforcement for the officials of Orissa Forest Department. The workshops were held on 16–17 February 2009 and were attended by around 50 officials from Simlipal Tiger Reserve and other adjoining Forest Divisions. Dr S.P. Goyal, Head-Wildlife Forensics, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun; Mr Saurabh Sharma, Advocate, Delhi High Court and Mr B.K. Sharma, Commissioner of Police, Bhubaneswar were some of the key speakers at the workshop.

During the workshop, knowledge and skills on wildlife forensic techniques and implementation of wildlife laws and policies were shared with field managers. The participants were also given a taster of the latest tools and technologies available for curbing illegal trade. A hands-on training session on the use of deep-search metal detectors for locating metal traps inside forest areas was conducted. TRAFFIC India gifted two such metal detectors to Simlipal Tiger Reserve. Literature on wildlife laws was also distributed to the participants. The workshop was organized at the request of the Simlipal Tiger Reserve and was the first such comprehensive training held in Simlipal for the field staff.

Continued on page 4

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TRAFFIC India's poster "Munias of India in the illegal bird-trade" released at the workshop: TRAFFIC India's latest communiqué titled "Munias of India in the illegal bird-trade" has been produced to help enforcement agencies identify the various species of munias in illegal bird-trade in India.

India is home to eight species of munia, all of which are protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Munias are popular aviculture subjects worldwide. Being small in size and adored for their beautiful colouration, melodious calls, low-cost diet and easy captive-

care, they are commercially exploited throughout their range. Although parakeets are the most popular pet birds in terms of preference and popularity, munias rank number one in terms of their sheer volume in bird trade (Ahmed, 2001).

Wildlife forensic kit developed: A Wildlife forensic kit has been jointly developed by TRAFFIC India and Forensic Cell, Wildlife Institute of India. The kit will help forest staff to collect samples in a standardized manner, analysis of which will lead to accurate investigation of the crime scene.

Often forensic samples from the wildlife crime scene are not collected in a standardized and appropriate manner. By the time they reach the forensic lab, they are damaged or have changed their nature, making it difficult for the scientist to provide accurate results. TRAFFIC India's forensic kit will help the forest staff in following a standardized protocol in collection of these samples. The kit contains most of the equipment required to collect samples such as surgical gloves, a plastic pouch, screw-capped vials, an injection syringe, a scalpel blade, forceps, scissors, a slide case, a glass slide, silica gel, filter paper, measuring tape, etc. Also, along with the kit, TRAFFIC India has produced a detailed manual on how to use the kit for collection of meat, skin, scat and blood samples of wild animals meant for forensic analysis.

TRAFFIC India has always encouraged use of forensic science in strengthening wildlife cases for effective conviction and has conducted many training programmes across the country regarding this. Now along with the training, TRAFFIC India is providing these kits to various Forest Divisions across the country.

Corbett Tiger Reserve: An enforcement training workshop was also held at Corbett Wildlife Training Centre at Kalagarh, Corbett Tiger Reserve for the forest staff of the Corbett Landscape. This workshop was organized by TRAFFIC India with support from WWF-India and in collaboration with the National Tiger Conservation Authority and Forest Department of Uttarakhand. The workshop was held on 21–22 February 2009 and was attended by over 50 officials from forest divisions in the Corbett Landscape including, Lansdowne, Terai West, Ramnagar and Haldwani. The key resource persons at the workshop were Mr. Ritwick Dutta, Advocate-Honourable Supreme Court of India; Mr. Vivek Sehajpal, Wildlife Forensics Scientist; Mr. DVS Khatri, Chief Conservator of Forests, Finance & Planning, Uttarakhand Forest Department; and Mr. Narendra Singh, Director-Corbett Wildlife Training Centre, Kalagarh.

Orientation programme on wildlife conservation for the Judiciary



TRAFFIC India and WWF, in partnership with Gauhati High Court and Assam Forest Department, held a two-day orientation programme on wildlife conservation for the Judiciary in Assam. This workshop was a follow-up of the previous workshops that were organized in Guwahati in 2008. The workshop was held on 14–15 March 2009 and was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Justice B.K. Sharma, Gauhati High Court. The programme was attended by 60 senior Judicial Officers from Assam, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura.

Continued on page 5

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The workshop's principal aim was to sensitize the judiciary to issues related to wildlife conservation. The judiciary plays a significant role in championing the cause of forest and biodiversity conservation, and the workshop provided a timely update on the status of forest and wildlife legislation, international conventions on related issues and enforcement of wildlife laws in India.

Hon'ble Justice B.K. Sharma said, "Judges must have in-depth knowledge about the various provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and forest offences. This will help them to handle cases better". He further urged the participating judges to exercise moral responsibilities while dealing with such cases. Mr M.C. Malakar, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF), Assam, presided over the workshop. He talked extensively about the rich biodiversity of north eastern states of India and the tough challenges that lie ahead in preserving it.

Other speakers at the workshop included Hon'ble Justice I.A. Ansari, Gauhati High Court; Dr Bibhav Talukdar, Head-Aranyak, Mr Sanjeev Chadda, Member-Central Empowered Committee (CEC), Mr Vivek Sahajpal, Wildlife Forensic Scientist, Mr Ritwick Dutta, Supreme Court Lawyer and Mr Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India. The workshop was successful in generating interest among the participants about curbing illegal wildlife trade and the implementation of wildlife laws. The participants have requested TRAFFIC India to organize such programmes periodically as it helps them to know about the new judgements and notifications in wildlife cases in India.

TRAFFIC India designs each such programme after careful interaction with the user agency and experts to ensure that the content and delivery of such programmes meet the expectations and requirements of the user agency. The customization of such programmes has been very useful as is borne out by the regular requests received for conducting more of these, including requests for repeat programmes by various agencies.

Deep search metal detectors to help find snares and traps in the forest



TRAFFIC India and National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) organized a training of the forest guards of Sariska and Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve on use of deep search metal detectors. These metal detectors help to locate snares set up by poachers to catch Tigers and other wild animals. The training was organized at Sariska on 8–9 January 2009 and at Bandhavgarh on 5–7 February 2009.

"Metal snares are often used to catch Tigers and other big cats, but they are almost impossible to find because they are cleverly camouflaged. However, by using deep search metal detectors, forest guards can now find even the most cleverly hidden traps", said Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India.

Over 35 forest officials were trained at Sariska Tiger Reserve and over 40 at Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve. TRAFFIC has provided a set of metal detectors to each of the Reserves for their day-to-day patrolling.

Deep search metal detectors are ideal for remote field operations because they are robust, simple to assemble and use, and do not require complicated maintenance or handling. The detectors can also be used during post-mortem examinations to see if snared animals have bullet wounds. This helps strengthen legal follow-up that leads to more effective prosecutions for poaching. The use of metal detectors is likely to have a deterrent effect in the long run, simply as poachers become aware that a new technology is in place to stop their efforts.

TRAFFIC India along with providing full training in the use of detectors has also developed a handy manual in English and Hindi to help field personnel.

"The feedback from trainees is very positive and they see many benefits from using the equipment", said Sinha. Senior officials are enthusiastic too, and several have contacted TRAFFIC to ask how they can obtain more detectors.

TRAFFIC India's metal detector programme, which is generously funded by WWF-UK and WWF-Germany, has provided equipment to various Tiger Reserves throughout India, including well-known ones such as Corbett, Ranthambore, Kanha, Pench, Simlipal, Bandhavgarh and Rajaji.



© Samir Sinha

Forest staff using deep search metal detectors at Sariska

Kudos to security forces for helping curb illegal wildlife trade



TRAFFIC India congratulates the Indian Army and other security forces for actively conducting wildlife seizures and helping to check illegal wildlife trade. The Army last year agreed to provide support to TRAFFIC India by sharing actionable information gathered by its Intelligence Units across the country on poaching and illegal wildlife trade, especially at the trans-boundary level. Some of the significant wildlife seizures made by these agencies since the beginning of 2009 are:

- Five hundred and eighty pangolin scales were recovered from a woman courier, by the Assam Rifles on 23 June 2009 at Bongyang checkpost, Chanded district, Manipur.
- Twenty tons of Red Sanders *Pterocarpus santalinus* were seized by the Assam Rifles on 22 June 2009 at Bongyang, Chanded district, Manipur.
- Two poachers were arrested and a .315 bore rifle and 15 detonators were seized at Marigaon district, Assam, on 4 May 2009, by the Mangaldai Wildlife Division with assistance from troops of 77 Mountain Brigade, Red Horns Division, Indian Army.
- Eighteen suspected poachers were detained inside the Chakrasila Wildlife Sanctuary, Assam, on 31 March 2009 by the army personnel of Red Horns Division. Arms and other lethal weapons were recovered from them.
- Two Tiger *Panthera tigris* skulls and paws, 16 kg of Tiger bone, 340 kg of pangolin scales and 191 deer antlers were seized by the Assam Rifles on 16 February 2009 at Bongyang. The seized items were found in a truck heading towards Moreh, Manipur (border town with Myanmar). This catch was followed up with two successive seizures of six kilogrammes of Leopard *Panthera pardus* bones and eight skulls of various other wild animal bones on 23 February 2009 and five kilogrammes of pangolin scales and 33 deer antlers on 24 February 2009.
- A Leopard skin and 4.5 kg of Tiger bones were seized by the Indo Tibetan Border Police on 13 February 2009 at Jaigaon, West Bengal, from a Bhutanese boy who was allegedly carrying these body parts.
- Thirty truck loads of Red Sanders *Pterocarpus santalinus* were seized at Bongyang in January 2009 by the Assam Rifles. The trucks were on their way to Myanmar and had come all the way from Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

MALAYSIAN ARMY TO BE TRAINED FOR WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT

TRAFFIC Southeast Asia (TSEA) in collaboration with WWF-Malaysia is engaging with the Malaysian Army on curbing illegal wildlife trade. TSEA has recently conducted a workshop with the Malaysian Army. Based on its experience of working together with the Indian Army, TRAFFIC India has also offered their support for this and has sent relevant training material and other details for this engagement.

TRAFFIC's network meeting organized in India



The TRAFFIC network WWF/IUCN Wildlife Trade Meeting was from 26—30 November 2008 at Ramnagar, Uttarakhand, India. TRAFFIC India was instrumental in organizing this meeting which had over 50 participants from all the TRAFFIC offices (Australia, Europe, East Africa, Central Africa, Southern Africa, South America, North America, East Asia and South-east Asia) and from TRAFFIC International, based in Cambridge, UK, and also from IUCN, the International Union for Conservation for Nature, and WWF, the global conservation organization.

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TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Disclaimer: The content for this section has been directly taken from news articles and website links which are reproduced below. TRAFFIC does not hold any responsibility regarding the authenticity of the information in these news articles.

Forty-three jailed for smuggling animal parts in Madhya Pradesh

In January 2009, 43 people were sentenced in Madhya Pradesh's Katni Forest Division for poaching and smuggling of animal parts. Minister of State for Forests (independent charge), Rajendra Shukla, said in an official statement that of these 43 people, 11 were sentenced to three years' imprisonment, 18 for two years and the remaining 14 for one year.

Prominent among those who were sentenced were international poachers like Shabbir Qureshi and Darya Singh, Shukla said. Both were arrested along with Ashok Pardhi, a known poacher, in June 2004 and seven Leopard skins were seized from their possession. All three have been sentenced to three years' imprisonment each. Property worth INR20 million was seized from Qureshi.

Darya Singh, who was arrested for smuggling Tiger and Leopard skins, had cases registered against him in Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

TRAFFIC India congratulates the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department and other enforcement agencies involved for being able to ensure strong conviction in this wildlife case. Even though the punishment can not replace the damage that has already been done to the wildlife by these notorious poachers, it will act as a deterrent for all those who continue to operate in this clandestine wildlife trade.

Source:
<http://www.dailytimesindia.com/2009/01/29866.htm>

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The main purpose of the meeting was to share experiences while highlighting the recent areas of progress, opportunities and challenges in various regions of work, enumerate the drivers of illegal and/or unsustainable trade and specify approaches to tackle these, and finally to set and plan programme goals for the years 2009—12. There was also a special session on overview of wildlife trade in India and South Asia which had additional participants from TRAFFIC India's partner organizations, State government, etc. The session was chaired by Dr R.B.S. Rawat, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests-Uttarakhand. Participants included Mr S. Chandola, Chief Wildlife Warden-Uttarakhand; Mr Brijendra Singh, Hon. Wildlife Warden, Corbett Tiger Reserve; Mr A. K. Mukerji, retired DG (Forests), Govt. of India; Mr Sanjeev Chaddha, Joint Secretary, Central Empowered Committee of the Supreme Court of India; Mr S.P. Yadav, Joint Director, National Tiger Conservation Authority; Ms Tania Plahey and Mr Arif Hussein, DEFRA (the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs); Mr Vinod Singhal, Field Director, Corbett Tiger Reserve; and representatives of The Corbett Foundation and Rainbow Friends of Nature.



© Samir Sinha

Mr Steven Broad, Executive Director-TRAFFIC said, "We are thankful to TRAFFIC India for helping us organize this meeting in India. We are hopeful that the learning here will culminate in on-the-ground action".

"At a time when illegal wildlife trade is taking a heavy toll on our precious flora and fauna, it is imperative to enhance our current work and initiate actions that will help curb this trade and regulate it in a manner such that it is not a threat to the conservation of nature. We are hopeful that the goals and targets set for 2009—12 during the meeting will help us achieve this" he added.

OUTPOST: ASEAN countries make major progress on wildlife, habitat conservation



The Government of Thailand, with support from the World Bank, ASEAN-WEN, the Save the Tiger Fund, TRAFFIC, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the FREELAND Foundation, held an important meeting to strengthen regional co-operation to curb illegal wildlife trade. This meeting, "A Forgotten Crisis: Arresting Wildlife Depletion through Strengthened Partnerships and Regional Cooperation", was held from April 10—12 in Pattaya, Thailand. It concluded with strong commitments by Asian governments and international partners to co-ordinate enforcement efforts in a concerted effort to halt wildlife crime and habitat depletion.

ASEAN-WEN is the region's largest environmental law enforcement network. It links scores of environmental agencies, police organizations, Customs bureaus and members of the judiciary from all 10 ASEAN member countries to share intelligence, conduct investigations, and train officers to combat wildlife trafficking and implement international and national laws regulating wildlife trade.

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TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Sixteen jailed for poaching Lions in Gujarat

On 26 February 2009, a Gujarat court sentenced seven women and nine men to five years in jail for poaching specimens of the rare Asiatic Lion *Panthera leo persica*. They were also fined INR2000. This was the third and final round of sentencing in the notorious poaching case. The accused were arrested for poaching six Asiatic Lions from Gir in Gujarat and illegal possession of wildlife articles. Two Lion claws too were recovered from the main accused Kuntar Singh and Nanaka Singh during their arrest in April 2008.

These 16 were convicted under sections 120 & 429 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) which carries a maximum of four years' imprisonment and a INR1000 fine. They were also convicted under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 which carries a sentence of five years and a INR1000 fine. Both the sentences, however, will run concurrently.

"What is notable is that this judgement is the third consecutive conviction in the Lion poaching case. In all the three cases it was the same gang. What held true in the earlier two cases held true in this one too", said Inspector General of Police (Prisons) Keshav Kumar. "One of the accused, Prabhakar Keshav Gajakosh, a politician and timber contractor was also sentenced. He was the international link for the Indian wildlife mafia and was arrested by Karnataka police on tip-off by the Gujarat police. Twenty three Tiger skins, 20 Leopard skins and 23 other skins were seized from him".

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Asiatic Lion, also known as the Indian Lion, is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, under which poaching and trade in the species is prohibited and punishable by law. It is listed in Appendix I of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) under which international commercial trade in the species is illegal.

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With illegal trade in wildlife estimated at over USD10 billion across Asia, second only to weapons and drug smuggling, participants at the conference made a call to action, with agreement on a new wildlife manifesto, "Combating Wildlife Crime in Asia," supported by ASEAN Secretary-General Surin Pitsuwan, Thailand Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, H.E. Suwit Khunkitti, and World Bank President Robert Zoellick.

Mr Zoellick, in his message, said, "ASEAN members, other interested countries in Asia, and a powerful coalition of partners in civil society with strong support from the World Bank have come together today to tackle wildlife crime head on and to take smart steps—immediate steps—to co-ordinate a regional law enforcement response to protect endangered species and protect habitats".

James Compton, Asia-Pacific Programme Co-ordinator of TRAFFIC, presented the study "What's Driving the Wildlife Trade?" at this international workshop. This study is a review of expert opinion on economic and social drivers of wildlife trade and trade control efforts in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam. All four of these countries are among the South-east Asian countries that act as major sources of wildlife in trade. The trade examines the factors that influence wildlife trade in South-east Asia, and in particular trade that is illegal and/or unsustainable. To view the report please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2008/10/3/new-study-on-whats-driving-the-wildlife-trade-in-south-east.html>

"Since its inception in 2005, ASEAN-WEN has become a model for regional cooperation in transnational law enforcement on illegal wildlife trade. We are hopeful that South Asian countries will similarly come together to set up a

regional mechanism for trans-boundary enforcement. TRAFFIC is already working with South Asian countries towards this" said Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India.

For more information visit www.asean-wen.org



James Compton(R) & Samir Sinha - TRAFFIC, presenting "What's Driving the Wildlife Trade?" in Pattaya

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



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Lions are victims of habitat loss and human-wildlife conflict in India, as well as victims of illegal wildlife trade. Strong and timely convictions such as those in the Gujarat Lion poaching case mentioned above have set a benchmark for effective investigations and prosecutions to curb illegal wildlife trade in India. The Gujarat Police must be complimented for their efforts.

Source: <http://www.headlinesindia.com/state-news/gujarat/16-jailed-for-five-years-for-poaching-lions-in-gujarat-7797.html>

Tantrik who advised woman to sacrifice a rhino arrested

In March 2005, the Mumbai police arrested a 36-year-old tantrik who took nearly INR300 000 from a 30-year-old woman and duped her into believing that sacrificing a rhinoceros would help her find a match. The accused, Farid Shah, even promised to go to Uttar Pradesh to catch a rhino!

The victim came across an advertisement in a vernacular daily stating that performing a certain puja would solve all their problems. The woman, a computer engineer and employed as manager in a city-based software company, immediately called up Shah and sought an appointment, the police said. "After listening to my problem, Shah asked me to perform a puja and sacrifice a hen or goat. Later, he told me to sacrifice a buffalo, after which, he claimed, I would start getting marriage proposals within 20 days," she said in her complaint.

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CITES UPDATE:

Bosnia and Herzegovina join CITES



Bosnia and Herzegovina, situated in south-eastern Europe, bordering Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, joined CITES as its 175th Party.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is home to nearly 90 species listed in the CITES Appendices, in particular many species of orchid and birds of prey. CITES trade with Bosnia and Herzegovina comprises mainly medicinal plants (exports) and reptile leather products (imports). The Convention entered into force in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 21 April 2009.

**CITES UPDATE:
Qatar to host the next CoP**



The 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP 15) will be held in Doha, Qatar. The Government of Qatar had earlier agreed to organize this meeting in January 2010 and later requested the CITES Secretariat for more time in order to prepare for this meeting. Finally, both the host country and the CITES Secretariat have agreed in principle that the meeting will be held in Doha from 13—25 March 2010. The Secretariat will soon make a formal announcement to confirm these dates.

**CITES UPDATE:
CITES directs Parties to declare
all stocks of rhinoceros horn and
derivatives**



Rhinoceros horn in ivory piles, Kruger National Park, South Africa

Under the *Notification to the Parties* of 25 May 2009, CITES has directed all the member countries to provide status of their stocks of rhinoceros horn and derivatives to the Secretariat in a prescribed format. The Parties have been asked to declare their stocks before the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP 15), due to be held in Doha, Qatar, in March 2010.

This decision was a follow-up of the request that was made under the *Notification to the Parties* of 16 December 2008, asking all member countries to report all seizures of rhinoceros specimens (whether horns or

other rhinoceros products) using the Ecomessage format that was designed by Interpol (see *Notification to the Parties* No. 2008/068 of 16 December 2008 for further details). Any incidents of illegal trade in rhinoceros specimens should also be reported, as should any rhinoceros poaching incidents where persons are detained or suspected. Earlier at its 57th meeting (Geneva, July 2008), the CITES Standing Committee had agreed that a CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force should be convened to address illegal trade in specimens of this species. A Task Force, consisting of representatives from mainland China, Hong Kong S.A.R., Kenya, India, Mozambique, Nepal, South Africa, Thailand, Viet Nam, Yemen and Zimbabwe, together with the CITES Secretariat, ICPO-Interpol and the Lusaka Agreement Task Force, was set up. The task force met in Nairobi, Kenya, on 18 and 19 November 2008.

The Task Force agreed that poaching of rhinoceroses and illegal trade in rhinoceros specimens had reached serious levels in some countries. It was noted that a number of individuals appeared to have engaged repeatedly in poaching of rhinoceroses, dealing in their horns and the smuggling of specimens from one continent to another. However, it was also noted that information regarding such individuals has not been widely shared, collated centrally or effectively analysed. The Task Force was of the firm opinion that opportunities to bring such people, and their associates to justice had been missed. Following this, all member countries were asked to declare not only the stocks of rhinoceros horn and derivatives but also report in future any seizures of rhinoceros horn and derivatives.

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She visited Shah again after 20 days, when she was told to sacrifice a rhino. After Shah became non-traceable, the victim lodged a complaint with the police.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

From time immemorial, tantriks and other witchcraft practitioners have been using wildlife in some form or other in their occult practices. In order to make some easy money, they prescribe sacrificing wild animals and sometimes consuming their body parts as a remedy for people's ailments and their other problems. Among other wildlife, owls are one of the most exploited groups of species for this practice. Tantriks and rural medicine men prescribe, among other remedies: owl-eye broth for night vision, owl claws as good luck charms, owl feathers to repel evil spirits, owl meat as aphrodisiac and owl torture for directions to hidden treasure.

Indian Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* is a highly endangered species. It is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and its international trade is banned under CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

Source:
<http://madraswanderer.blogspot.com/2009/03/miseries-of-being-owl.html>;
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Mumbai/Police-nab-tantrik-who-duped-woman-of-Rs-3L/articleshow/4311582.cms>

**Four arrested while trying to
sell Leopard skin**

On 13 April 2009, four persons were arrested while trying to sell a Leopard skin in Udthagamandalam, Tamil Nadu. A team of forest officials pretending to be buyers had established contact with the gang. When the culprits turned up for the transaction they were nabbed.

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TRAFFIC India adds.....

TRAFFIC India congratulates the Tamil Nadu Forest Department for cracking this case. The information regarding the sale of the Leopard skin was anonymously sent to TRAFFIC India and was further passed to the Forest Department. The Department immediately acted on it and detained the poachers. More arrests and recoveries are likely after investigation.

Source:

www.thehindu.com/2009/04/15/stories/2009041554330400.htm

Bears continue to be poached for bile

In May 2009, a gang of poachers struck again in the forests of Vidarbha, Maharashtra. They poached two Sloth Bears and decamped with their paws and bile. The incident took place at Gangazari in Tiroda. Mukesh Ganatra, Deputy Conservator of Forests, Gondia said, "It is a clear case of electrocution. The matter came to light on May 19 when locals reached their farms in the morning". The bodies were found in farmland. The bears were estimated to be three years old. Sources said that the modus operandi strikingly resembled that of the Katni gang of poachers from Central India.

The wildlife in Vidarbha is reeling under severe threat of poaching after the poisoning of two deer and other animals near Bhandara, and fears of nearly 20 Tigers having been poached outside Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve.

TRAFFIC India adds.....



© WWF-Canon / Y.-J. REY-MILLET

There are four species of bear found in India—Himalayan Black Bear *Selenarctos thibetanus*, the Himalayan Brown Bear *Ursus arctos*, Sun Bear *Helarctos malayanus* and the Sloth Bear *Melursus ursinus*. The Brown Bear, Sun Bear and the Sloth Bear are protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 while the Himalayan Black Bear is protected under Schedule II, Part II. Hunting and trade in all four species is banned under this Act. Furthermore, international commercial trade in these species is prohibited under CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

In India, populations of all the bear species have suffered significantly due to illegal trade of bear gall bladders and bile. Bear bile is used in medicines in countries like China, Japan and South Korea and is also used occasionally in Ayurvedic and Tibetan medicines. South Korea is believed to be the largest consumer of bear parts in the world. Gall bladders and bile extracts are often smuggled out as frozen food and cannot be easily distinguished from those of cows, sheep or pigs, thus making detection extremely difficult for the enforcement agencies. Bear paws, meat, and fat are also traded alongside and are considered a delicacy in many Asian countries.

Source:

<http://www.dnaindia.com/report.asp?newsid=1257906>

<http://www.animalalliance.ca/kids/anipart1.htm>

<http://www.animalsasia.org/index.php?UID=G7C61FB6ZY89>

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Twenty one monitor lizards seized from smugglers

In June 2009, 21 monitor lizards were rescued from the clutches of smugglers at Suhelwa wildlife sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh. Sources said that these lizards were on their way to China via Nepal. The forest team arrested smugglers and handed them over to Sirsia police. The accused were residents of Badalpur village.

According to forest officers, monitor lizards are boiled and their oil is extracted for purported medicinal purposes. Their meat is also in demand in India, Nepal, China and many other countries. Their skin is also used for making shoes, purse, bags and other items.

Last year in October 2008, the Tamil Nadu Forest Department seized two monitor lizards from a canteen at Villianur, Puducherry. The lizards were kept for preparing meat dishes at the canteen, said officials of the Department.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

There are four species of monitor lizard found in India—Bengal Monitor *Varanus bengalensis*, Yellow Monitor *Varanus flavescens*, Desert Monitor *Varanus griseus* and Indian Water Monitor *Varanus salvator*. All of these are protected under the Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, under which hunting and trade of the species is banned. Indian Water Monitor Lizard is listed in Appendix II of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) while all the other three species are listed in Appendix I. The international trade of all four species to and from India is prohibited.



© Hartmut JUNGIUS / WWF-Canon

Monitor lizards are victims of habitat loss as well as targets of the illegal reptile skin trade. Live monitors are also seen in India during festivals and in fertility rites. Their eggs are considered a delicacy and the entire animal is also eaten; oil extracted from fat is used in the treatment of failing eyesight and in cooking. Monitor fat is used as an aphrodisiac and the excretion is used in the treatment of eye and skin diseases. Travelling *hakims* in India also exhibit a variety of drugs and tonics derived from these animal sources.

Source:

http://www.zsienvs.in/endb/end_reptilia/reptilia_data/varanus_salvator.htm

http://www.zsienvs.in/endb/end_reptilia/reptilia_data/varanus_bengalensis.htm

<http://envfor.nic.in/divisions/re/ta5p5.html><http://www.expressbuzz.com/edition/print.aspx?artid=0s1fPYCUMak=>

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Allahabad/Smugglers-arrested-with-monitor-lizards/articleshow/4609882.cms>

<http://www.hindu.com/2008/10/31/stories/2008103150730200.htm>

IN FOCUS:
Is 2009 a year of doom for the Tiger?



45 tigers killed so far this year

Experts cite govt failure in curbing poaching, increasing human presence

Gyan Varma, NEW DELHI

The government has been making all the right noises about its efforts to save the tiger. But the results, so far, have been little to roar about — 2009 has, in fact, been the

deadliest in recent years for the big cats. There is also a worrying trend of tiger deaths due to man-animal conflict, and not just poaching.

Despite millions being pumped into saving tigers and interventions at the highest level, as many as 100 tigers

have been killed in the past three years. Sources in Project Tiger, set up by the ministry of environment and forest, also confirm that the first six months of 2009 accounted for 45 of those deaths. In the past two years, government statistics show 28 tiger deaths in 2008 and 27 in 2007. Two years ago, Madhya Pradesh's Panna reserve boasted at least two dozen tigers. Now it has none.

"The government has been unable to control poaching," said Sunita Narain, chairperson, National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), the empowered committee appointed by the government. She says though NTCA had submitted a report to the government, cautioning it about the increasing number of deaths this year, no action has been taken.

"There is no dearth of funds



IN ALL: 100 deaths over last three years

THIS YEAR: 45 and counting

POISONED: At least 12 confirmed cases

with the government. But it is unable to protect the tigers because the guards are too old and cannot run around the reserves to break the nexus of poachers," said Narain, adding that recruitment is handled by the states and the centre has not much say in it.



exclusive

Daily News & Analysis, Ahmedabad
29 June 2009, Page 7

The recent spate in Tiger mortality reported from across the country has left most conservationists wondering about the future of Tigers in India. Over 45 Tiger deaths have been reported since the beginning of 2009. The Tiger is a victim of habitat degradation, illegal wildlife trade and human-wildlife conflict. Unless concerted efforts are taken to save the species in the wild, the future appears bleak for the Tiger.

The Tiger *Panthera tigris* is an endangered species and is listed under the Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. It is also India's National Animal.

This Act gives it protection against hunting/poaching and trade of skins, bones and other body parts. Any person who commits such an offence is punishable with an imprisonment of not less than three years, extending up to seven years, along with a fine of not less than INR50 000 which may extend up to INR200 000. In the event of a second or subsequent conviction, an offender can receive imprisonment for a term of not less than seven years and a fine of not less than INR500 000 that can vary up to a maximum of INR5 000 000.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) presently, renders international commercial trade in Tiger parts illegal. India has been a signatory to this convention since the year 1975.

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Besides habitat degradation and loss and human-wildlife conflict, illegal trade in Tiger bone, skins and other body parts has been one of the primary threats to the survival of the species in the wild. However, with support from the international community, efforts have been directed to curb this trade. For example, at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP 14), the ban on international trade in Tiger parts and derivatives was reinforced and China was asked to phase out its privately run "Tiger farms" that presently house over 4000 of these big cats. Owners of these farms have been pressurising the Chinese government to allow legal trade in Tiger parts. Finally, the CITES Parties adopted a strong Tiger trade decision by consensus. "Tigers should not be bred for their parts or derivatives" was the unequivocal message from the forum.

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© Martin HARVEY / WWF-Canon

Survey finds 'no signs' of tigers in Panna

NEHA SINHA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 3

First, Panna tiger reserve lost all its tigresses to poachers. Now, it may have lost its tigers as well.

According to sources at the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) tracking the camera-trapping evidence, there are now no signs of tigers in the once densely populated reserve.

While Madhya Pradesh continues to deny that Panna may have lost all its tigers, it has interestingly asked the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests for permission to translocate a tiger to the reserve, calling it part of a "long-term plan". The ministry has so far not cleared its request.

Panna had between 16-24 tigers till 2006 and close to 40 tigers in 2002. However, a WII survey using 42 cameras found 'signs' of a maximum of two tigers in December-January in Panna, with two of the pictures belonging to the same tiger. However, since then, the continuous camera trapping has not shown any signs of the animals, WII scientists say.

Calling this serious, tiger scientist Raghu Choudhary, who has worked extensively with WII and is an expert on Panna, says: "This is a situation worse than Sariska because Panna had more than 40 tigers. This is complete and total loss."

The WII survey also confirmed that Panna had no more tigresses, a charge Madhya Pradesh had denied till the findings. To deal with this, the state is in the process of acquiring two tigresses, one each from Bandhavgarh and Kanha. In fact, to hurry up the process, the state has even ditched the elaborate aerial route and a tigress is right now on its way from Bandhavgarh by road to the reserve. The second tigress is likely to be moved from Kanha soon. Originally, a helicopter was to do the translocation and a rescue of Panna had been carried out for this purpose.

Dr H Pahl, Chief Wildlife Warden, Madhya Pradesh, says the request that a tiger be translocated as well is part of the same plan. "There are male tigers in Panna," he says, "but the population is scattered. When the females are translocated here, they might not find tigers to mate with. Thus we have a long-term plan of translocating a tiger too."

A senior official from the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests said the question of agreeing to Madhya Pradesh's request for a tiger "does not arise" at the moment. "No permission has been given so far to translocate a male tiger in addition to translocating the two females. Experts are demanding an investigation. If there is indeed a male tiger or two male tigers in Panna, they should be radio-collared and monitored. If Madhya Pradesh claims that it still has male tigers, then they shouldn't have to ask for another tiger translocation," says Choudhary.

The news of Panna Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh having lost all its Tigers is not only alarming, given the small number of wild Tigers that remain today but also embarrassing for the country. In 2004, when Sariska was declared Tiger less, it was an extremely sad time in the history of conservation. Now for Panna to happen a few years down the line shows we have not learnt our lesson. What is even more disturbing are the signals suggesting that there could be several other Tiger Reserves in a similar situation.

Even though the National Tiger Conservation Authority has issued a series of advisories to strengthen the protection of wild Tigers in India but it remains to be seen how these are implemented at the ground level.

Mr Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India said, "Leadership in protection of Tigers is clearly to emerge at the field level. Every single wild Tiger irrespective of where it is found is under threat. All Tiger bearing areas must put in place effective planning for strengthening security for wild Tigers and carry out periodic audits of such security measures including by independent evaluators. TRAFFIC has offered its support and commitment to state forest departments and other enforcement agencies for handling this crisis".

Continued on page 14

*The Indian Express, New Delhi
3 March 2009, Page 4*

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AN OVERVIEW OF TIGER DEATHS SINCE THE BEGINNING OF 2009:

S. NO	DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER OF TIGER DEATHS
1	19 June 2009	Bor Dam, Pipalparao Forest Range, Terai Central Forest Division, Uttarakhand	1
2	12 June 2009	Bandipur National Park, Karnataka	1
3	4 June 2009	Nagarhole National Park, Karnataka	1
4	2 June 2009	Vanvihar National Park, Bhopal	1
5	30 May 2009	Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary, Goa	1
6	27 May 2009	Ramnagar Forest Division, Uttarakhand	1
7	23 May 2009	Ramnagar Forest Division, Uttarakhand	1
8	14 May 2009	Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan	1
9	13 May 2009	Outskirts of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra	1
10	7 May 2009	Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	1
11	6 May 2009	Chiroli, Chandrapur	1
12	25 April 2009	Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary, Orissa	1
13	24 April 2009	Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	1
14	18 April 2009	Kaziranga National Park, Assam	1
15	13 April 2009	Keri Forest, Goa	1
16	12 April 2009	Gangaram village, Narsampet, Warrangal, Andhra Pradesh	1
17	12 April 2009	Kanha Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	1
18	10 April 2009	Panna Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	1
19	4 April 2009	Pench Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	1
20	4 April 2009	Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan	1
21	2 April 2009	Van Vihar National Park, Bhopal	1
22	25 March 2009	Adhyalmendha lake, Chandrapur, Maharashtra	1
23	24 March 2009	Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra	1
24	23 March 2009	Kaziranga Tiger Reserve, Assam	1
25	18 March 2008	Bhadravati, Chandrachur	1
26	17 March 2009	Corbett Tiger Reserve, Uttarakhand	1
27	10 March 2009	Corbett Tiger Reserve, Uttarakhand	1
28	7 March 2009	Corbett Tiger Reserve, Uttarakhand	1
29	4 March 2008	Kanha Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	1
30	26 February 2009	Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra	1
31	26 February 2009	Corbett Tiger Reserve, Uttarakhand	1
32	24 February 2009	Faizabad district, Uttar Pradesh	1
33	22 February 2009	Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra	1
34	13 February 2009	Kaziranga Tiger Reserve, Assam	1
35	8 February 2009	Pilibhit, Uttar Pradesh	1
36	31 January 2009	Kanha Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	1
37	29 January 2009	Corbett Tiger Reserve, Uttarakhand	1
38	29 January 2009	Kanha Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	1
39	23 January 2009	Tadoba-andhari Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra	1
40	21 January 2009	Kaziranga Tiger Reserve, Assam	1
41	20 January 2009	Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	1
42	18 January 2009	Kanha Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	1
43	10 January 2009	Kaziranga Tiger Reserve, Assam	1
44	7 January 2009	Kanha Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	1
45	5 January 2009	Kaziranga Tiger Reserve, Assam	1
46	3 January 2009	Kanha Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh	2
47	3 January 2009	Kaziranga Tiger Reserve, Assam	1
48	2 January 2009	Bhandara, Maharashtra	1

Please note: Atleast 11 Tiger skins and other derivatives have been recovered from over 18 seizures conducted since the beginning of 2009.

SIGNPOST: Other significant news stories to read



World's richest biodiversity hotspots are most war prone: More than 80 percent of the world's major conflicts have taken place in the most biologically rich and diverse places on earth, a new study says. These hotspots are considered top conservation priorities because they house more than half of all plant species and at least 42 percent of all vertebrates, and are highly threatened. For more information, please visit <http://www.fastnews.in/world-news/worlds-richest-biodiversity-hotspots-are-most-war-prone>

Global CITES operation nets over 4500 specimens of endangered species in one day: The summary result of an intensive global one-day CITES operation carried out by 90 Customs administrations across the globe on 15 January 2009 reveals seizures totalling 4630 live specimens of endangered species as well as products and derivatives. These seizures included specimens from as many as 80 kinds of species, including ivory tusks, musk, Tiger derivatives, caviar, rhinoceros horns, lynx, snow lotus, and Lion skins with many of the species regarded as critically endangered and at the edge of extinction. For more information, please visit <http://www.cites.org/eng/news/sundry/2009/WCO-cites-operation.shtml>

Dead Tigers to be frozen, studied: In a bid to fix accountability and check the practice of showing unnatural Tiger deaths as natural, the National Tiger Conservation Authority in India has decided that each dead Tiger will be deep-frozen, stored and studied by an independent team to ascertain how it died. A team formed for this purpose will include an official from the Authority, a State veterinary doctor and a non-governmental Tiger expert nominated by the chief wildlife warden of the State. They will treat injured Tigers too. For more information, please visit <http://www.physorg.com/news163646477.html>

Pink or red? experts debate corals' future: Coral experts met in March 2009 in Hong Kong to discuss ways to stop the over-exploitation of pink and red corals in the world's oceans. Millions of items and thousands of kilogrammes of red and pink coral those in the genus *Corallium* are traded internationally each year as jewellery and in other collectables. For more information, please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2009/3/23/pink-or-redexperts-debate-corals-future.html>

Thousand new species in Greater Mekong: Over 1000 new species have been discovered in the Greater Mekong Region of South-east Asia since 1997, says a new report by WWF. Among the most incredible finds documented in First Contact in the Greater Mekong are the Lao Rock Rat, thought to have gone extinct 11 million years ago but discovered in a Lao food market; the hot-pink "dragon millipede" that produces cyanide in self-defence; the world's largest huntsman spider, which has a leg span of over 30 centimeters; and a new species of purple banana from Southern China. For more information, please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2008/12/17/1000-new-species-in-greater-mekong.html>

Myanmar emerges as ivory trade and elephant smuggling hotspot: Around 250 live Asian Elephants have been smuggled from Myanmar in the past decade, mostly destined for "elephant trekking" tourism activities in neighbouring Thailand, a new report by TRAFFIC has revealed. Meanwhile blatant illegal ivory trade continues in Myanmar, with TRAFFIC surveys of 14 markets and three border markets in Thailand and China finding 9000 pieces of ivory and 16 whole tusks for sale. For more information, please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2008/12/10/myanmar-emerges-as-ivory-trade-and-elephant-smuggling-hot-sp.html>

Corrigenda

In the November 2008 issue of the TRAFFIC Post, under the TRAFFIC Alert section on page 6, it was stated that "Lion skin was seized in Chhattisgarh". This was on the basis of newspaper reports. It has since been pointed out that what was seized was not a Lion skin but a Tiger skin.

Also on page 8, under the TRAFFIC Alert section, it stated that the Tiger trade racket was busted in north India in September 2008. Please note that the seizure actually took place in July 2008. These errors are regretted.

HEADLINES

SHAHTOOSH SHAWLS WORTH CRORES SEIZED AT DELHI AIRPORT

China's Shahtoosh shawls, made from the wool of the endangered Pashmina goat, were worth crores of rupees when they were seized at Delhi airport. The shawls were found in a container belonging to a trader from China. The trader was arrested and the shawls were seized. The value of the shawls is estimated to be in the crores of rupees. The trader was found with a large quantity of shawls. The shawls were found in a container belonging to a trader from China. The trader was arrested and the shawls were seized. The value of the shawls is estimated to be in the crores of rupees.



Shahtoosh shawls worth crores of rupees were seized at Delhi airport.

Leopard count down by 69 in eight weeks

At Least 36 Big Cats Were Poisoned, Trapped Or Died Of Accidents Between January 1 & February 25

Leopard count in India has fallen by 69 in eight weeks. At least 36 big cats were poisoned, trapped or died of accidents between January 1 and February 25. The decline is a significant concern for conservationists. The loss of these animals is a major threat to the biodiversity of the region. Conservation efforts are being undertaken to protect the remaining population.

LEOPARD TOLL



The leopard population in India has declined significantly. Conservationists are working to protect the remaining leopards. The loss of these animals is a major threat to the biodiversity of the region. Conservation efforts are being undertaken to protect the remaining population.

The decline in leopard numbers is a cause for concern. Conservationists are working to protect the remaining population. The loss of these animals is a major threat to the biodiversity of the region. Conservation efforts are being undertaken to protect the remaining population.

Over 50 blackbucks die in Rajasthan wildlife sanctuary

Over 50 blackbucks recently died in a Rajasthan wildlife sanctuary. The deaths were attributed to a sudden change in the weather. The sanctuary is located in the Thar Desert. The blackbucks were found dead in various parts of the sanctuary. Conservationists are investigating the cause of the deaths. The loss of these animals is a major threat to the biodiversity of the region.

Census counts 1572 croes in Bhitarkanika

A census in Bhitarkanika National Park counted 1572 crocodiles. This is a significant increase from previous counts. The park is home to a large population of crocodiles. Conservationists are working to protect the population. The census was conducted by a team of experts.



A crocodile counted during the census in Bhitarkanika National Park.

POACHERS ENDANGER TURTLES

Poachers are endangering turtles in India. The poachers are using illegal methods to capture the turtles. The turtles are being sold in the black market. Conservationists are working to protect the turtles. The loss of these animals is a major threat to the biodiversity of the region.



A turtle endangered by poachers in India.

The poachers are using illegal methods to capture the turtles. The turtles are being sold in the black market. Conservationists are working to protect the turtles. The loss of these animals is a major threat to the biodiversity of the region.

93 lions have died in Guj in 3 yrs

Ninety-three lions have died in Gujarat in the last three years. This is a significant decline in the lion population. The lions are being killed for their skins and bones. Conservationists are working to protect the remaining population. The loss of these animals is a major threat to the biodiversity of the region.

ROAR'S GONE

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009
Deaths	23	28	36	10



A lion that died in Gujarat in the last three years.

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TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



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OUTPOST



TRAFFIC ALERT

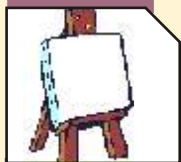
TRAFFIC Alert (Latest news on illegal wildlife trade in India):

- **Eight Common Marmosets stolen** from Alipore zoo Pg 5

© Martin Harvey / WWF-Canon



- **Endangered marine species seized** in Tamil Nadu Pg 6
- **Forty six Indian Softshell Turtles seized** in West Bengal Pg 7
- **One arrested in West Bengal** for possessing 20 musk deer sacs Pg 8



SIGNPOST

SIGNPOST: Other significant news stories to read such as Endangered species list released, Dramatic decrease in illegal timber trade between Burma and China but smuggling continues; India says Chinese medicine fuels Tiger poaching; Rare wild animals recovered from a private collector in West Bengal; Ten months for eBay ivory trader; DNA 'Barcode' to help nab illegal wildlife traders Pg 11



IN FOCUS

- **Edible-nest Swiftlet: A harbinger** of a new conservation era Pg 9

Experts meet in Nepal to plan action to save the Tiger



More than 250 experts, scientists and government delegates from 13 Tiger range States called for immediate action to save Tigers before the species disappears from the wild, citing the urgent need for increased protection against Tiger poaching and trafficking in Tiger parts. The recommendations were made during the four-day Kathmandu Global Tiger Workshop 2009 held on 27–30 October 2009 in Kathmandu, Nepal.

The purpose of the workshop was to bring all participating countries to work on a strategic action plan to stop the alarming downward trend in Tiger numbers, to introduce new ideas and also to allow participating countries to share their experiences regarding protection of Tigers.

China has historically been the main consumer of Tiger parts and products, and promised during the workshop to work with its neighbours to end Tiger trade and bring back wild Tigers. A much reduced but persistent demand for Tiger parts and products in China continues to drive poaching of wild Tigers throughout the species's range. Trade in Tiger parts has been banned in China since 1993, but several large-scale Tiger farms exist in the country and their owners have been pressurizing the government to reopen the trade. Any reopening of the trade would be a catastrophe for wild Tigers.



© Samir Sinha

The participants at the Global Tiger Workshop 2009 suggested using the Chinese Year of the Tiger, which begins in February 2010, to create global awareness of the critical plight of wild Tigers and enlist support for their conservation.

The workshop urged all countries to implement CITES resolutions, enhance the capacity of INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization (WCO), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the CITES Secretariat and regional wildlife enforcement networks (including ASEAN-WEN) to combat illegal trade in wildlife at the international level.



© Staffan Widstrand / WWF-Canon

The workshop also called upon countries to implement effective Tiger conservation measures such as conserving and managing buffer zones and corridors that connect core Tiger breeding areas, stop infrastructure projects in such areas, avoid financing development projects that adversely affect critical Tiger habitats, and empowering local communities that live in and around Tiger landscapes with sustainable economic incentives and appropriate technologies to minimize human-Tiger conflict.

The Kathmandu Global Tiger Workshop is the first in a series of political negotiation meetings occurring throughout the year and leading up to a final Heads of State Tiger Summit in September 2010.

The workshop was hosted by Nepal's Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Government of Nepal, and co-organized and co-sponsored by the CITES Secretariat, Global Tiger Forum, Global Tiger Initiative, Save The Tiger Fund and the World Bank.

Source:

www.panda.org

http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=11302

TRAFFIC India and NTCA prepare national database on the mortality of Tiger and other species



The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has been working with TRAFFIC India to set up a national web based database on Tiger and other species mortality in India. This database will begin operations shortly, with access for Field Directors of Tiger Reserves, Chief Wildlife Wardens and others authorized by the NTCA. The database is expected to be a useful tool for strengthening field level conservation. The website is undergoing a final security audit before its formal launch.

Kerala judiciary extends support for strengthening wildlife enforcement



Hon. Judges of the Kerala High Court took part in an "Orientation Programme on Wildlife Conservation" on 3–4 October 2009 in Kochi, Kerala. The programme was conducted jointly by TRAFFIC India and WWF-India in partnership with the Kerala Judicial Academy.

The workshop aimed to sensitize the judiciary about issues related to wildlife conservation. The judiciary plays a significant role in championing the cause of forest and biodiversity conservation, so it was felt necessary to update them on the status of forest and wildlife legislations, international conventions on related issues and enforcement of wildlife laws in India.

The programme was inaugurated by the Chief Justice of Kerala, Hon. Justice SR Bannurmath in the presence of Hon. Justice Kurian Joseph, Executive Chairman, Kerala State Legal Services Authority. Hon. Justice PR Raman, President of the Kerala Judicial Academy presided over the inaugural function, which was

graced by the presence of 30 other Senior Judges of the Kerala High Court, 14 Principal Judges of district courts of Kerala and other officers of the judiciary. Overall, more than 60 senior judiciary officers attended this programme.

During the programme, the Hon. Chief Justice SR Bannurmath expressed his concern over the growing illegal wildlife trade in the country and the need to build awareness on environmental and wildlife related laws among the members of the judiciary in Kerala. Justice Bannurmath also urged the Senior Judges to play a catalytic role in wildlife conservation.

Key resource persons for the programme included Dr S.P. Goyal of the Wildlife Institute of India, Sri S.P. Yadav of the National Tiger Conservation Authority, Sri A.D.N. Rao and Sri Ritwick Dutta, Advocates from the Supreme Court of India.

Mr Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India, during his presentation, emphasized that wildlife crime had now become much more organized and transcended national borders. He stressed the need for co-operation, collaboration and awareness to meet this challenge.

The orientation programme was the fourth in a series for the judiciary conducted by TRAFFIC India.



Judges at the workshop in Kochi, Kerala

© MKS Pasha

New guidelines for preparation of security plans for Tiger Reserves in India



The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) in association with TRAFFIC India has prepared new guidelines for scaling up security at Tiger Reserves in India. The guidelines were drawn up amidst the on-going Tiger crisis which has seen more than 60 Tigers dead in India in 2009 to date.

The Generic guidelines for preparation of security plans for Tiger Reserves were released by Shri Jairam Ramesh, Hon. Minister of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India at the 4th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority held on 6 October 2009 in New Delhi.

The growing demand in some countries for Tigers parts and derivatives is one of the greatest threats to the survival of the big cats. The NTCA has advised all Indian States to prepare a specific Tiger Conservation Plan and to use the newly developed guidelines to prepare security plans for their Tiger Reserves.

Dr Rajesh Gopal commented: "Illegal demand for Tiger parts and derivatives is a threat to the already endangered Tiger population in the country, necessitating enhanced intelligence-based enforcement."

"These newly released guidelines will help States to develop an effective security plan for strengthening management of their Tiger Reserves."

The document provides insights into the nature of the threat to wild Tigers, evaluation of protected areas, preparation of security maps, prevention and detection of wildlife crimes, patrol planning, intelligence gathering, running informer networks, establishing criminal profile directories, understanding the scene of crime, media management, and other topics.



WCCB, Defra and TRAFFIC India collaborate to strengthen wildlife enforcement



The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India; TRAFFIC India and Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Govt. of UK) are collaborating to disseminate knowledge on measures and skills for combating wildlife crime across the country. To mark the beginning of this effort, a two-day workshop on wildlife crime enforcement was organized at the Tamil Nadu Police Academy, Chennai on 20–21 August 2009. Over 30 officials from the Forest Department, Police, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Customs and Railway Protection Force (RPF) attended.

Inaugurating the workshop, Thiru R. Sundararaju, Chief Wildlife Warden and Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Govt. of Tamil Nadu, said that this multi agency training was the first of its kind in Tamil Nadu. He congratulated the efforts of WCCB, Defra and TRAFFIC for providing the opportunity to key enforcement agencies in Tamil Nadu to acquire the skills for combating illicit wildlife trade.

Mrs Rina Mitra, Additional Director, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau stressed the enormity and impact of the illegal wildlife trade and the need for the workshop. She hoped the workshop would pave the way for similar



© MKS Pasha

From left to right: Shri Arunachalam, DIG-Tamil Nadu Police Academy; Mrs Reena Mitra, Addl Director-WCCB; Thiru R. Sundaraju, Chief Wildlife Warden & PCCF, Govt. of Tamil Nadu and Mr Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India at the workshop in Chennai

programmes for sensitizing officers and building the capacity of frontline staff in combating wildlife crime.

Mr Arif Hussain of Defra noted that his organization looked forward to working with the Govt. of India and TRAFFIC in taking the initiative forward.

Similar enforcement training workshops are planned in other parts of the country over the coming months.

Wildlife enforcement training workshops conducted across India



As part of TRAFFIC India's "Capacity Building" programme, wildlife enforcement training workshops were conducted in the States of Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra. The workshops were organized to provide training and inputs to a diverse group of officials working on wildlife enforcement and other supportive issues.

Since December 2007, TRAFFIC India has successfully conducted 16 workshops and trained over 700 officials across the country. The training programmes and modules are tailor-made for the diverse target groups, although common subjects include wildlife forensics; the role of CITES; evaluating scenes of wildlife crime; setting up and handling information networks; conducting search and seizures; developing documentation that leads to successful prosecution in a court of law and more. The programmes enable TRAFFIC India to share knowledge on the new tools and technology that are required to combat poaching gangs and to break the wildlife trade nexus across regions.

A synopsis of the two latest workshops is given below:

Raipur, Chhattisgarh: TRAFFIC India and WWF-India in partnership with Chhattisgarh Forest Department and the National Tiger Conservation Authority, conducted a two day enforcement training workshop on wildlife conservation for forest department officials in Chhattisgarh. The workshop was held on 29–30 June 2009 at Raipur and was inaugurated by Mr Vikram Usendi, Hon. Minister of Environment & Forest of Chhattisgarh. Over 50 officials of the Chhattisgarh Forest Department participated.

Nagpur, Maharashtra: TRAFFIC India in partnership with WWF-India and the Maharashtra Forest Department conducted a training workshop on wildlife law enforcement on 1–2 August 2009. The workshop was held at Nagpur and over 45 forest officials from important Tiger areas of Maharashtra participated. The aim of this workshop was to strengthen the ability of frontline wildlife staff and managers to understand and enforce wildlife law effectively.

During the workshop, WWF-India handed over two four-wheel drive Bolero Camper vehicles to the Maharashtra Forest Department for use in Bor and Nagzira wildlife sanctuaries. The vehicles are specifically meant for anti-poaching and fire protection purposes in these sanctuaries, located in Maharashtra's Vidarbha region.

Amendment to Biological Diversity Act, 2002 smoothens the process of filing complaints



In order to expedite law enforcement and implementation, the MoEF (Ministry of Environment and Forests) through a notification no. 68 dated 12 January 2009, has authorized all range officers and above to file complaints in cases of violation of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002. Previously only Central Government or those authorized by them were able to file complaints.

TRAFFIC Alert



Eight Common Marmosets stolen from Alipore zoo

Eight Common Marmosets *Callithrix jacchus* were stolen from Alipore Zoological Gardens, Kolkata on 8 August 2009. This was not the first attempt to steal marmosets from India's oldest zoological park. Thieves had earlier targeted the monkey enclosure in March 2009, but were chased away by the guards. The theft has now cast a cloud over security arrangements at the zoo, which were handed over to a private agency four years ago.

Later, seven of the eight marmosets were recovered from Durg in Chhattisgarh. The eighth monkey is believed to have died while the animals were being transported from Kolkata to Durg.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

This is not the first time that animals have been stolen from a zoo in India. This year in July a Sand Boa was stolen from Trivandrum zoo in Kerala, while eleven snakes were stolen from Vandalur zoo and Guindy Snake Park in Chennai. Two Green-winged Macaws were also stolen from Nandankanan zoo in Orissa. Concerns have been raised about security at zoos across India.

The exact source of demand for the stolen zoo animals is yet to be identified. However, investigation of the stolen marmosets from the Kolkata zoo suggests a growing demand for rare exotic animals within India, with exotic animals targeted from government as well as private zoos.

Exotic animals are currently not protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and as such, regulating their trade is extremely difficult. There is a need to focus on this little known but high value theft of exotic animals and birds and take steps to regulate it.

Continued on page 6

Commemorating Wildlife Week 2009



TRAFFIC India in collaboration with WWF-India and the National Zoological Park, New Delhi, has organized an environmental quiz “Wild Wisdom” to commemorate Wildlife Week 2009. The quiz was held on 6 October 2009 at the WWF-India Secretariat in New Delhi and received a tremendous response with 26 schools participating from Delhi and adjoining areas. After several interesting rounds, Sanskriti School, Chankyapuri, emerged as the winner followed by Chinmaya Vidyalya, Vasant Vihar.

It is the third year running “Wild Wisdom” has been held during Wildlife Week, but this year, it was bigger and will culminate with a mega intercity wildlife quiz being organized in November 2009 in New Delhi.

“Don't Buy Trouble” film wins CMS Vatavaran Award

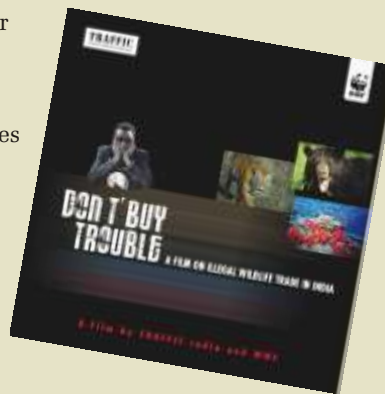


TRAFFIC India's film “Don't Buy Trouble” has received an award at the CMS Vatavaran Environment and Wildlife Film festival held in New Delhi this October. The award was in the “Best Public Service Announcement” (PSA) category, which includes messages, short or promotional films, commercials or advertising campaigns that educate or inform the public at large.

This film is part of TRAFFIC India's campaign to curb illegal trade in wildlife. A one minute version of the film captures glimpses of the burgeoning illegal wildlife trade in India that threatens the nation's precious flora and fauna, and is the latest addition to TRAFFIC India's consumer awareness “Buyers Beware” campaign.

Besides highlighting the gruesome reality for many species in illegal trade, the film also draws attention to the various national and international laws that protect wildlife and informs viewers about the legal consequences of engaging in such trade.

The film was made by renowned wildlife filmmaker Himanshu Malhotra and was produced by TRAFFIC India/WWF-India.



TRAFFIC Alert



Continued from page 5

Source:

http://www.asianetindia.com/news/red-sand-boa-stolen-tvm_58005.html
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/news/city/kolkata/-8-rare-monkeys-stolen-from-Alipore-zoo/articleshow/4875722.cms>
<http://www.samaylive.com/news/rare-birds-stolen-from-nandankanan-zoo/641132.html>
<http://www.expressbuzz.com/edition/story.aspx?Title=8+sand+boas+stolen+from+Guindy+snake+park&artid=35p9RgKma84=&SectionID=lifojHIWDDUU=&MainSectionID=lifojHIWDDUU=&SEO=Vandalur+zoo&SectionName=rSY%7C6QYp3kQ=>
<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/kolkata-cops-raid-pune-mumbai-dens/514264/>
http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/india-news/seven-stolen-marmosets-recovered-from-durg_100239845.html#ixzz0VyWKnuU3

Endangered marine species seized in Tamil Nadu

On 11 August 2009, the Tamil Nadu Forest Department apprehended three fishermen and seized 250 kg of dried sea cucumbers and 150 kg of seahorses at Mandapam North Sea shore, Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu. During a routine coastal surveillance, officials noticed a group of fishermen standing on the seashore with gunny bags. The officials tried to check the bags, but the fishermen resisted, attempted to assault the officials then tried to escape. However, they were overpowered and the bags seized. The marine species were destined for smuggling to Sri Lanka using a clandestine boat, sources added.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Domestic trade in Sea Cucumbers *Holothurians* and Seahorses *Sygnathidians* is prohibited under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Seahorses are also listed in Appendix II of CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

Continued on page 7

CITES UPDATE:

CITES requests Tiger range States to comply with conservation measures



At its 58th meeting held in Geneva from 6–10 July 2009, the Standing Committee of CITES noted that a significant number of Tiger range States had failed to comply with the conservation measures suggested for Asian Big Cats during the 14th Conference of the Parties held in The Hague, Netherlands in 2007.

The CITES Standing Committee also issued notification to all Tiger range States to submit reports by 20 October 2009 to determine if those Parties having intensive operations for breeding Tigers on a commercial scale have restricted their captive populations to a level supportive to the sustainability of Tigers in the wild. To view the notification, please visit <http://www.cites.org/eng/notif/2009/E029.pdf>

CITES UPDATE:

New CITES guide to prevent illegal trade in falcons



© Chris Martin Bahr / WWF-Canon

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

The Government of Canada and the Falcon Enforcement Task Force of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) launched a new guide on falcons and hawks in July 2009, to coincide with the 58th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee.

The CITES guide to falconry species is available in two editions: one for the general public and the other specific for law enforcement officers. The public version of the guide enables identification and provides description of the six falcon and one hawk species most commonly traded for falconry purposes. It also contains information on the identification of juvenile falcons and falcon hybrids.

An expanded Law Enforcement Edition also includes information on illegal activity and trade in these species. It will help law enforcement officers to monitor and control the cross-border movement of falcons. In the mid-2000s, illegal trade in birds of prey slumped because of falconers' fears over avian flu. However, it seems to be growing again as evidenced by major recent seizures in several countries. Illegal activities involve harvesting the eggs of falcons and hawks from nests in the wild and the trapping of wild birds. The eggs or live birds are then smuggled to countries where falconry is historically and culturally significant and where birds can attract prices of tens of thousands of dollars. Some falcon species are becoming increasingly rare in the wild, and such poaching significantly affects their survival.

The guide can be downloaded at <http://www.ec.gc.ca/publications>.

Source:
Press release, www.cites.org

TRAFFIC Alert



Continued from page 6

Despite the protection, illegal trade in seahorses continues to thrive. Seahorses are used as an ingredient in traditional Chinese medicines and are believed to have aphrodisiac properties. The main markets for seahorse trade are in China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Korea, Malaysia and Taiwan.

Sea cucumbers are found in the Gulf of Mannar, India's only National Park for these species, and are smuggled from the Ramanathapuram-Tuticorin coast in Tamil Nadu to countries such as China, Japan and Malaysia where they are prized as aphrodisiacs and also for their medicinal value.

In order to stop this trade and to curb the damage being done to our precious marine ecosystem, there is a need to undertake studies to assess the illegal trade in these marine species and formulate action accordingly.

Source:
<http://www.ias.ac.in/currsci/feb252002/377.pdf>
<http://www.india-today.com/itoday/20040913/environment.html>
<http://news.webindia123.com/news/Articles/India/20090811/1316232.html>

Forty six Indian Softshell Turtles seized in West Bengal

On 12 July 2009, authorities at Bidhannagar More intercepted a vehicle coming from Bihar and recovered 46 Indian Softshell Turtles, a Schedule I species. Two people from Malligunj on the Bengal-Bihar border were arrested. Forest Department officials had been tipped off about the duo taking the turtles to Nepal. It is believed they would have been carried further to China, where turtles fetch a high price for their flesh as well as for their medicinal value.

Continued on page 8

OUTPOST:
World's Customs linked through
ENVIRONET



The World Customs Organization (WCO) has launched ENVIRONET, a secure internet-based tool to share information quickly and securely amongst environmental law enforcement officers worldwide to enhance environmental border protection.

Environmental crime is increasing globally, with enforcement officers playing a pivotal role in controlling international trade in environmentally sensitive goods and in eradicating illegal trafficking. To be effective, Customs officers need rapid access to information on, for example, expert opinion of the identity of wildlife parts in trade, or information about the legality of exporting particular items. To assist officers in these tasks, the new, simple way of sharing information quickly and easily was developed.

The new communication tool focuses on trade in goods falling under several international agreements, including those covering trade in hazardous chemicals, living modified organisms, chemical weapons, as well as wildlife products falling within the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Information can also be exchanged on nuclear materials and illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing.

ENVIRONET complements the existing EU-TWIX, a TRAFFIC-run system, which includes a mailing list that links enforcement authorities dealing with wildlife trade in the European Union (EU). EU-TWIX is highly specialized, dealing only with wildlife crime issues and with a built-in database allowing analysis of wildlife seizures, whereas ENVIRONET is more general, dealing with seven types of environmental offences.

ENVIRONET will be provided and maintained by the WCO to members of a select closed user group comprising Customs, law enforcement officers, and members of similar, recognized national authorities, free of charge.

Source:

- <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Kolkata-/Duo-held-with-46-rare-turtles/articleshow/4770598.cms>
- <http://www.nytt.org/asia/trade-ws.htm>
- http://zsienvi.nic.in/endb/end_reptilia/reptilia_data/trionxy_gangeticus.htm



© Gerald S. Cubitt / WWF-Canon

One arrested in West Bengal for possessing 20 musk deer sacs

On 1 October 2009, a Bangladeshi national was arrested in West Bengal's Maldah district for possessing 20 sacs of the musk gland of the highly prized and threatened Himalayan Musk Deer. Following a joint raid by officials of the Border Security Force (BSF) and the West Bengal Forest Department, Asimuddin Mandal was arrested at Mohaddipur checkpost. The source of the musk sacs is currently unknown, but it is known they were en route to Bangladesh.

TRAFFIC Alert



Continued from page 7

"A big racket works here to catch and send turtles to China. Those recovered on Sunday were collected from forests in Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand," said Manindra Biswas, Conservator of forests (territorial), North Bengal.

TRAFFIC India adds.....



© Ashutosh Tripathi

Indian Softshell Turtle *Nilssonia gangeticus* is listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife

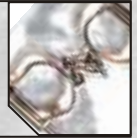
(Protection) Act,

1972 under which all trade in the species is banned. International trade in the species is prohibited under CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) where the species is listed in Appendix I.

Indian Softshell Turtles primarily inhabit the Ganga and Mahanadi river systems where they are threatened by extensive habitat loss and illegal wildlife trade. The turtles are exploited for their meat and also for use in traditional Chinese medicines. They are collected along the entire Gangetic belt and sent to markets in West Bengal where they are either sold for their meat or are sent to other countries. Recent reports suggest a growing demand in this turtle species for its plastron (the flat part of a turtle's shell structure), which is used to make gelatin in many countries.

Continued on page 9

TRAFFIC Alert



Continued from page 8

TRAFFIC India adds.....

The Himalayan Musk Deer *Moschus chrysogaster* is listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Internationally it is listed in Appendix I of CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). Therefore, both domestic and international trade in the species is prohibited. However, Musk Deer continue to be killed for the glands present near the navel of adult males. Musk is used to make perfumes, soaps, cosmetics and in certain traditional medicines in Asia.

Poachers kill male deer to remove the sac which yields about 25 g of musk. It is traded through Delhi, Kolkata, Amritsar to Pakistan, Middle East, Hong Kong, Japan and Myanmar.



© TRAFFIC

Musk pods

Source:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2009/10/04/stories/2009100455710700.htm>

IN FOCUS:

Edible-nest Swiftlet: A harbinger of a new conservation era



© Manchi Shirish S

For the first time in the history of wildlife conservation in India, a wildlife species previously accorded the highest protection under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 has been delisted to allow sustainable trade. This marks the beginning of a new thinking where sustainable and controlled trade in a species or its derivate is being considered as a strategy to secure the conservation of species; in this instance, the Edible-nest Swiftlet.

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

In India, Edible-nest Swiftlets *Collocalia fuciphaga* are found in the Nicobar and more commonly in the Andaman Islands, where they inhabit rock caves near the shore.

Their nests are constructed entirely of hardened saliva and are considered a delicacy in Chinese cuisine. They rank amongst the world's most expensive animal products. The nests are also believed to have aphrodisiac and medicinal properties and are used in many traditional medicines. The species has been exploited throughout most of its range although there is very little demand in India as none of the traditional medicine systems utilize the nests.

The Edible-nest Swiftlet has been delisted from Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, for a limited period of three years in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. This was after a group of conservationists, non-governmental organizations and local communities demonstrated a mechanism whereby local communities could participate in harvesting and preserving the nests.

Mr Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India said: "This is the first time in India that sustainable harvesting is being considered as a conservation tool. We are happy to learn that there is active participation of local communities both for protection and harvesting of the nests. The success of this venture depends on the ability to demonstrate the sustainability of nest harvesting levels."



© Abbar Ahmed

Nests of Edible-nest Swiftlet

Edible-nest Swiftlet is not listed in CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

Selling bird's nest soup to save this bird: there's a change in law

NEHA SINHA
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 17

TO save a bird, its nest will now be sold. In an unusual conservation strategy, the National Board of Wildlife (NBWL) has delisted the Edible Nest Swiftlet, a cave-nesting bird found in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, from the Wildlife Protection Act (WPA). Reason: local communities which poached the bird's nests — used in the famous bird's nest soup, a delicacy in Chinese cuisine and thought to be an aphrodisiac — are now being roped in to harvest the nests commercially. This, argues the NBWL, will help to sustain both the communities and the Edible Nest Swiftlet itself. The controlled sale of nests, which are made by the saliva of the Swiftlet, could only have been possible if the bird, accorded highest protection under Schedule One of the WPA, was delisted from the act. At a meeting of the NBWL Standing Committee chaired by Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh last month, the bird was delisted for three years. The proposal had been pending with the NBWL for three years. "Conservation strategies need to be flexible. One way of protecting this bird

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

Swiftlet delisted MANOHAR SHRI

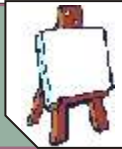
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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- International trade in swiftlet nests with special reference to Hong Kong* Amy S.M. Lau, David S. Melville. (April 1994).

Indian Express, New Delhi, 18 August 2009

SIGNPOST: Other significant news stories to read



Endangered species list released: The Ministry of Environment and Forests has issued a notification under the Biological Diversity Act (2002) and released a revised list of endangered species in Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Kerala. The National Biodiversity Authority has issued alerts to protect 13 animal species and 26 plant species threatened with extinction in Kerala, the state with the most number of threatened species in the list.

For more information, please visit

<http://www.expressbuzz.com/edition/story.aspx?Title=Endangered+species+list+released&artid=zDLcvN/e8fk=&SectionID=1ZkF/jmWuSA=&MainSectionID=fyV9T2jIa4A=&SectionName=X7s7i|xOZ5Y=&SEO=>

Dramatic decrease in illegal timber trade between Burma and China but smuggling continues: The illegal cross-border timber trade between Burma and China has decreased significantly since 2005. However, "snake business" is widespread and the authorities in China should do more to clamp down, according to a new detailed review by the campaign group Global Witness.

For more information, please visit

http://www.globalwitness.org/media_library_detail.php/855/en/dramatic_decrease_in_illegal_timber_trade_between_

India says Chinese medicine fuels Tiger poaching: Talks between India and China to try to save the endangered Tiger failed to make much progress, India's environment minister said on 17 September 2009. The use of Tiger parts in Chinese medicine was encouraging the poaching of India's Tigers, Jairam Ramesh told reporters. China was also operating Tiger farms in violation of international agreements, which stimulated demand, he said.

For more information, please visit

<http://www.reuters.com/article/environmentNews/idUSTRE58G4XQ20090917>

Rare wild animals recovered from a private collector in West Bengal: Over 50 wild animals including peacocks, rare turtles, a giant squirrel and over 30 species of birds were recovered in a raid conducted by the forest department at a private collector's residence in Chandranagar in West Bengal's Hooghly district in September 2009. Several animals seized are listed under various Schedules of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

For more details, please visit <http://www.thehindu.com/2009/09/16/stories/2009091657122000.htm>

Ten months for eBay ivory trader: A man who traded in elephant and whale ivory on eBay was sentenced to 10 months in prison following an international investigation by the UK's HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC). Nicholas Noonan, 46, of Bedfordshire, UK, pleaded guilty on 5 October 2009 to charges relating to illegal trading in African Elephant tusks and Sperm Whale teeth as well as ivory artifacts. They had been carved into billiard balls or used to make corkscrews before being sold on the commercial website.

For more details, please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2009/10/20/10-months-for-ebay-ivory-trader.html>

DNA "Barcode" to help nab illegal wildlife traders: A new tool has emerged that could give investigators around the world a way to stop the illegal trade in threatened and endangered species. The idea is that customs agents can send samples of items made from animal products like crocodile skin boots or antelope hide bags to a DNA analysis lab where researchers can determine exactly what species the product or meat is from. This kind of analysis is now possible because researchers at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York City have identified a specific section of DNA that is unique to each species. By analysing this "barcode of life," they can determine if the skin is from an endangered antelope or one that's allowed to be hunted.

For more information, please visit <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=112819451>

HEADLINES

66 tigers dead in 8 months

23 Big Cats Died Due To Poaching

STATE OF AFFAIRS... The tiger population in India has declined by 66 tigers in the last eight months...



Probe on into smuggling elephants to Kerala

The Kerala government has ordered a probe into the smuggling of elephants from other states to Kerala...



Poachers kill 23 of 66 tigers dead this year



AP/Chris Wedel

New Delhi: Tiger deaths continue at an alarming rate. Statistics released from different parts of India by a government watchdog show that between January 1 and August 31 this year, at least 66 tigers lost their lives.

Of these, 23 fell to poaching. The list includes whistles of skins, bones, claws, skeletons, cubs and paws during this period. The remaining 43 died of a variety of reasons such as lightning, old age, tiger-human conflict, accidents and diseases, according to the statistics of Wildlife Protection Society of India.

In the last few months, Uttarakhand in the north and Karnataka in the south have recorded high numbers of tiger deaths, which illustrates that the problem exists across the country," said Debraj Wright of WPSI.

Poachers trying to poison rhinos in Kaziranga National Park

Kaziranga (Assam) forest authorities in Assam have detected signs of a rhino poaching attempt in the park...



Notorious poacher Papaiah nabbed

Wildlife experts consider a major breakthrough in the hunt for the notorious poacher Papaiah...



Tiger, leopard parts prices in China markets have doubled

BEIJING (AFP) - Tiger and leopard parts prices in China markets have doubled since July...

Year of tiger: India will ask China to plug poaching

WILDCRUISE - India will ask China to plug poaching during the year of the tiger...



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TRAFFIC logo with WWF and IUCN logos below it. Text: 'TRAFFIC is a joint programme of WWF and IUCN'

TRAFFIC POST

the wildlife trade monitoring network

ISSUE 8
FEBRUARY, 2010

TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



TRAFFIC INDIA UPDATE

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- **TRAFFIC India develops a booklet** on Important Aspects of Investigation in Wildlife Offences Pg 7



OUTPOST

- **China's call for increased conservation efforts** marks the beginning of the Chinese Year of the Tiger 2010 Pg 7
- **Asian countries pledge to double Tiger numbers by 2022** Pg 8
- **International enforcement agencies** to tackle wildlife trade in concerted moves Pg 9



CITES UPDATE



© GS Bhardwaj

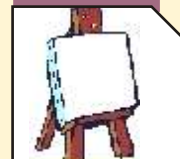
- **Conservation of Asian Big Cats** to be discussed at CITES CoP 15 Pg 9



IN FOCUS



TRAFFIC ALERT



SIGNPOST

- **Red Alert Red Sanders** Pg 10



© Samir Sinha

TRAFFIC Alert (Latest news on illegal wildlife trade in India):

- **Man held** with 40 endangered lizards Pg 5
- **Shahtoosh shawls seized** from J&K emporium in New Delhi Pg 6
- **Over 500 Indian Star Tortoises** seized on Indo-Bangladesh border Pg 7
- **Blackbuck skin seized** from a shoe showroom in Kolkata Pg 8



© Martin Harvey / WWF-Canon

SIGNPOST: Other significant news stories to read such as 'Global surge' in rhino poaching, Sharks killed for oil used in Swine Flu vaccine, Ivory mafia makes a killing in Kerala, Europe seeks ban on tuna trade etc. Pg 11

“Tigernet”– India's first consolidated database on Tiger mortality and crime launched



© GS Bhartwaj

There has been a legitimate concern in India for some time about the accurate reporting of Tiger deaths and the circumstances surrounding them, with conflicting information from official sources and NGOs, and accusations of secrecy over some findings. To tackle this and to bring in greater transparency and clarity in the process of tracking and evaluating Tiger mortality in India, TRAFFIC India joined hands with the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) to develop and maintain an online database on Tiger mortalities and crime in the country.

“Tigernet” (<http://tigernet.nic.in/>) was launched in January 2010 by Shri Jairam Ramesh, Hon. Minister of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India, in New Delhi and is probably the first ever consolidated database in India on mortality and poaching related to Tigers and other protected species within Tiger reserves in the country. The new system allows enforcement officers such as the Tiger reserve directors and chief wildlife wardens to record information on Tiger

mortalities, to monitor patterns of where poaching incidents are occurring and use this information to strengthen anti-poaching efforts.

This endeavour is believed to be the most scientific and comprehensive one to underpin the issue of wildlife poaching in the country taking the Tiger as a flagship species. Proper record keeping and accurate statistics are an integral part of the process of monitoring and curbing an illegal activity that has wide ramifications for the biological heritage of the country. Therefore, the data collected by the website will help in gauging trends of poaching, regional and national significance of Tiger mortality and provide pointers for effective moves to be undertaken on the ground to mitigate the problem. It is anticipated that the new website will simplify the whole Tiger death reporting system and allow a more accurate and transparent picture to be generated of the poaching and other threats facing the nation's Tiger population. Automatic reminders will be sent to official staff to upload details surrounding any Tiger mortalities, including the findings of post mortem examinations.

The website also provides an option for concerned citizens of the country to send in details about wildlife mortality they are aware of.

Samir Sinha, Head–TRAFFIC India said, “Collection of streamlined information is the first step toward addressing the root cause of a misdeed and this website has to be seen in this context”.

He further added, “It is hoped that it will engender a spirit of honesty and co-operation among all major stakeholders in Tiger conservation in the country for remedial action to save the majestic predator of the Indian jungles along with all the other denizens that cohabit with this species”.



India's wildlife law enforcement gets a boost with the launch of TRAFFIC's latest Handbook



© TRAFFIC India

From left to right: Mr Samir Sinha, Hon. Minister Shri Jairam Ramesh and Mr Ravi Singh

As a step forward towards strengthening wildlife enforcement in India, Shri Jairam Ramesh, Hon. Minister of Environment and Forests launched TRAFFIC India's Handbook on Wildlife Law Enforcement in India on 16 February 2010 at the WWF–India Secretariat in New Delhi. The book has been produced with support from WWF–India and is authored by Samir Sinha, Head–TRAFFIC India.

The handbook is a comprehensive and detailed publication on wildlife trade and crime, conceived from several discussions with senior enforcement officials and experts. It aims to support the efforts of various enforcement agencies in their fight against wildlife crime. The handbook is for use by officials from the Forest Department, Police, paramilitary forces guarding our borders, the Central Bureau of Investigation, Department of Revenue Intelligence and others working on wildlife enforcement in India. It can be used as an important resource material during trainings conducted on wildlife enforcement and other related issues.

Its special features include sections on prevention of offences, identifying early signs, the scene of wildlife crime, the internet as a tool for illegal wildlife trade, securing electronic evidence and conducting interrogation.

In his foreword to the book, Shri Jairam Ramesh stated, “The handbook is a comprehensive document that highlights emerging threats from illegal wildlife trade and offers valuable information on identifying and responding to such threats.”

“I would recommend the field practitioners, enforcement and policing authorities and anyone with a keen interest in protecting our natural heritage to make use of this handbook in the best possible way”, he also said at the launch.

Mr Ravi Singh, SG & CEO, WWF–India further commented, “From a conservationist's point of view, the handbook is a vital input at the present stage of India's conservation history, being published at a time when many of our own species and conservation landscapes are depreciating, some beyond even long-term recovery. I am confident that the handbook will help the practitioners and concerned individuals in standing firm against erosion of our natural heritage.”

Mr Samir Sinha, Head–TRAFFIC India and also the author of the book said, “I am deeply touched by the support and appreciation I have received for this book. It is hoped that this handbook will prove a useful tool in the battle against illegal wildlife crime in India.”

TRAFFIC India helps poachers surrender



Six hardcore poachers from north-eastern India surrendered during a ceremony organized by TRAFFIC India on 26 November 2009 at Bansbari, Assam. The poachers turned themselves in with six firearms, three deer antlers and two deer skins along with traps and nets to Sh. Khampha Bargayari, Dy Chief, Bodo Territorial Council (BTC).

The poachers operated in and around Manas National Park, Assam, and most were known to be active in the region. Between them they are said to have killed two Tigers, a Rhinoceros and three Asian Elephants in recent years. Their surrender is a boost to conservation effort in the region.

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

In October 2009, three poachers were arrested, based on information provided to the Forest Department through an intelligence network established by TRAFFIC India. Earlier, apprehended individuals in Assam had indicated that active poachers in Kaziranga Tiger Reserve, Orang National Park, Pobitara National Park and Manas National Park were interested in changing their ways and surrendering if support for an alternative source of livelihood could be provided. This led to co-operation between TRAFFIC India and BTC to identify the relevant individuals, resulting in the recent surrender.



© TRAFFIC India

Surrendered poachers at the ceremony



© TRAFFIC India

Items recovered from the surrendered poachers

Sh. Khampha Bargayari, Dy Chief of BTC said at the surrender ceremony that in the coming year, BTC plans to budget a rehabilitation programme for the surrendered poachers where they will be provided employment at dairy farms and co-operative stores set up by BTC.

TRAFFIC India hopes that the surrender of these poachers will set a positive example for all others operating in the area. This is surely a step ahead in our mission to help curb illegal wildlife trade.

Forest and police officials in Bhopal receive training on wildlife enforcement



TRAFFIC India, in collaboration with the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), Govt. of India and Defra (the Department for Food and Rural Affairs, Govt. of UK) held a training workshop on wildlife law enforcement for forest and police officers in Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh from 4—6 November 2009. The workshop was attended by 50 personnel from both the Forest and Police departments of Madhya Pradesh.

Inaugurating the workshop, Mr R S Negi, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) of Madhya Pradesh, highlighted the need to strengthen wildlife enforcement and develop effective intelligence network for tackling wildlife crime. The workshop was also attended by Mr Sartaj Singh, Hon. Forest Minister, who stressed the need to develop wide networks to curb the growing menace of wildlife trade.

During the workshop, Mrs Rina Mitra, Director—WCCB talked about the importance of local action in monitoring wildlife trade. She also expressed hope that better communication between States will help in stalling transborder crime.

Mr Samir Sinha, Head—TRAFFIC India highlighted the nature of international illegal wildlife trade and how it has emerged to become a form of organized trade.

This workshop was the second in a series conducted by TRAFFIC, WCCB and Defra. The first was held in Chennai in August 2009.

TRAFFIC India participates in India's first BioFach



BioFach, the World Organic Trade Fair, was held for the first time in India; from 18–20 November 2009 in Mumbai. It was inaugurated by Mr Dawcho Lepcha, Hon. Minister for Food Security and Agriculture Development, Sikkim.

TRAFFIC India, representing the FairWild Foundation, participated in the three-day fair and showcased its work on the ISSC–MAP (International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants) project that has been implemented in the States of Uttarakhand & Karnataka.



© Khalid Pasha

Besides promoting the FairWild standards (including ISSC–MAP) at the fair, TRAFFIC India and its delegation of medicinal plant experts, local partner NGOs, State Government representatives and harvesters/collectors from the field (local community) interacted with those involved at various levels in the medicinal plant sector. Overall, TRAFFIC India's participation helped generate interest among visitors on sustainable practices for collection of various MAP species from the wild.

The Hon. Minister Mr Lepcha said that creating an organic world is the right mantra for the eco-conscious 21st Century. He pledged to make Sikkim a fully organic state by 2015.

Mr Khalid Pasha, Co-ordinator–TRAFFIC India, who attended the three day fair said, “BioFach marks the beginning of a new era for organic farming and the medicinal and aromatic plants sector in India. The fair will help bridge the gap between the overseas and domestic markets for such products”.

BIOFACH is a World Organic Trade Fair, originally from Nurnberg, Germany and now organized in five other countries, worldwide (Brazil, China, India, Japan and USA).

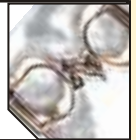
Karnataka begins implementing sustainable practices for collection of medicinal and aromatic plants



To mark an end of the three-year project that entailed demonstrating ISSC–MAP (International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants) in the state of Karnataka; and to celebrate the beginning of a new phase wherein the various stakeholders of the medicinal plant industry begin to put into use the ISSC–MAP principles and standards for harvesting of the plants, FRLHT (the Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions) organised a workshop in Bangalore in collaboration with TRAFFIC India on 29 January 2010.

Continued on page 6

TRAFFIC Alert



Man held with 40 endangered lizards

Delhi Police arrested a man and seized 40 monitor lizards alive from his possession in West Delhi on 11 January 2010. The accused was allegedly planning to sell the lizards, which were tied up and stuffed into seven gunny bags, to a client who failed to turn up. The poacher had tied the limbs of the lizards together to keep them immobile. The police arrested the accused while he was sitting in a park in Raghbir Nagar (West Delhi) with his wife and children with the seven gunny bags with him containing the lizards.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

There are four species of monitor lizard found in India–Bengal Monitor *Varanus bengalensis*, Yellow Monitor *Varanus flavescens*, Desert Monitor *Varanus griseus* and Indian Water Monitor Lizard *Varanus salvator*. All of these are protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, that bans hunting of and trade in the species. Indian Water Monitor Lizard is listed in Appendix II of CITES (Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) while the other three species are listed in Appendix I, prohibiting their international trade.

Despite legal protection, monitor lizards continue to be exploited for their skin which is used to make articles of apparel and household use viz. handbags, wallets, shoes and watch straps including scabbards for kukris and drums. The skin of the Indian Water Monitor Lizard is also used as upper leather for expensive shoes in the international market (Bhanotar, et al. loc. cit.).

Live monitors are seen in India during festivals and in fertility rites. Their eggs are considered a delicacy and the entire animal is also eaten (Murthy 1978 and 1988, Smith, 1930 and Das, 1989); oil extracted from fat is used in the treatment of failing eyesight (Murthy, 1986) and in cooking (Auffenberg, 1986; Das, 1989).

Continued on page 6

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The workshop was attended by the various stakeholders to the projects including officials from the Karnataka Forest Department, the CEO of the State Medicinal Plant Board, community members from both field sites of the project in Karnataka and the project initiation and execution team.

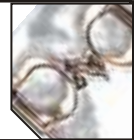
The project was began in January 2007 and aimed to demonstrate the international standards for harvesting medicinal and aromatic plants from the wild, to assist stakeholders engaged with the harvesting and trade of these plants, and to help traders and industry to implement best practices.

Mr G A Kinhal, Member of the Advisory Board for ISSC-MAP, who initiated this project in Karnataka highlighted the role of all stakeholders in making the project a success and thanked the Karnataka Forest Department for co-operating in the implementation of ISSC-MAP in Karnataka.

Mr Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India commented, "In my 20 years of experience as a forest officer, I heard the concept of sustainability being talked about only in conference rooms, so it is extremely touching to hear communities now understanding and accepting the concept as a way for long-term sustenance of resources."

The ISSC-MAP standard was developed by WWF-Germany, the IUCN/SSC Species Survival Commission Medicinal Plant Specialist Group (MPSG), TRAFFIC and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation. For more details, please visit <http://www.floraweb.de/map-pro/>

TRAFFIC Alert



Continued from page 5

Monitor fat is used as an aphrodisiac and the excretion used in the treatment of eye and skin diseases (Hussain, 1771, Khan, 1911 and Vohora and Khan, 1979). Travelling hakims in India also exhibit a variety of drugs and tonics derived from these animal sources (Das, 1989).

Source:

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/man-held-with-40-endangered-lizards/566779/0>
<http://envfor.nic.in/divisions/re/ta5p5.html>;
http://zsienvvis.nic.in/endb/end_reptilia/reptilia_data/varanus_salvator.htm
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<http://envfor.nic.in/divisions/re/ta5p5.html>
<http://www.expressbuzz.com/edition/print.aspx?artid=0s1fPYCUMak=>

Bombay Scottish School wins Wild Wisdom



© Nishant Chandra

From left to right: Mr Cyrus Sahukar, Mr. Ravi Singh and Miss Ekta Chowdhary

Students from Bombay Scottish School, Mumbai, won the national level wildlife quiz titled Wild Wisdom while students from Rajagiri Higher Secondary School, Kalamassery, Kerala and Delhi Public School, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh were the two runners up. This inter-city quiz was held on 18 November 2009 at the Sanskriti School in New Delhi and was organised by WWF-India and TRAFFIC India.

Five teams were selected based on a written preliminary round from the 13 that participated from cities across the country. The five finalists were named after five endangered wild animals that are primarily

threatened by poaching—Elephant, Rhinoceros, Otter, Whale Shark and Tiger.

The quiz was hosted by Mr Cyrus Sahukar of MTV Fame and Miss Ekta Chowdhary, Pantaloons Femina Miss India 2009 was the chief guest of the day who gave away certificates and trophies to winners. The winning teams were taken to the prestigious Jim Corbett National Park in Uttarakhand.

This quiz is part of TRAFFIC India's initiative to generate interest among children and youth on wildlife and trade-related issues.

Shahtoosh shawls seized from J&K emporium in New Delhi

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) recovered three banned Shahtoosh shawls from the Jammu and Kashmir government's emporium in Central Delhi on 3 December 2009 and arrested the emporium manager. Mushtaq Ahmed, manager of the Kashmir Government Arts Emporium on Baba Kharak Singh Marg, was remanded in judicial custody. The agency is currently trying to find out how Ahmed procured the shawls.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Tibetan Antelope *Panthelops hodgsonii*, despite being accorded the highest protection status under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, has become a fashion victim. Its international trade is also prohibited under CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). However, seizure reports like the above indicate that the trade in Shahtoosh continues.

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TRAFFIC India develops a booklet on Important Aspects of Investigation in Wildlife Offences



TRAFFIC India has developed a booklet on *Important Aspects of Investigation in Wildlife Offences*. Authored by Saurabh Sharma, Advocate-High Court, Delhi, the booklet attempts to pull together various aspects of investigation into wildlife offences as per the legal procedures prevalent in India. Successful investigation involves combining the best available scientific tools and techniques with established legal procedures that can stand scrutiny in courts of law. The booklet attempts to interpret and present in a simplified way various aspects of investigation as laid out in the laws of the land, and the interpretations of various law courts of these aspects. The booklet draws on the author's experience of successfully fighting some of India's high profile wildlife offence cases in the courts of law across the country.

TRAFFIC Alert



Continued from page 6

Shahtoosh is manufactured from the underwool of the endangered Tibetan Antelope (Chiru) and perhaps three to five Chirus are killed to make one shawl. Reports have confirmed there is a ready supply of the wool from Kashmir's weavers who make the luxurious shawls that are then supplied to affluent customers in India, Nepal, the Middle East and Europe.

Source:

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/3-shahtoosh-shawls-seized--J-K-emporium-manager-held/550508/>

Over 500 Indian Star Tortoises seized on Indo-Bangladesh border

Border Security Force (BSF) jawans seized a consignment of 670 tortoises at the Kalandi border post in the Sundarbans, West Bengal, during the early hours on 13 November 2009. The reptiles were being smuggled across the border into Bangladesh. The guards on duty spotted a group trying to cross the river that demarcates the border. While the smugglers managed to escape they left behind about 15 sacks containing 670 tortoises of which 500 were

TRAFFIC India adds.....

The Indian Star Tortoise *Geochelone elegans* has become one of the most commonly traded wildlife species. This is despite the fact that in India, hunting and trade of the species is banned under Schedule IV of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and international trade is prohibited under CITES (Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) where it is listed in Appendix II.

Commonly known as Tarewala kachua, Star Tortoises are largely threatened by illegal trade. Due to their small size, live tortoises can easily be carried in baggage with fruits and vegetables. They are often wrongly declared as fish, crabs and souvenirs. Star Tortoises are either traded for their meat or for the live pet trade.

OUTPOST: China's call for increased conservation efforts marks the beginning of the Chinese Year of the Tiger 2010



The State Forestry Administration (SFA) of China issued a Directive on 4 January 2010 calling for increased protection of wild Tigers through natural habitat management, stronger law enforcement action against illegal trade in Tiger parts and products, stricter regulation of captive breeding regulations and enhanced public awareness campaigns.

Poaching of Tigers across Asia coupled with habitat loss has led to a dramatic decline in global Tiger numbers in the wild from around 1 00 000 animals a Century ago to approximately 3200 today. Currently, China has only around 20 wild Amur Tigers *Panthera tigris altaica*.



© Klein & Hubert / WWF

Although domestic trade in Tiger parts has been illegal in China since 1993, demand for parts, such as Tiger bone for tonic wines and skins for clothing and display, still exists. In 2008, TRAFFIC's market surveys in Gansu and Ningxia provinces found the illicit trade in Tiger products still existed, although at a low level.

The SFA Directive includes a mandate to crackdown on illegal smuggling and trade in Tiger parts and products, specifically asking local forestry bureaus in China to collaborate with other law enforcement agencies to increase monitoring and undertake enforcement measures against such trade.

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The Directive calls for promoting public awareness to reduce consumption of Tiger parts and a public rejection of illegal trade, and suggests encouraging and motivating people to report wildlife crime to the authorities.

The Directive also calls for increased monitoring and management of Tiger captive breeding facilities through creation of a database to track all Tigers births and deaths in such facilities and the secure storage of stockpiles of Tiger bodies and parts. Those facilities without storage capabilities will have to destroy their stockpiles under the supervision of local authorities, and each operation will be required to demonstrate it has met the appropriate conditions before it will be issued with a permit to open up for public viewing.

“TRAFFIC welcomes the measures proposed by the State Forestry Administration ahead of the Year of the Tiger, which is make or break time for wild Tigers,” said Professor Xu Hongfa, Head of TRAFFIC's China team.

“2010 will determine if the Tiger's future burns bright or continues to fade away.”

OUTPOST:

Asian countries pledge to double Tiger numbers by 2022



Ministers and senior delegations from 13 Tiger range States Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Thailand, and Viet Nam committed to implementing measures to double the number of wild Tigers by 2022 at the 1st Asia Ministerial Conference on Tiger Conservation held in Hua Hin, Thailand in January 2010.

The post-conference declaration includes pledges to protect wild tigers and their prey from poaching through regular patrolling of tiger habitats and elimination of national and cross-border trade in tiger and tiger parts as well as a commitment to support communities living in and around tiger landscapes and minimize human-tiger conflicts.

The countries also appealed for the commitment of international institutions to help finance and support the new conservation efforts.

“The World Bank stands ready to support regional projects in the tiger range countries and to mobilize the donor community and develop innovative financial instruments to support tiger conservation funds,” said World Bank President Robert B. Zoellick, in a video message to the conference.

The Royal Government of Thailand, who hosted the meeting, announced plans for increased patrolling of tiger habitats in Thailand, assistance for restoration of tigers populations in neighbouring countries and more secure funding for the ASEAN–Wildlife Enforcement Network.

Michael Baltzer, Leader of WWF's Tiger Initiative, commented: “We are delighted to see a ray of hope for the tiger as represented by the tiger range countries' commitment to work together to double wild tiger numbers by 2022.”

Currently there are around 3200 tigers left in the wild. A Century ago the figure was estimated at 1 00 000.

TRAFFIC Alert



Continued from page 7

A significant part of the trade is meant for international markets. Two recent investigations undertaken by TRAFFIC at wildlife trade markets in Thailand and Indonesia clearly indicate the Indian Star Tortoise is in the top three tortoise species traded. Over the years Bangalore, Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata, Pune, the Port City of Kandla in the Gulf of Kutch, Kutch, the coast of Gujarat and Rajasthan have emerged as common trade points for smuggling the Indian Star Tortoise.

Source:

<http://www.hindu.com/2007/06/02/stories/2007060202801300.htm>
<http://www.ptinews.com/pti%5Cptisite.nsf/All/ABE0FF6E0AB002FD652573410056363>
<http://www.mumbaimirror.com/net/mmpaper.aspx?page=article§id=35&contentid=1458082400>
<http://www.thehindu.com/2009/11/14/stories/2009111458082400.htm>

Blackbuck skin seized from a shoe showroom in Kolkata

The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) and Kolkata Police conducted a raid at the popular Sreeleather showroom in Kolkata's Lindsay Street in October 2009 and seized Blackbuck skin which was on display amongst shoes and bags. A senior Sreeleathers executive was arrested for illegal possession and procurement of the skin although company officials insisted it was cow skin. However, forensic tests by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Kolkata, in November 2009 confirmed the skin was indeed that of a Blackbuck.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Blackbuck *Antelope cervicapra* is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, which prohibits hunting of and trade in the species. It is also listed in Appendix II of CITES (Convention of the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) that prohibits all international trade in the species. The above case, in which a reputable company was involved in openly selling the skin of a protected species is of concern. It clearly demonstrates that despite legal protection, the species is still hunted for its skin.

Source:

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/blackbuck-skin-seized-from-kolkata-shoe-show/536080/>

OUTPOST:

International enforcement agencies to tackle wildlife trade in concerted moves



Representatives from the secretariats of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), INTERPOL, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Customs Organization (WCO) held their first-ever joint meeting in Vienna late last year to design strategies intended to prevent and combat the illegal trade in wild animals and plants.

Willem Wijnstekers, Secretary General of the CITES Secretariat, announced that the discussions had led to a proposed International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime that will enhance law enforcement capacity at international, regional and national levels to bring greater co-ordination to protect the world's natural resources and to bring to justice those who seek to exploit them in a criminal fashion. This is a strong signal that all relevant agencies are now towards taking concerted action to curb illegal trade in tigers and other wildlife products.

CITES UPDATE:

Conservation of Asian Big Cats to be discussed at CITES CoP 15



The upcoming CITES Conference of Parties CoP 15 at Doha, Qatar will see another series of discussions on the fate of Asian Big Cats—comprising five species, namely: tiger, leopard, snow leopard, clouded leopard, and Asiatic lion. All Asian big cats have been included in Appendix I of CITES since 1975, with the exception of the Asiatic lion *Panthera leo persica* and the Amur tiger *Panthera tigris altaica*, which were included in Appendix I in 1977 and 1987, respectively. Two agenda documents relate to Asian big cats:

- Document 43.1 Report of the Secretariat
- Document 43.2 Proposed revision of Resolution Conf. 12.5 on conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix-I Asian big cat species (submitted by the Kingdom of Sweden on behalf of the European Community Member States)

In Document 43.1, the Secretariat summarizes the latest actions towards delivery of Decisions 14.65-14.72. Little impact has been made on the threats facing ABCs following CoP14. Following the adoption of those Decisions in 2007, the Parties subsequently failed to deliver on them in full. The Secretariat states that the conclusions and recommendations of the 1999 report to SC42 from the CITES Tiger Missions Technical Team are still valid and relevant today. This shows that solutions have long been evident but that sustained and widespread political will, financial support, and effective implementation are needed to give these a proper chance to succeed.

Document 43.2 proposes amendments to Resolution Conf. 12.5 aimed at increasing regional cooperation, improving enforcement controls and procedures, ensuring tiger-breeding operations are consistent with the conservation of wild populations, improving reporting, improving compliance, and encouraging an expansion of a database such as EU-TWIX. WWF and TRAFFIC support this document in principle, particularly measures to curtail captive tiger breeding to a level supportive only to conserving wild tigers. However, it needs to be pointed out that there are many important issues to discuss at this CoP relating to Asian big cats and that this one issue should not dominate all the discussions, at the expense of ignoring issues such as the need for stronger penalties, closing of legislative loopholes, and greater resources for enforcement efforts. The recommendations outlined above should be applied to all countries with intensive operations breeding tigers on a commercial scale.

These discussions will be watched with interest, especially in India and all other tiger range and consumer countries as they are likely to have a significant impact on tiger conservation in years to come.

Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India adds, "India played a significant role in the tiger related discussions during the CoP 14 and we are hopeful that it will take up the same leadership role during the CoP 15."

TRAFFIC's recommendations on the proposals to amend the Appendices of CITES due to be discussed at CoP 15 can be viewed at <http://www.traffic.org/cop15>.

IN FOCUS: Red Sanders Red Alert



© Samir Sinha

A series of recent seizures of Red Sanders has indicated that smugglers are getting increasingly more sophisticated in transporting the valuable timber out of India. In 2009 alone, 322.50 tonnes of Red Sanders were seized from 26 out of 41 seizures reported in India. Since the beginning of 2010, at least eight seizures of Red Sanders have taken place already.

Red Sanders *Pterocarpus santalinus* is endemic to the southern parts of India's Eastern Ghats, mainly the State of Andhra Pradesh. For centuries, the prized wood has been made into objects for traditional wedding dowries in Japan, and used to make traditional musical instruments. Today the wood, also known as Red Sandalwood, is in great demand in China and Japan, where it is used to make furniture and carvings as well as medicines. In India it is used to make a dye.

Preliminary research by TRAFFIC suggests that while the use of the rare timber for furniture may be the most significant driver of recent Red Sanders smuggling, off-cuts from the furniture industry are then sold on into the traditional medicine trade.

However, the tree species has been heavily overexploited and its export, except in special circumstances, is prohibited under India's Foreign Trade Policy. It is also

protected under the Red Sanders and Sandalwood Transit Rules of Andhra Pradesh Forest Act, 1967 and international trade is controlled through the listing of *Pterocarpus santalinus* in Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

"It is evident from the spate of seizures taking place that smugglers of Red Sanders are operating on a massive scale and are running highly organized international smuggling rackets," commented Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India.

According to India's Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) latest annual report, the DRI made 15 Red Sanders seizures in 2008—2009. This was slightly down from just over 20 in each of the years since 2005, when the largest total seized was 466 cubic metres of logs in 2005—2006.

Smuggling attempts uncovered often involve the concealment or misdeclaration of the timber in shipments as everything from jute bags to zinc oxide to mustard oil cake and even salt. Logs have often been intercepted being transported by road from India to China via Nepal.

Since 2006, almost 1000 tonnes of Red Sanders have been recovered from near various Customs and border posts across India, including the Indo-Nepal border. On the Nepal side, over 400 tonnes of the wood have been seized during the same period, almost all of it destined for China.

However, other overland smuggling routes are becoming apparent. In October 2009, a consignment of around 2000 logs was intercepted by DRI officers near Aizawl, in north-eastern India, believed to be en route to China. Six Chinese nationals were arrested at the scene.

Elsewhere in north-eastern India, according to media reports, at least 100 tonnes of Red Sanders have been seized in Manipur and Mizoram since August 2009, and 600 tonnes seized by the forest department in transit in Dhubri and Burdawan.

According to the DRI report, in 2008—2009, on five occasions the DRI seized shipping containers with Red Sanders en route to Dubai, and in two cases each it was to UAE and Malaysia. However, a recent seizure finds criminals getting more sophisticated in getting the wood aboard ships to be smuggled out of India.

Continued from page 10

In November 2009, two clearing agents at Chennai port were arrested in a case involving 32 tonnes of Red Sanders logs. The men were said to have used the name of their regular export clients who were unaware of the scam and made duplicate shipping bills, complete with the signatures of all Customs officials concerned. They forged rubber stamps and even duplicated the time locks used by Customs to seal export containers meant to ensure their authenticity. The cargo was then cleared by the agents and loaded onto ships and cleared for export without any Customs check. In December 2009, part of the same consignment was uncovered after DRI officials recalled a container destined for Dubai and discovered 339 Red Sanders logs weighing 9 tonnes aboard.

“We are seeing several changes to the nature and scale of the illicit trade in Red Sanders,” said Sinha. “For example, logs are being transported via different routes overland and are being shipped to the Middle East, although whether this is to markets in that region or it is just being used as a transit point, remains to be seen.

“The DRI are to be congratulated for their diligence in uncovering these smuggling routes and techniques, but as well as stopping the smuggling in India, we urgently need to find out more about what can be done to control the drivers of the Red Sanders demand in China, Japan and elsewhere.”



SIGNPOST: Other significant news stories to read



Global surge' in rhino poaching: Rhino poaching around the world is on the rise despite efforts to protect the animals, a report warns. The global surge in the illegal trade has been driven by demands from Asian medicinal markets, the study by conservationists concluded. It suggests that a decline in law enforcement is the main reason for the rise in poaching in Africa. For more information, please visit <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/8388606.stm>

Sharks killed for oil used in Swine Flu vaccine: Vaccines being made to protect people from swine flu may not be so healthy for threatened species of sharks. That's because millions of doses of the pandemic H1N1/09 vaccine contain a substance called squalene, which is extracted from shark livers. More commonly found in beauty products such as skin creams, squalene can be used to make an adjuvant, a compound that boosts the body's immune response. For more information, please visit <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2009/12/091229-sharks-liver-oil-swine-flu-vaccine.html>

Ivory mafia makes a killing in Kerala: Inter-State ivory peddlers are flourishing in Kerala despite the vigil mounted by the police and the Forest department. Authorities admit the number of elephants wild and tamed falling victim to these rackets is increasing by the year. Forest officials call the criminals 'ivory mafia'. Ivory worth crores of rupees had been seized by the department personnel in 2009 but smuggling of ivory has still not stopped. Officials say the seized ivory may not constitute even half the volume of the contraband being smuggled out of the State. For more information, please visit <http://www.dailypioneer.com/231667/Ivory-mafia-makes-a-killing-in-Kerala.html>

Europe seeks ban on tuna trade: Europe acted on Monday, 22 February 2010, to bring about a worldwide ban on commercial fishing of bluefin tuna, the king of Japanese sushi and sashimi, in a move that has already angered Tokyo. However, the proposal unveiled by the European Commission, which has still to be agreed by national governments, is that any ban based on scientific evidence concerning falling stocks only comes into force in 2011. For more information, please visit http://www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/World/Story/STIStory_493519.html

Monkeys, butterflies, turtles...how the pet trade's greed is emptying south-east Asia's forests: Countries across south-east Asia are being systematically drained of wildlife to meet a booming demand for exotic pets in Europe and Japan and traditional medicine in China posing a greater threat to many species than habitat loss or global warming. More than 35 million animals were legally exported from the region over the past decade, official figures show, and hundreds of millions more could have been taken illegally. For more information, please read <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/feb/21/illegal-wildlife-trade>

HEADLINES

In transit or destination, Delhi is poachers' capital

There is little connection between the city and the poaching trade. Delhi is a transit point for poachers and their goods. The city is a hub for poachers and their goods. The city is a hub for poachers and their goods. The city is a hub for poachers and their goods.

WILDLIFE POWERS

Crime Branch sleuths bust illegal wildlife racket

Leopard skin can fetch a price of Rs25 lakh on the black market. The Crime Branch sleuths have busted an illegal wildlife racket. The racket was run by a group of poachers who were selling leopard skins on the black market.



Alarming rise in leopard killing in Uttarakhand. Two more big cats killed in 10 days; this year's toll crosses 40

Two more big cats killed in 10 days; this year's toll crosses 40. The alarming rise in leopard killing in Uttarakhand is a cause for concern. The state government has taken steps to protect the remaining leopards.



2 Tibetans among tiger poachers

Two Tibetans among tiger poachers. The police have arrested two Tibetans who were involved in tiger poaching. The poachers were caught while trying to sell tiger skins on the black market.



Smugglers held with rare snake

Smugglers held with rare snake. The police have arrested four persons with a snake of a rare species of reportedly considerable value. The gang leader, however, managed to escape. Senior Superintendent of Police, A.K. Singh, said, "On Friday night four persons were arrested near Maha Maya flyover with a rare type of snake - brown sand boa. They revealed the value of the snake to be Rs.40 lakh in India. However we are verifying their claim."



The brown sand boa is called two-headed because of its tall when it's angry. (PT PHOTO)

Poachers kill two rhinos in Kaziranga

Poachers kill two rhinos in Kaziranga. The poachers have killed two rhinos in the Kaziranga National Park. The rhinos were found dead in a forest area. The poachers were caught while trying to sell the rhino horns on the black market.



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TRAFFIC POST

the wildlife trade monitoring network

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TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



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CITES UPDATE

- **Tiger range countries reach a consensus at CITES** on ways to address illegal trade in the big cats Pg 8
- **CITES backs better rhino protection measures** Pg 9



IN FOCUS



TRAFFIC ALERT

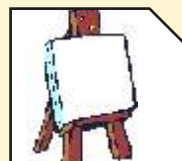
- **Critical look at the proposed amendment to the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972** by Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India (Published in gfiles, Vol 3, Issue 12/March 2010) Pg 10

TRAFFIC Alert (Latest news on illegal wildlife trade in India):

- **Drugs containing derivative of a protective plant species** seized in Delhi Pg 5
- **Sleuths find protected sea cucumber** on five-star hotel's menu Pg 6
- **Orchid smuggling from India to China** continues to persist Pg 7
- **Twenty three kg of dolphin oil** seized, poacher arrested Pg 8



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SIGNPOST

- **SIGNPOST: Other significant news stories to read such as-** In Arunachal Pradesh a Tiger skin is worth 5 kg of rice; Rise in sale of exotic birds; Whaling Plan draws anger from green groups; World governments fail to deliver on 2010 biodiversity target etc. Pg 9

Forest officials strengthen skills to fight wildlife crime in Andhra Pradesh



© TRAFFIC India

TRAFFIC India and WWF-India in collaboration with Andhra Pradesh Forest Department conducted a training programme to enhance skills and knowledge of 45 senior officials of the Forest Department in wildlife law enforcement.

A two-day workshop, held over 17–18 April 2010 at Andhra Pradesh Forest Academy, Dulapally (Hyderabad), included sessions on effective implementation of India's Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, with elaboration on important case judgments pertaining to it; procedures and protocols for wildlife crime investigation; an overview of illegal international wildlife trade; wildlife forensics and protocols on collection of samples for analysis.

Experts on hand included Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India; Supreme Court Advocates ADN Rao, Ritwick Dutta & Saurabh Sharma; and Dr S P

Goyal, a wildlife forensic expert from the Wildlife Institute of India.

TRAFFIC India also provided resource materials on various aspects of wildlife trade and enforcement, including a forensic kit for field use.

“This capacity building programme will help in addressing various threats to different elements of the biodiversity of the state, ranging from Tigers and Leopards to important timber species like Red Sanders,” said Samir Sinha.

“New aspects of wildlife law enforcement introduced here will help to bolster the enforcement capacities of those officers present and enable them to gain a better understanding of the evolving nature of threats against the state's wildlife.

“The Andhra Pradesh Forest Department deserves commendation for taking the lead in organizing this event.”

Wildlife law enforcement officers in India receive training in specialized skills for fighting wildlife crime



Wildlife forensics is an important tool for managing wildlife crime and is an emerging science with a number of institutions and individuals working on it internationally. With this in mind, TRAFFIC India, in partnership with the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and Gujarat Forensic Sciences University (GFSU), organized a training programme, the first of its kind in India, on the use of forensics by wildlife law enforcement officers in tackling wildlife crime.

Twenty officers of the rank of Assistant Conservator of Forest (ACF), Deputy Conservator of Forest (DCF) and Conservator of Forest (CF) attended the five-day workshop held from 22–26 February 2010 at the GFSU in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. They received hands-on training in the use of modern scientific tools and techniques that help strengthen wildlife cases and fight wildlife crime. They also shared knowledge and experience on implementation of tools and techniques in the field and their potential for supporting conservation in India.

The training module dealt with inputs on various aspects of crime management including ballistics, nano-technology, evidentiary value of scientific opinion in a court of law, interrogation techniques, documentation of wildlife cases, medico-legal examination use in wildlife investigation, cyber forensics and wildlife species identification using wildlife forensic techniques.

Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India commented: “This training will give participants a comprehensive understanding of the present scenario of wildlife crime and trade in India and its implications for conservation of species in the wild as well as a thorough background knowledge of the use of modern forensic tools and techniques in strengthening enforcement efforts.”

Continued on page 3

Continued from page 2

“Wildlife crimes, including poaching and illegal trade in animals and plants and parts thereof, threaten a number of Indian wildlife species. Reports indicate that wildlife crime is on the increase in India, although the conviction rate for offences remains at less than 2%. It is hoped that increased use of forensics in wildlife crime cases will help to secure more convictions” he further added.

Dr J.M. Vyas, Director General, GFSU stated that the workshop provided participants with hands on training in the use of modern wildlife forensic scientific tools and techniques that will help in improving the conviction rate for wildlife cases.

Experts at the training programme included Ms. S. G. Gokani, Registrar of the Gujarat High Court; Mr Ajay Tomar, Inspector General of Police, Anti-Terrorism Squad, Gujarat; Dr M. S. Dhayia, Director of the Institute of Forensic Sciences, GFSU; Dr S.L. Vaya, Director-Institute of Behavioral Science, GFSU; Mr H.P. Sanghvi, GFSU; Dr Y. K. Aggarwal, Director of R&D, GFSU; Mr S.J Trivedi, GFSU; Mr Sudhir Mishra, Advocate–Supreme Court of India; Dr S. P. Goyal of the Wildlife Institute of India; Mr Sanjay Pandey, CEO–iSec Services; Mr Samir Sinha, Head–TRAFFIC India and several other experts.



Credit for all the three photos above: TRAFFIC India

Trainee judges receive overview of environmental and wildlife law



Mr Samir Sinha, Head–TRAFFIC India, addressing the participants at the training in Delhi

TRAFFIC India conducted a one-day orientation programme on environmental and wildlife law for 83 trainee judicial officers at the request of the Delhi Judicial Academy (DJA) on 30 March 2010.

The purpose of the programme was to provide an overview of the current status of forest and wildlife policies and legislation and help raise awareness of wildlife conservation challenges in India. Issues related to forestry conservation, illegal wildlife trade, environmental law and biodiversity conservation were discussed during the programme.

The Hon. Acting Chief Justice of Delhi High Court Shri Madan Lokur graced the occasion along with Shri A K Mukherji, Former Director General of Forests and Special Secretary, Government of India; Mr Samir Sinha, Head–TRAFFIC India; Prof. (Dr) Ved Kumari, Chairperson DJA; Ms Anu Malhotra, DHJS (Delhi Higher Judicial Services) and Director-DJA; Shri Alok Agarwal, DHJS and Joint Director-DJA; Shri Mahendra Vyas, Advocate and Member of the Central Empowered Committee, Supreme Court of India, Shri A D N Rao, Advocate-Supreme Court of

India and Amicus Curie, Shri Ritwick Dutta, Advocate Supreme Court of India and other senior officials of the Delhi Judicial Academy.

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Hon. Chief Justice Shri Madan Lokur said, "The powers vested with the judicial officers allow them to play a pivotal role in changing the mindsets of society towards various issues and especially those that may not have immediate direct impact on the lives of people, like environment and wildlife. He therefore encouraged the officers to understand the environmental and wildlife laws and exercise decisions which help ensure ecological security for future generations."

Mr Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India emphasized on the need for judicial support to assist in curbing wildlife crime in India.

Tiger hoarding up in Bangalore



TRAFFIC India with support from WWF-India and Baali Outdoor Media and Communications displayed a PSA (Public Service Announcement) on Tiger trade at a prominent junction in Bangalore in February 2010. The TRAFFIC PSA was put up as a hoarding with the aim to reach out on issues related to Tiger poaching and trade. The hoarding makes an appeal to the general public to come forward in support of Tiger conservation. The PSA has been placed as a permanent background to the hoarding that will be visible as and when other advertisements are removed for replacement at the site.

TRAFFIC India is extremely grateful to Baali Outdoor Media and Communications for offering this space to the cause of Tiger conservation, to Mr G.S. Bhardwaj for providing us the Tiger image for the hoarding and also to WWF-India for their continuous support.

Tiger Chronicles, an e-newsletter on issues pertaining to Tiger poaching and trade launched



Wild Tigers need our help, more than ever before. To promote this idea TRAFFIC launched a monthly e-newsletter to offer some of the diverse and comprehensive information on Tigers in Tiger range countries, with links to seizures and consumer demand in global markets. The newsletter was launched in April 2010 and carries the latest Tiger related updates and news.

To subscribe to the newsletter, please forward your request to dchhabra@wwfindia.net or you can alternatively view newsletters at www.trafficindia.org



OUTPOST:
**South Asia forges consensus on
 wildlife enforcement network**



© Samir Sinha

First meeting of the South Asia Experts Group on Illegal Wildlife Trade

South Asia contains a range of habitats of global significance that support a unique array of animal and plant species such as Tigers and other Asian big cats, rhino, marine and freshwater turtles, pangolins and Red Sanders, but it is ironic that this very biodiversity richness makes the region a target for poachers and traffickers of wildlife.

Experts from South Asia universally agree that these threats to

biodiversity extend beyond political boundaries and need a coordinated regional response for combating illegal poaching and trafficking.

The historic First Meeting of the South Asia Experts Group on Illegal Wildlife Trade was concluded on 19 May 2010 with the objective of helping wildlife law enforcement agencies become better organized than the criminals themselves. As a major step towards a co-ordinated and collaborative mechanism, the Experts Group agreed that an action-oriented approach under the newly formed SAWEN (South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network) should be pursued without delay.

The experts from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka agreed the structure, functions and operational parameters for SAWEN, including ideas for developing multi-lateral activities based on strong interagency co-operation at the national level.

"Co-operation and co-ordination between the government agencies supported by their international counterparts is of utmost importance to effectively tackle illegal wildlife trade in the region," said Hon. Mr Deepak Bohara, Minister for Forest and Soil Conservation, Government of Nepal, in his closing address.

The Government of Nepal has offered to drive this process further in hosting the network and acting as an interim co-ordinator. Over the next six months, it will focus on co-ordinating key information and identifying further resources and expertise from member countries to develop joint operations, training programs, communication plans and fundraising to enable the network to begin interdicting major trafficking activities. The Government of Bhutan has offered to host the next meeting of SAWEN members.

The First Meeting of the South Asia Experts Group on Illegal Wildlife Trade was hosted by the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, Govt. of Nepal, and supported by WWF Nepal and TRAFFIC International. Funding support for the meeting was generously provided by the US Government's Department of State.

TRAFFIC Alert



Drugs containing derivative of a protective plant species seized in Delhi

A consignment of Ayurvedic medicine from yoga guru Baba Ramdev's pharmacy was among medicines confiscated by authorities in February 2010 in Delhi because they contained derivatives of Kuth, a protected plant under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. In total, 23 consignments were seized at different airports and seaports in the country during international Operation TRAM (conducted against trade in illegal wildlife products, coordinated by Interpol).

Agencies involved during the operation included the Department of Customs, Department of Revenue Intelligence, CISF, Airport authorities, Drug Controller, Plant Quarantine, Forest Department and Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), which was the Operation in Command of the exercise in India.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Saussurea costus, locally known as Kuth, is a herb found in the Himalayan belt bordering Pakistan and India. It is commonly used in medicines in China and is considered to be one of their 50 fundamental herbs. It is also used in Ayurvedic medicine where it is valued mainly for its tonic, stimulant and antiseptic properties. It is said to be an aphrodisiac and is also believed to help prevent greying of hair. The root has an acrid, sweet and bitter taste with neutral potency. It is also used in Tibetan medicine. The plant is known to be used for curing rheumatism, liver dysfunction and pulmonary disorders.

In India, it is cultivated in the Himalayas as a medicinal plant and also for its use in perfumery and for preserving furs. The trade reported is for the roots, live plants, derivatives, extracts, oil and formulations (Schippmann, 2001).

Continued on page 6

OUTPOST:
**Porous China-Myanmar border
 allowing illegal wildlife trade**



Porous borders are allowing traders in Myanmar to offer door-to-door delivery service for illegal wildlife products and derivatives such as Tiger bone wine to buyers in China, according to TRAFFIC's latest snapshot on wildlife trade in China.

The State of Wildlife Trade in China 2008 report, released at the CITES meeting in Qatar in March 2010, is the third in an annual series on emerging trends in China's wildlife trade. The report found that over-exploitation of wildlife for trade has affected many species and is stimulating illegal trade across China's borders.

Tiger and leopard parts were found to be in demand in western China. However, market surveys in 18 cities found just two places where such items were encountered. One of them Bei Da Jie Market in Linxia city has a history of trading in Tiger products. A total of five surveys conducted in this market between late 2007 and 2008 found one Tiger, 15 leopard and seven snow leopard skins for sale.

“There is clearly ongoing demand for leopard and Tiger products, but the trade appears to be becoming less visible year-on-year,” said Professor Xu, Director of Traffic's Programme in China adding that it is unclear if it is because there is less trade in such products or it has become more covert and organized.

The report also examines the trade of other wildlife species in China such as freshwater turtles, timber, traditional medicinal plants etc. Other topics covered include analysis of wildlife trade information, the Corallium trade in East Asia, tackling cross-border illegal wildlife trade on the China-Nepal border, and stopping illegal wildlife trade online.

Copy of the report can be downloaded at <http://www.traffic.org/home/2010/3/16/porous-china-myanmar-border-allowing-illegal-wildlife-trade.html>

OUTPOST:
**INTERPOL targets illegal trade
 in wildlife medical products**



A month-long operation targeting the illegal trade in medicines containing protected wildlife products has resulted in a number of arrests worldwide and the seizure of thousands of illegal products worth more than EUR10 million.

Continued on page 7

TRAFFIC Alert



Continued from page 5

Saussurea costus is listed in Schedule VI of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 under which collection of the species from the wild is prohibited. However trade in the cultivated species and its derivatives obtained from licensed sources are allowed within India. *Saussurea costus* is also listed in Appendix I of CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) which prohibits international trade in the species and its derivatives. Despite the protection, reports indicate the roots are smuggled primarily to China and Japan.

Source:
<http://news.outlookindia.com/item.aspx?675952>

Sleuths find protected sea cucumber on five-star hotel's menu

The Indian government might be trying to protect endangered animals but a five-star hotel in Delhi was found selling sea cucumbers, a Schedule I species under the Wildlife (Protection) Act of India. The investigators were surprised to see that the animal had been listed in the menu and the hotel was regularly getting supplies for clients. The raid was conducted at a restaurant of Hotel Taj Mansingh, located in the heart of the capital.

The investigators posing as customers went to the restaurant and ordered a dish of sea cucumbers. The hotel staff served the dish within a short time. After the sea cucumbers were put on the table, a raid was conducted in the kitchen of the restaurant. The officials seized several kilos of sea cucumbers from the hotel kitchen. They also obtained the supplier's address from the hotel staff and raided its premises where they found further quantity of sea cucumbers.

Continued on page 7

Continued from page 6



© Khalid Pasha

Kuth Saussurea costus. In India, Operation TRAM seized many consignments of Ayurvedic medicines containing derivatives of this protected plant species. For more details on this, please refer to TRAFFIC Alert on page 5.

INTERPOL co-ordinated Operation TRAM, which involved national wildlife enforcement authorities, police, customs and specialized units from 18 countries (**Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, France, Georgia, India, Italy, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom and Zimbabwe**) across all five continents. In Italy alone, officers from the Corpo Forestale dello Stato made more than 30 000 seizures.

The operation, which ran throughout February, involved investigations into individuals and companies as well as inspection of various locations such as seaports and wholesalers premises.

Many of the seized medicines contained or were marketing the use of illegal ingredients such as derived from Tiger, bear and rhinoceros.

“A primary goal of Operation TRAM was to combat the illegal trade in endangered

wildlife, which is a threat to our planet's biodiversity and demonstrates the commitment of INTERPOL and its member countries in fighting this type of crime,” said David Higgins, Manager of the INTERPOL Environmental Crime Programme.

“This operation has again proved that while environmental criminals may cross borders and display high levels of organization, so too will the international law enforcement community in its efforts to apprehend those criminals.”

In India, Operation TRAM was conducted between 1-28 February 2010 to combat the illegal trade in traditional medicine products containing wildlife products and or derivatives that are restricted or prohibited to be traded in accordance with Wildlife laws, Customs Act, Exim Policy and CITES and was coordinated by the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB). Read more about WCCB's involvement at <http://wccb.gov.in/press%20release/tram.html> .

Globally, the operation was coordinated by the INTERPOL Environmental Crime Programme with strong support from the UK National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) and was conducted in response to the increasing use of endangered and protected wildlife products in traditional medicines throughout the world.

TRAFFIC Alert



Continued from page 6

The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) has registered cases against six people, including five senior management members of Taj Mansingh and the owner of the company that was supplying sea cucumbers to the hotel.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Domestic trade in sea cucumbers (Holothurians) is prohibited under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Sea cucumbers are found in the Gulf of Mannar, India's only National Park for these species, and are smuggled from the Ramanathapuram-Tuticorin coast in Tamil Nadu to countries such as China, Japan and Malaysia where they are prized as aphrodisiacs and also for their medicinal value.

It is perturbing to learn that sea cucumbers were being so openly served in a reputed hotel.

Source

:http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report_sleuths-find-protected-sea-cucumber-on-five-star-hotel-s-menu_1357358
<http://www.ias.ac.in/curresci/feb252002/377.pdf>
<http://www.india-today.com/itoday/20040913/environment.html>
<http://news.webindia123.com/news/Articles/India/20090811/1316232.html>

Orchid smuggling from India to China continues to persist

Even as the resource/manpower-starved Forest Department of Manipur state is faced with the daunting task to preserve the rare flora and fauna found in the state, it has been revealed that large quantity of rare orchids and ginseng roots are being smuggled into China.

Continued on page 8

CITES UPDATE:

Tiger range countries reach a consensus at CITES on ways to address illegal trade in the big cats



© Xu Ling/ TRAFFIC East Asia

Tiger skin for sale in Litang, China

Tiger range countries, including China, reached a strong consensus at the CITES Conference held in March 2010 in Qatar on the way forward to address pressing concerns of illegal trade threatening wild populations of Tiger and other Asian big cat species. The 13 range countries, with support from the CITES Parties, also agreed to continue with measures to address farming of captive populations, and stop breeding of Tigers for trade in parts and derivatives.

A significant market for Tiger products persists in China, but commitments from the Chinese government and traditional Chinese medicine associations point the way forward to making effective interventions to reduce consumer demand and stop the illegal trade.

In January this year, China's State Forestry Administration issued a Directive which reaffirmed its policy on Tiger conservation and regulation of trade in Tiger products, including control of present farming activities. The Directive reaffirms China's commitment to stopping illegal Tiger trade, which includes the maintenance of a domestic ban in place since 1993 to prohibit trade in Tiger bone.

Just prior to the CITES meeting in Qatar, the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies (WFCMS) announced, in Beijing, their stand on Tiger conservation. The WFCMS, which has 195 member organizations in 57 countries, urged its members not to use Tiger parts and those of other endangered wildlife species in traditional medicine.

Amendments to an EU document calling for strengthening of an existing CITES Resolution on trade in Asian Big Cats include improved reporting by the range countries on the conservation of, and trade in, Asian big cats; the establishment of regional enforcement networks; and the setting up of a database for Asian big cat trade. The revised Resolution also urges CITES Parties to contribute financial and technical assistance to enable the range countries to implement the Resolution.

In addition, CITES Parties have agreed to continue with work begun at CoP14 in 2007, under a series of CITES Decisions which will remain in force. Most significantly, this includes a focus on restricting any commercial-scale captive breeding populations to a level only supporting wild Tiger conservation, and preventing any farming of Tigers for trade in parts and derivatives. But it is important to note also that Decisions on supporting regional law enforcement networking, and promoting the connection between the revised Resolution and domestic Tiger trade control policies, have also been extended by consensus.

TRAFFIC Alert



Continued from page 7

Speaking as a resource person during the one-day workshop on 'media sensitisation for wildlife conservation' at Keibul Lamjao National Park, Bishnupur district in March 2010, noted environmentalist RK Ranjan said that certain orchid varieties belonging to the *Dendrobium* family are being smuggled to China through the porous Indo-Myanmar border.

He mentioned that the smuggled orchid varieties are abundantly found in Chandel district, and these along with a rare ginseng variety, medicinal plants found in Ukhrul district are being sent to some other south Asian countries also.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Orchids have always been a subject of fascination due to their unique and eye catching flowers. There are over 1600 species of orchids in India, of which the major varieties are found in north-east India. Of late, widespread deforestation and over-collection of orchids in the wild for trade has put some species at risk. Live orchids and their plants have long been in trade, despite many species in the Orchidaceae family especially *Dendrobium* are found in the list of prohibited exports from India.

Source:

- <http://epao.net/GP.asp?src=13..150310.mar10>
- <http://www.telegraphindia.com/1071109/asp/others/print.html>
- http://finance.indiamart.com/exports_imports/exports_from_india/negative_list/prohibited_list.html

Twenty three kg of dolphin oil seized, poacher arrested

A team of forest officials and police recovered 23 kg of dolphin oil and arrested a poacher in separate raids in Patna district, Bihar in May 2010. The team raided two houses in Islanganj village and seized 20 kg dolphin oil kept in three containers. However, no arrest was made in this connection as the miscreants were not present at the time of the raid.

Continued on page 9

CITES UPDATE:
CITES backs better rhino protection measures



Countries with rhino populations agreed to focus on increasing law enforcement, training of guards, strengthening border controls, improving rhino population monitoring, creating campaigns to enhance awareness in consumer countries such as Viet Nam, and rooting out organized crime syndicates that are behind the increase in poaching and illegal trade.

The agreement was made at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) meeting held in Doha, Qatar, in March 2010 and comes amid a global rhino poaching crisis.

Rhino poaching worldwide hit a 15-year high in 2009. The illegal trade is being driven by an Asian demand for horns, made worse by increasingly sophisticated poachers that are now using veterinary drugs, poison, cross bows and high calibre weapons to kill rhinos.

The decisions adopted were based on a TRAFFIC / International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) report, which was released ahead of the CITES meeting. For a copy of the report, please visit

<http://www.cites.org/common/cop/15/doc/E15-45-01A.pdf>

This report pointed out a decline in law enforcement effectiveness and an increase in poaching intensity in Africa. Viet Nam was highlighted as a country of particular concern Vietnamese nationals operating in South Africa have recently been identified in rhino crime investigations. It also raised concerns about the low and declining numbers as well as the uncertain status of some of the Sumatran and Javan Rhino populations in Malaysia, Indonesia and Viet Nam. For more information, please visit

<http://www.traffic.org/home/2009/12/1/rhino-poaching-surges-in-asia-africa.html>

SIGNPOST:

Other significant news stories to read



Disclaimer: Links to external news items as given above are provided for information only and are not intended to represent TRAFFIC's policies, positions, opinions or views on the issues raised in the item.

In Arunachal Pradesh a Tiger skin is worth 5 kg of rice: Read more on <http://www.mid-day.com/news/2010/apr/210410-Tiger-skin-arunachal-pradesh-poachers.htm>

Rise in sale of exotic birds: Read more on <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/patna/Rise-in-sale-of-exotic-birds/articleshow/5900890.cms>

Whaling Plan draws anger from green groups: Read more on <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8678760.stm>

World governments fail to deliver on 2010 biodiversity target: Read more on <http://www.traffic.org/home/2010/4/30/world-governments-fail-to-deliver-on-2010-biodiversity-targe.html>

Ayurveda out of balance: 93 percent of medicinal plants threatened with extinction: Read more on <http://www.scientificamerican.com/blog/post.cfm?id=ayurveda-out-of-balance-93-percent-2010-04-05>

TRAFFIC Alert



Continued from page 8

In a separate raid, the team arrested Munna Sahni from Takiapar village for his alleged involvement in poaching incidents and sale of dolphin oil. Three kgs of dolphin oil was recovered from his possession. The drive was taken up a week after four Ganges River Dolphins were killed by suspected poachers. An autopsy revealed that the dolphins were trapped and then beaten to death as they bore several abrasive marks on their necks and heads.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Of the seven species of dolphins worldwide, four are found only in freshwater: the Ganges River Dolphin *Platanista gangetica*, the Yangtze River Dolphin *Lipotes vexillifer*, the Indus River Dolphin *Platanista minor* and the Amazon dolphin *Ina geoffrensis*, of which the Ganges River Dolphin is the only freshwater dolphin found in India.

The Ganges River Dolphin is listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, under which hunting or trade in the species is totally banned. Its international trade is further prohibited under CITES (Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) where the species is listed in Appendix I.

The population of the Ganges River Dolphin has dwindled alarmingly to fewer than 2000 individuals during the last century, due to various factors such as direct killing, habitat fragmentation by dams and barrages, indiscriminate fishing and river pollution. Dolphins are hunted for their meat and by fishermen in the middle reaches of the Ganges for their oil, which is used as a fish attractant.

Source:

www.wwfindia.org
<http://www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/details/41758/0>

IN FOCUS:

Critical look at the proposed Amendment to the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972



(The article was authored by Mr Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India and was published in gfiles, Vol 3, Issue 12/March 2010)

LEGISLATURE

wildlife (protection) act |

by SAMIR SINHA

"No society can make a perpetual Constitution or even a perpetual law"

– Thomas Jefferson

THE Wildlife (Protection) Act, as enacted in 1972, was independent India's first national legislation with the specific purpose of protecting its wildlife heritage. The WLPA included provisions for hunting of certain species and in certain areas, as *shikar* was still acknowledged as sport.

Since then, the conservation scenario in the country has undergone a dramatic change. As pressure on land – always a limited and finite resource – has increased, wild habitats have shrunk and fragmented. Many charismatic species have seen their wild populations touch precarious levels, despite growing concern about their conservation. The tiger is perhaps the best example of this.

In response to increasing awareness on conservation issues, the WLPA has also been amended a number of times – most recently in 2006. These amendments have ranged from bringing select plant species under the ambit of the Act (as opposed to only fauna in the original version) to establishment of the National Tiger Conservation Authority and the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau.

Awareness has also grown about the illegal trade in wildlife products and the relative ease in evading conviction. A feeling has been gaining ground that, in its present form, the WLPA does not serve as a deterrent to such criminals.

All this has prompted another amendment. In a first, the proposed amendment aims to lay down a definition of wildlife research. This has been the bone of contention between the wildlife and forest bureaucracy of the country and the scientific community as the latter feels that, in the absence of transparent and specific provisions, wildlife research has been subjected to unnecessary con-



Lord of the jungle or sitting duck?

Chameleon Law?

A critical look at the proposed changes to the WLPA, to be tabled in Parliament

trols. Much debate over the parameters for wildlife research is expected.

On the issue of settlement of rights in the establishment of Protected Areas, the amendment makes specific references to the provisions of the recently enacted Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act. The implementation of provisions of these two pieces of legislation has always been seen as contentious by many, and some also feel that certain provisions of the Recognition of Forest Rights Act contradict the WLPA. As such, bringing in a

reference to one Act in the implementation of the other is likely to be seen as establishing the primacy of one and diluting the WLPA.

At present, declaration of national parks and sanctuaries is generally a two-tier process. First, the government issues a notification of intention, following which rights, if any, are recognized and settled wherever considered necessary. Only after this is the final notification of establishment issued. Nearly 80 per cent of the Protected Areas in the country are yet to have the final notifications issued. This, despite Supreme Court directions very long ago.

In its present form, the WLPA also has provisions whereby certain legal provisions of protection are applicable immediately when the first notification is issued. This is a major provision which has extended added legal cover to most Protected Areas despite the fact that the final settlement proceedings may not be complete. The proposed

Charismatic species have seen their wild populations touch precarious levels, despite growing concern about conservation. The tiger is the best example.

Crime and Punishment

A major attempt has been made to redefine the nature of offences under this Act and punishments prescribed.

PROPOSED Category 1 offences include the hunting, trade or unlawful possession of some important species such as the tiger, lion, elephant, rhino, all leopards, musk deer, all turtles and tortoises, all bears, Tibetan antelope, all crocodiles, including ghariyals, all bustards, dolphins, and whale sharks. This appears debatable, as the WLPA already has species classified under various schedules. Further classification will only cause confusion in implementation.

Another proposal says that "any person committing a Category 1 offence is punishable with imprisonment of a minimum term of five years extendable up to seven years and shall be fined a minimum of rupees five lakhs which may be increased to rupees one crore only". In the case of a second or subsequent

offence under Category I, the penalty applicable shall be imprisonment of not less than seven years, or a fine of not less than Rs 5 lakh and up to Rs 75 lakh, or both. It appears that, while the imprisonment for subsequent offences has been raised, the maximum fine is lower than for the first offence!

For category II offences, the maximum penalty is imprisonment for a minimum period of three years and a maximum of seven years. The person shall also be subject to a fine up to Rs 3 lakh only.

Category I and Category II offences are cognizable, non-bailable, and triable by a sessions judge. The proposed amendment also seeks to remove the existing provision of Section 51-A (which lays down certain conditions on grant of bail) on the rationale that it is no longer required. However, a non-bailable offence does not imply that an accused cannot get bail; it only implies that bail is not a matter of right for the accused and (s)he can still be released on bail under provisions of Section 437 of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973.

amendment seeks to do away with this and treat all Protected Areas lacking a final notification as "proposed". This could have a major impact on a large number of Protected Areas.

THERE is also an added provision that, in case any vehicle or vessel has been seized under the provisions of this Act, a reasonable opportunity shall be given to the accused prior to arriving at the finding that the item is forfeited to the government. Such proceedings shall be conducted by an officer not below the rank of Assistant Conservator of Forests. Also, no court shall take cognizance of such an offence till such administrative proceedings are complete and the competent officer arrives at a *prima facie* decision against the accused. An appeal against this order shall lie with the Conservator of Forests and no further appeal shall lie, including to any trial court, against this decision. This is thus a quasi-judicial mechanism to ensure speedy processing of cases where vehicles and so on are seized in connection with wildlife offences.

The proposed amendment also makes, for the first time, a direct reference to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). At present,

CITES is administered mainly through the provisions of the EXIM Policy as laid down by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade. This inclusion of administration of CITES within the WLPA is a welcome step. However, it remains to be seen as to how the introduction of a new Chapter VI-B on regulation of trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora will impact what is currently a thriving and totally unregulated business in exotic flora and fauna (especially birds and mammals), including many listed under CITES.

The major area where the proposed amendment seems to miss the bus is the rationalization of its various schedules. Currently, there are six schedules, including one that lists "vermin". These include over 800 species and families of wild animals and just six species of plants. This is a clear case of imbalance. In addition, there is a separate Chapter

The amendment seeks to treat all Protected Areas lacking a final notification as 'proposed'. This could impact a large number of Protected Areas.

V-A that prescribes specific provisions related to Schedule I and Part II of Schedule II of the WLPA. This is confusing. There must be clear distinctions between relevant provisions for schedules. Instead of clarifying this, there is further attempt to create new categories of offences for selected species, different from the original schedules! In addition, there is now a Schedule VII being added.

There is also a growing tendency among lawmakers to include what are primarily policy, management and administrative issues within the ambit of legislation. The WLPA is an example of this. In the recent past, provisions of the law have made references to issues like "evaluate and assess various aspects of sustainable ecology and disallow any ecologically unsustainable land use, ensure that the tiger reserves and areas linking one protected area or tiger reserve with another protected area or tiger reserve are not diverted for ecologically unsustainable uses, emphasize co-existence in forest areas outside the National Parks" and so on. Though well intentioned, when included in a legal statute, such provisions are virtually impossible to define and implement. **g**

(The writer, an Indian Forest Service officer, is head of TRAFFIC India. The opinions expressed are personal)

HEADLINES

18 tiger parks going Sariska way

Jairam Sounds Red Alert Against Miner-Poacher Activities in Reserves
Tiger census figures by Nov, says Ramesh
Our lions dying anyway, why not give us 18...



Ramesh rings Kaziranga tiger poaching alarm

...of disappearance of tigers... Ramesh rings Kaziranga tiger poaching alarm... TROUBLED WATERS



For whom poaching is an art of survival

For whom poaching is an art of survival... Poaching is an art of survival... A daring operation led to arrests



Wild tusker deaths on the rise in Kerala

Wild tusker deaths on the rise in Kerala... In Kerala, the number of wild tusker deaths has risen... A daring operation led to arrests



4 held with leopard skin in Sabarkantha

4 held with leopard skin in Sabarkantha... A daring operation led to arrests... Poacher tribes claim Veerappan turf



Poacher tribes claim Veerappan turf

Poacher tribes claim Veerappan turf... The use of law traps was... Poacher tribes claim Veerappan turf



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TRAFFIC POST

the wildlife trade monitoring network

ISSUE 10
OCTOBER, 2010

TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



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takes lead in sensitizing judicial officers on wildlife conservation
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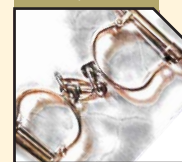
- **Live Tiger found in check-in** Pg 7
baggage in Bangkok
- **Malaysia gets tough new wildlife** Pg 8
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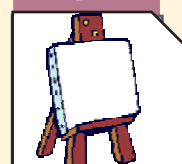
IN FOCUS



CITES UPDATE



TRAFFIC ALERT



SIGNPOST

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dark secrets (TRAFFIC India exposé into surreptitious owl trade in India)



© Abrar Ahmed

- **Ministry of Environment and** Pg 9
Forests, Govt. of India creates new CITES cell

TRAFFIC Alert (Latest news on illegal wildlife trade in India):

- **Gangtok police seizes 2.1 kg of** Pg 6
Yarsa Gumba
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- **Poaching gang busted, 2.5 kg of** Pg 9
pangolin scales recovered
- **Puma skin found in parcel sent to** Pg 10
India by post from USA



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OUTPOST



MP, Maharashtra and Jharkhand deploy sniffer dogs to combat wildlife crime



Five dogs specially trained to sniff out illegal wildlife products joined the ranks of the Forest Departments of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Jharkhand on 29 July 2010. The dogs have been trained to detect hidden wildlife articles such as bones and skins of Tiger and Leopard and also bear bile.

The dogs and their 10 handlers completed a rigorous nine month training programme at 23rd Battalion of Special Armed Forces, Madhya Pradesh. The training was facilitated by TRAFFIC India that culminated in a passing out ceremony held in Bhopal.

This is the second phase of TRAFFIC India's sniffer dog training programme. Previously two dogs were trained and deployed by the forest departments of Haryana and Uttarakhand.



© TRAFFIC India

TRAFFIC has helped to conduct sniffer dog programmes to detect smuggled wildlife parts in other countries as well such as in the Russian Far East and Europe.

"Illegal wildlife trade has evolved into an organized transnational activity threatening the survival of many species in India," said Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India.

"In order to curb this growing menace it is necessary to deploy the best enforcement practices available including the use of sniffer dogs, which have a proven track record in detecting crime and serving as a long-term deterrent."

TRAFFIC India is overwhelmed by the support and response this programme has received from the forest departments and is especially grateful for the contribution of the 23rd Battalion of Special Armed Forces.

Himachal Pradesh High Court takes lead in sensitizing judicial officers on wildlife conservation



On 22 August 2010, the Himachal Pradesh Judicial Academy, the Himachal Pradesh High Court and the Forest Department of the State organized an orientation programme on various issues related to biodiversity conservation for over 125 judges of various district level courts at the Himachal Pradesh High Court in Shimla.

The programme was addressed by the Hon. Chief Justice of Himachal Pradesh Justice Kurian Joseph and Hon. Justice Vinod Gupta—Chairman of the Judicial Academy. Many other senior judges and forest officials of the state were also present at the programme.

The workshop aimed to sensitize the judiciary on issues related to wildlife conservation. Presentations were made by Mr Vinay Tandon IFS (Indian Forest Service), Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Himachal Pradesh; Dr. P.K. Mathur of the Wildlife Institute of India and Mr Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India.

The judiciary plays a significant role in championing the cause of forest and biodiversity conservation, so it was felt necessary to update them on the status of forest and wildlife legislation, international conventions on related issues and enforcement of wildlife laws in India.

In his presentation, Mr Sinha emphasized the significant role of the judiciary in protecting the natural wealth of the country. He presented an overview of the illegal wildlife trade in India and the South Asian region and of efforts needed to curb this growing form of organized transnational crime.

Such inputs are part of a regular engagement with the judiciary for their orientation on wildlife law enforcement issues being regularly conducted by TRAFFIC India across the country.

GTF gains impetus, leads long term sustained commitment to Tiger Conservation



At the meeting of the Global Tiger Forum (GTF) held at the WWF-India Secretariat on 28-29 June 2010, the governments of member Tiger range countries and other member countries expressed solidarity in giving an impetus to Tiger conservation efforts and to take steps to steer the commitment forward.

The two-day meeting was convened to develop a new strategy for the GTF, and to provide a platform for sharing of conservation approaches across range countries, focusing on issues that can be replicated and scaled up, with an intention to galvanize political will and action to save the iconic species from extinction. Representatives from eight Tiger range countries including India and representatives from organizations such as WWF-India, TRAFFIC India, Wildlife Trust of India, Wildlife Institute of India and Wildlife Protection Society of India were also present.

Standardizing the methodology of conservation approaches on monitoring and habitat management, increasing law enforcement, linking critical area systems and looking at the issue of habitat fragmentation were the commonalities that emerged from among the initial discussions of the country delegates. The need to realize a sense of urgency and create awareness-raising campaigns, build capacities and tackle transboundary issues were the other pertinent points discussed during the course of the conference.

“GTF can play a lead role through close collaboration with Tiger range countries and other organizations to check international hotspots of Tiger trafficking, besides evolving a regional roadmap to strengthen global Tiger conservation through respective National Action Plans,” said Indian Minister of Environment, Shri Jairam Ramesh in his message.

“The commitment from Tiger Range Countries is important at this juncture to revitalize and strengthen the forum. I appeal to all Tiger range countries for their active participation in this regard”, he added. GTF is the only inter-governmental body representing countries that still have wild Tigers, and it is responsible for facilitating, co-ordinating and strengthening these governments' commitments and actions towards saving Tigers in the wild.



© Rohit Singh

India and Nepal sign accord to protect wildlife and tackle crime



India and Nepal have signed an agreement that will help strengthen efforts for better management of forest areas along the 1751 km of the Indo-Nepal border, much of which are key habitats for Tigers and other threatened wildlife.

The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 29 July 2010 followed a meeting on transboundary biodiversity conservation held in Kathmandu, Nepal, between senior officials of India's National Tiger Conservation Authority and Nepal's Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation.

Both the countries will co-operate and co-ordinate implementation of national action plans to protect Tigers, rhinos and elephants and strengthen the role of personnel involved in wildlife conservation, by intensifying the joint patrolling of border areas and restoring border habitats.

“For the value of long-term conservation, it is encouraging to see the strengthening of the existing collaboration between India and Nepal for the protection of biodiversity and ecological security in the area bordering the two countries,” said Mr Ravi Singh, Secretary General and CEO, WWF-India.

Key transboundary areas to benefit include Sukhlaphanta- Lagga Bagga- Pilibhit, Bardia-Katerniaghat-Khata, Banke-Suhelwa, Jhapa-Darjeeling and Kosi Tappu.

Continued on page 4

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“With wildlife moving freely across the border and illegal wildlife trade increasingly a transnational crime, such inter-country agreements are imperative for ensuring adequate biodiversity conservation in South Asia,” said Mr Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India.

“In the past, porous borders have allowed smuggling of protected wildlife and other wildlife products out of the region for consumption in other parts of Asia”.

“The new collaboration will enable a better flow of intelligence between India and Nepal and lead to joint operations to curb the illegal wildlife trade”.

Items smuggled from India to Nepal include animal parts such as Tiger, Leopard, Snow Leopard and otter skins, pangolin scales, Yarsa Gumba and Red Sanders, as apparent from the seizures made.



© WWF Nepal

India and Nepal have signed an agreement for better management of forests along the shared border region

Captured on camera: Communities benefitting from sustainable plant harvest in India



A new video was released in August 2010 showcasing how village forest communities implement sustainable harvesting of wild medicinal and aromatic plants to supplement local livelihoods and as a result ensure conservation of natural resources which would otherwise be at risk of over-exploitation.

The film covers a field project in Karnataka, India, where the recently developed International Standard for the Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (ISSC-MAP) was field tested.

The project in Karnataka was implemented by FRLHT in collaboration with TRAFFIC India as part of a “Saving Plants that Save Lives and Livelihoods” programme supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

The Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT), India, (now renamed IAIM, the Institute for Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine) helped develop the methodology and the management plan for the field sites in the Agumbe Range in Shimoga and the Katgal Range in Honnavara.

The field project drew heavily on traditional knowledge of the local community, and combined this with innovative techniques to ensure sustainability of the plant species.

“It was important to find a way to collect the resin in a commercially viable way but not adversely affect the tree,” explains Dr M N B Nair of FRLHT in the video.

Now, thanks to a new technique developed by FRLHT, grooves are first cut in the bark, a hormone painted on to stimulate resin flow, and then only is the resin collected.

Local communities formed special Task Teams to collect various forest products as per the new practices.

To view the video, please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2010/8/25/new-film-shows-how-communities-benefit-from-sustainable-plan.html>

Meeting in Himachal Pradesh to review the status of Kuth in India



TRAFFIC India in association with the Himachal Pradesh Forest Department organized a meeting on 23 July 2010 in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh to discuss issues related to the status of Kuth *Saussurea costus* in India and the impact of its listing in CITES. This one day meeting was attended by various stakeholders including forest department officials of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Uttarakhand, officials from HRDI (Herbal Research and Development Institute) Uttarakhand, representatives from Dabur India Ltd. and Chemexil India Pvt. Ltd, traders, farmers and cultivators from Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Uttarakhand.

TRAFFIC India has been invited by the CITES Secretariat to carry out a review of the status of Kuth in India and the impact of its listing in CITES (Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

Saussurea costus locally known as 'Kuth' is a robust perennial herb of the Western Himalayas, distributed over Pakistan and India. The species has been used in traditional health systems of the region including Ayurveda, Tibetan and Chinese Medicine, for centuries. As per the various documented uses, it is in high demand both locally and at the international level.

Saussurea costus was listed in Appendix I of CITES in 1985, which strictly regulates its international commercial trade. It is also listed under Schedule IV of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. This offers protection to the plant species and prohibits picking, uprooting etc. from any forest land and any area so specified by notification. The cultivation of such plants without a licence is also prohibited.

The meeting in Himachal was to understand the impact of these legal implications on the conservation of the species in the wild.

TRAFFIC India has been interacting with various stakeholders to understand the dynamics of the Kuth trade and will be submitting a detailed report shortly.

New guidelines in sustainable wild plant harvesting prove a global success



Worldwide application of new guidelines for sustainable harvesting of wild medicinal, aromatic, dye and food plants and trees are charting new ways to protect the species and their habitats and benefit the communities that depend on them, according to a new report from world wildlife trade monitoring network, TRAFFIC.

The report—Wild for a cure: ground-truthing a standard for sustainable management of wild plants in the field—was released in September 2010 and details projects in India, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Cambodia, Lesotho, Nepal, and South Africa where new methods have been devised to protect key natural resources in the wild whilst ensuring improvements in the livelihoods and benefits to local people through application of guidelines on sustainable collection from the wild.

The report stresses the importance of ensuring that all local stakeholders—from collectors to local organizations, resource management authorities, and businesses—are actively involved in partnership from the outset, and that clear and realistic market channels should be identified for harvested products with ways devised to give “added value” to products and a fair share of benefits to the owners of traditional knowledge.



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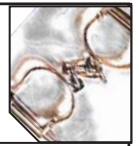
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In India, the guidelines for sustainable wild plant harvesting were implemented in the states of Karnataka and Uttarakhand. The implementation was successful in flagging the harvesting issues of medicinal plants at the state and national level. For example, in Uttarakhand, the guidelines have been adopted under the State's policy on sustainable harvesting and collection of wild medicinal plants and on-ground positive initiatives are being undertaken to minimize the gaps between the various stakeholders of the medicinal plant industry.

Another example of its success comes from Karnataka where a new method to collect the valuable resin of the *Ailanthus triphysa* tree was devised. Instead of removing the bark, killing the tree, collectors now make shallow "wishbone" grooves in the trunk which are coated with a hormone to stimulate resin flow.

Also in India, the ISSC-MAP guidelines have been adopted by the national working committee working for the development of the MADP (Medicinal, Aromatic and Dye Plants) code. To download the copy of the report, please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2010/9/15/sustainable-wild-plant-harvesting-proves-a-global-success.html>

TRAFFIC Alert



Gangtok police seizes 2.1 kg of Yarsa Gumba

On 23 July 2010 Gangtok Sadar police arrested five persons while they were trying to sell 2.1 kg of Yarsa Gumba illegally. The police had been tipped off regarding the group trying to peddle Yarsa Gumba in Sikkim's capital city. A decoy was sent to strike a deal with the group and after much negotiation and despite evasive maneuvers by the group, a deal for ₹ 270 000 per kg was struck. When they arrived to make the exchange, a police team in plainclothes pounced on the group at 12:30 pm near State Guest House and recovered the consignment. Some members of the group had apparently brought the Yarsa Gumba from the high altitude region of Lachung in North Sikkim.

Springdales School wins the Delhi 'Wild Wisdom' quiz



TRAFFIC India and WWF-India organized an inter-school wildlife quiz titled 'Wild Wisdom' in New Delhi on 8 September 2010. Fourteen schools participated in the quiz which was conducted by renowned RJ Mr Mounish Jolly.

In between the rounds on various issues related to wildlife, students were also shown a film on illegal wildlife trade by TRAFFIC India and provided an overview of the damage this trade is causing on the country's precious flora and fauna.



Springdales School, Pusa road, won the competition and has qualified for the inter-city grand finale due to be held in November this year.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Yarsa Gumba *Cordyceps sinensis*, commonly known as *Keera Ghaas* (insect-grass) in India is becoming a quiet victim of massive over-exploitation in the country. Originally known only from Nepal, Tibet and Sichuan, Qinghai, Xizang and Yunnan provinces of China, Yarsa Gumba was collected and exported through both regulated and unregulated channels. It is only during the last few years that it has been found in the higher reaches of Arunachal Pradesh and more recently in the Garhwal and Kumaon Himalayas in India.

Yarsa Gumba is considered a miracle ingredient in many traditional medicines and practitioners believe it helps to enhance lung function, bolster the kidney's yang energy, relieves coughs, poor vitality, impotency, spermatorrhea, asthma, aching joints, and reduces sputum and the general debility caused by long term illness.

Yarsa Gumba is not listed under the Wildlife Protection Act of India, nor under the EXIM Policy of India.

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Preserving India's Wild Heritage- TRAFFIC India profiles its work through images



TRAFFIC India has released a new brochure that outlines its work in India through a series of images. The brochure captures the essence of TRAFFIC India's journey in helping conserve India's precious wild flora and fauna since its inception. To view a copy, please visit

http://www.wwfindia.org/about_wwf/enablers/traffic/downloads/



New collaterals launched under the "Don't Buy Trouble" campaign



TRAFFIC India released four brand new Public Service Announcements (PSAs) as part of its ongoing "Don't Buy Trouble" campaign. The posters advise tourists to be careful of what they buy as souvenirs during their travels to India.

Targeted at domestic and foreign tourists, they send a clear message that it is not only the poachers and traders of endangered wildlife who are liable for punishment under India's Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, but also those who purchase and use such items and ignorance of the law cannot be taken as an excuse.

Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India, said: "In the eyes of the law, the end consumer is as much a partner in wildlife crime as the trader or the poacher. Tourists who inadvertently or otherwise become a party to this trade only end up fuelling the demand. As such, their awareness and co-operation is invaluable in curbing this illegal trade".

"Through these posters, TRAFFIC India hopes to drive home the message that souvenirs derived from endangered species of wildlife should not be treated as mementos, but rather as symbols of the wanton destruction of our natural heritage. Therefore, if in doubt, don't buy".

The posters have been created pro bono by Titus Upputuru, Saatchi & Saatchi. The "Don't Buy Trouble" campaign has been received very well and has been running successfully at hotels/resorts, Tiger reserves and national parks, and other major tourist hotspots through hoardings, posters, films, leaflets etc.

OUTPOST: Live Tiger found in check-in baggage in Bangkok



A two-month old Tiger cub was found sedated and hidden among stuffed-Tiger toys in the luggage of a woman at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi International Airport on 26 August 2010. The 31-year old Thai national was scheduled to board a Mahan Air flight destined for Iran when she had trouble checking in her oversized bag.

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TRAFFIC Alert



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Currently there is very little information regarding the trade of Yarsa Gumba from India. People go to various extremes to collect this fungus. Dharchula District in north Uttarakhand, bordering Nepal is believed to be one of the major collection areas in India. People from across Nepal also enter this area to collect.

For more information on this trade, please refer to TRAFFIC India's article on Yarsa Gumba featured in TRAFFIC Post Issue 4 (July 2008). You can view the newsletter at http://www.wwfindia.org/about_wwf/enablers/traffic/newsletter/ or at http://www.traffic.org/regional-newsletters/traffic_post_4.pdf.

Source:

<http://voiceofsikkim.com/2010/07/24/gangtok-police-seizes-2-1-kgs-of-yarsa-gumba/>
Chandra S. Negi, Department of Zoology, Government Postgraduate College, Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand.

Two held with snake venom in Delhi

Two men were arrested for attempting to sell cobra venom illegally in Adarsh Nagar in north-west Delhi on 7 August 2010. Mudhasu Vaker Rao (56) and Anil Jain (65) were arrested for engaging in illegal trade of venom of King Cobra and other snakes. About 285 g of venom kept in two bottles was seized from them.

Deputy Commissioner of police (northwest) N S Bundela said, "The two had received the venom from a person named Harish and were planning to sell it at a higher price. Harish had reportedly promised to give them ₹ 20 00 000 if they were able to find someone who would buy the venom."

TRAFFIC India adds.....

The trade in snake venom is heavily regulated and has a very limited and niche market. Snake venom is used to make anti-venom serum, the only cure for snake bites.

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Airports of Thailand (AOT) staff suspected something amiss when they scanned the bag and x-ray images showed an item resembling a real cat. Officers from the Livestock Development Department and the National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department were then called in to open the bag for inspection and discovered the tranquilized cub.



© Wildlife Checkpoint, Suvarnabhumi Airport

The drugged Tiger cub in check-in luggage at Bangkok airport

Investigations are underway to determine if the cub was caught from the wild or captive-bred, who arranged for the cub to be transported and what was the suspect's intended final destination.

Tiger populations in Thailand and throughout Asia are critically threatened by poaching and trade to meet the international demand for tiger parts, products and, as illustrated in this case, even live Tigers.

This seizure demonstrates the importance of raising awareness of illegal wildlife trade among port security personnel, who are ideally placed to detect instances of smuggling. The CITES Secretariat issued a certificate of commendation to the Airports of Thailand Public Company and the CITES Wildlife Checkpoint of the National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department of the Government of Thailand, at Suvarnabhumi Airport, Bangkok. It noted that such personnel in Thailand had received training of this nature, which was delivered by the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network's Programme Coordination Unit and TRAFFIC, and funded by USAID.

OUTPOST : Malaysia gets tough new wildlife law



In August 2010, Malaysia's Parliament passed the country's tough new Wildlife Conservation Bill 2010 which provides significantly higher penalties and mandatory jail terms for wildlife crime.

The new law, expected to come into force by the end of this year, will replace their 38-year-old Protection of Wild Life Act. The highest penalty in the existing Act is a maximum fine of MYR15 000 (USD4700) or five years jail, or both, for hunting a Sumatran Rhino, Tiger or Clouded Leopard.

Under the newly passed law, the same offence carries a minimum fine of MYR100 000 (USD31 600), and a jail term not exceeding five years.

It provides for minimum fines, a mandatory jail sentence for setting snares and closes loopholes by providing penalties for products containing parts of protected species or their derivatives. It also prevents zoos from operating without a permit.

Illegal trade in protected species such as pangolins and monitor lizards has also been singled out for tougher penalties.

The new Bill received widespread support from the public with many writing to their Members of Parliament asking them to support it when it was being debated. Last year thousands of people signed a petition seeking better protection for Malaysia's wildlife.

TRAFFIC Alert



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The venom is extracted from mainly four species of snakes in India commonly known as the "Big Four"—the Indian Cobra *Naja naja*, Common Krait *Bungarus caeruleus*, Russels Viper *Daboia russelii* and Saw-scaled Viper *Echis carinatus*. The venom is injected into horses in increasing doses and then the blood is drawn and purified. This serum contains vital antibodies that help to combat invasion of venom. Romulus Whitaker in his book, 'Snakeman' (1999) said "Venom is one of the most expensive natural resources on earth..."

However, it is not clear if there are ready buyers for such products and if they really do command such prices for products from dubious, unknown sources which may not have been scientifically collected. Many such attempts to buy or sell such products are usually trying to cheat gullible people, often by creating a hype around such products regarding their value and use.

Source:

- <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/2-held-with-snake-venom/articleshow/6284265.cms#ixzz0z1pITs31>
- <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/rssarticle/show/msid-2296621,prtpage-1.cms>
- <http://www.deccanherald.com/Content/Aug212007/national2007082020383.asp>

Sansar Chand gets 6-yr term

On 25 August 2010, notorious wildlife trader Sansar Chand was sentenced to six years in jail, —the maximum punishment prescribed under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972,—following a trial involving a case relating to the seizure of a Leopard skin 15 years ago. A fine of ₹ 50 000 was also imposed. This is the fourth conviction for Chand.

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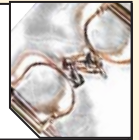
CITES UPDATE:

Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India creates new CITES cell



The Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India has recently constituted a special CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) Cell within the Ministry to help strengthen the enforcement of the CITES regulations in the country. The new cell will assist in the technical, administrative and legal functioning of CITES implementation in India. It will also act on the various Decisions taken at CITES Conferences of the Parties (CoPs) and respond to requests from the CITES Secretariat. It is expected that this new body will better aid efforts to halt the exploitative trade in endangered species that is threatening the ecological security and integrity of the country. The new cell has ten members with two NGO representatives including the Head of TRAFFIC India. The Additional Director General of Forests (Wildlife) is the Chairman with the Member Secretary of the National Tiger Conservation Authority, the Director of Project Elephant and the Additional Director of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau amongst the members.

TRAFFIC Alert



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TRAFFIC India adds.....

TRAFFIC India congratulates the enforcement agencies, judiciary and all those involved with this case. This is clearly a landmark judgment and will help set an example for others. Even though the matter has taken 15 years to reach its conclusion, it is hoped that it will still send a strong message to deter wildlife crime.

Source:

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/environment/flora-fauna/Norths-Veerappan-gets-6-yr-term-for-poaching/articleshow/6435689.cms>

Poaching gang busted, 2.5 kg of pangolin scales recovered

The pangolin has become a hot favourite with wildlife traders. In August 2010, the police busted a gang of poachers in Kamalapur village near Hampi (Karnataka) and arrested seven men with 2.5 kg of pangolin scales destined for the international market. Honorary wildlife warden, Bellary district, Santosh Martin said that the demand for pangolin scales and monitor lizards has shot up in the international market place because of their perceived medicinal value. He maintained that around 1000 pangolins have been hunted in the last two months alone in the region and explained that the poachers get 2 kg of scales from each of the animals.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

The Indian Pangolin *Manis crassicaudata* and the Chinese Pangolin *Manis pentadactyla* are the two pangolin species found in India. Within India, the Chinese Pangolin is confined to Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Tripura, Mizoram and northern parts of West Bengal. The Indian Pangolin is found discontinuously throughout the plains and lower slopes of the hills from south of the Himalayas, except the north-eastern region, to Kanyakumari.

In India, both the Indian and the Chinese Pangolin enjoy the same protection status as the Tiger and are listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. Internationally, both are listed in Appendix II of CITES, which strictly regulates all international trade in the species: currently none is permitted.

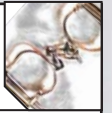
The flesh of pangolins is relished by some Indian tribal communities and scales and skins are found in trade. Pangolins are the most frequently encountered mammals seized from illegal traders in Asia. Illegal trade in Asian pangolin meat and scales has caused the scaly anteaters to disappear from large swathes of Cambodia, Viet Nam and Lao PDR.

China has a long history of consuming pangolins as meat and in traditional medicine. Pangolin meat is considered a delicacy in Southeast Asia and their scales are used in traditional medicine. Some pangolins are even stuffed and displayed to be sold as curios.

Source:

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/bengaluru/1000-pangolins-hunted-2-months-020>
<http://envfor.nic.in/news/janmar03/pangolins.pdf>
www.traffic.org

TRAFFIC Alert



Puma skin found in parcel sent to India from USA

On 7 August 2010, the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) officials opened a parcel at Kolkata's Foreign Post Office that was sent from the United States of America to India through the U.S. Postal Service and which was labeled as containing a rug, only to discover that it contained a complete animal skin of what is suspected to be a puma. The WCCB officials had previously received information that parts of a big cat were being transported through the post.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Popularly known as the American Lion, cougar, deer tiger, Mexican lion, panther, mountain lion or catamount, *Pumas Felis concolor* can be found in diverse habitats varying from the mountain forests 500 m above sea level to lowland swamps and grasslands. This large, solitary cat has the greatest range of any large wild terrestrial mammal found in the Western Hemisphere, extending from Yukon in Canada to the southern Andes of South America.

Pumas are listed in Appendix I of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), thus any international trade in this species, its parts and derivatives without the relevant CITES documentation is illegal. Pumas are threatened by habitat loss and fragmentation, and poaching of their wild prey base. They are persecuted across their range by retaliatory hunting as a consequence of livestock predation, and due to fear that they pose as a threat to human life (IUCN Cats Red List workshop, 2007).

The seizure of the Puma skin is quite alarming as it is evidence some people are willing to bring exotic wildlife products into the country. A full investigation is needed to determine where the parcel was heading and for what purpose.

TRAFFIC India congratulates WCCB officials for their efforts in conducting this seizure.

Source:

<http://www.wisedude.com/animals/puma.htm>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cougar>

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/details/18868/0>

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/08/16/stories/2010081660271300.htm> javascript:history.go(-1)

<http://mundoazul.org/habitats-species/puma/save-the-puma/>

IN FOCUS:

Birds of the night reveal their dark secrets (TRAFFIC India exposes the surreptitious owl trade in India)



Use of owls in black magic and sorcery driven by superstition, totems and taboos is one of the prime drivers of the covert owl trade, finds a TRAFFIC India investigation into the illegal trade, trapping and utilization of owls in India.

TRAFFIC India's report entitled "Imperilled Custodians of the Night" was launched on 2 November 2010 by Shri Jairam Ramesh, Hon. Minister of Environment and Forests at his office in New Delhi. The prime investigator and author of the report is ornithologist Mr Abrar Ahmed.

Hunting of and trade in all Indian owl species is banned under the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 of India. While the exact number of owls traded each year countrywide is unknown, it certainly runs into thousands of individuals and there are anecdotal reports of owls becoming rare throughout India due to loss of suitable habitat especially old growth forests.



Hon. Minister Shri Jairam Ramesh (right) releasing the report at his office in New Delhi. Mr Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India (left)

© TRAFFIC India

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In light of such reports, TRAFFIC is calling for measures including better law enforcement to curb the trade in owls immediately.

TRAFFIC also calls for raising awareness of the beneficial and vital role of owls in the ecosystem, the birds being of particular benefit to farmers through their predation of rodents and other crop pests. The sacrifice of owls on auspicious occasions appears to be a regular practice and TRAFFIC warns of a possible increase in owl trade and sacrifice around Diwali, the Festival of Light, which this year is on 5th November.

Shaman or black magic practitioners frequently referred to as tantriks in India, prescribe the use of owls and their body parts such as skull, feathers, ear tufts, claws, heart, liver, kidney, blood, eyes, fat, beak, tears, eggshells, meat and bones for ceremonial pujas and rituals.

Of the 30 owl species recorded from India, 15 have been recorded by this study in the domestic live bird trade. Owl species most highly sought after by traders are large species, especially those with false "ear-tufts" (actually feather extensions on the head), which are thought to bestow greater magical properties on the birds.

However, trade includes both large (e.g. Rock Eagle-Owl) & small (e.g. Spotted Owlet) owl species inhabiting areas as varied as urban settings and forest or riverine tracts with the main centres for the illicit trade located in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Bihar, according to TRAFFIC.



Shri Jairam Ramesh, Hon. Minister of Environment and Forest said at the launch, "Diwali should be a time for celebration across our nation, not one when our wildlife is plundered to feed ignorant superstition. India's wildlife already faces many pressures; the additional burden of being killed out of ignorance and fear is not one that has any place in our modern society".

"Owls are as important to our ecosystem as the Tigers or any other better known charismatic species. It is important that the threat to the species is brought to light on the festival of Diwali and concrete on ground action is undertaken to curb its trade" he further added.

The TRAFFIC investigation also finds that besides black magic, owls are trapped and traded for use in street performances; killed for taxidermy and for their meat; their parts are used in folk medicines; even their claws and feathers are sometimes used in headgear. Live owls are also used as decoys to catch other bird species.

For a copy of the report, please visit <http://www.wwfindia.org/?4940/Black-magic-behind-illegal-owl-trade-in-India>

Parts of owls sold for folk medicinal use/black magic

SIGNPOST: Other Significant news stories to read



Disclaimer: Links to external news items as given above are provided for information only and are not intended to represent TRAFFIC's policies, positions, opinions or views on the issues raised in the item.

Nations respond to rhino poaching crisis; 20 September 2010; <http://www.traffic.org/home/2010/9/20/nations-respond-to-rhino-poaching-crisis.html>

The biggest animal bone trading network ever in Vietnam intercepted; 15 September 2010; <http://www.traffic.org/home/2010/9/20/police-in-viet-nam-uncover-wildlife-bone-trade-network.html>

Consensus on measures to conserve Saiga antelopes; 14 September 2010; <http://www.traffic.org/home/2010/9/14/measures-to-protect-saiga-antelopes-agreed.html>

Middle East linked to falcon egg trade; 22 August 2010; <http://www.thenational.ae/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20100822/NATIONAL/708219862/1042>

HEADLINES

Even human skin will be traded some day: SC

Rakesh Bhatnagar NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court gave a dressing down to notorious poacher Sansar Chand for leopard and red leopard skins would...



Tigers in peril

Habitat loss was earlier thought to be biggest threat to tigers. But it has now been found that the trade in tiger bones, destined for use in Chinese medicine, is a bigger threat...

the country is commercial. The judges hinted that poachers will be shown no mercy and warned that if they're not stopped, no tigers and leopards would be left in the country.

On July 5, the judges had sought Rajasthan government's response to Chand's plea for parole. He is serving a five-year jail term for smuggling leopard skins in 2003. The poacher has been convicted for smuggling claws, skin, teeth and other animal parts out of Bilhara in 2003. According to official investigations, Chand is responsible for the death of at least 10 tigers in Sariska in 2006. He has been acquitted by a court in two cases related to wildlife crime for want of evidence.

Dogs add teeth to anti-poaching drive

Pramod News Service NEW DELHI

It was a passing out ceremony at Bihar's 23rd Battalion of Special Armed Forces academy with a difference. Not a single policeman but five German Shepherds...



Panchkula. Of them, one each was deployed by the Forest departments of Haryana and Uttarakhand. The procurement of dogs and training programmes were funded and facilitated by Traffic India, national chapter of WWF-India.

According to Sansar Singh, head of Traffic India, illegal wildlife trade has evolved into an organised transnational activity threatening the survival of many species in order to curb this growth. It is necessary to deploy the best enforcement practices available, including the use of sniffer dogs, to have a proven track record in detecting crime and serving long-term deterrents.

17 quintals of antlers seized from Saharanpur

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 12

In a joint operation, the Forest department and district police seized 17 quintals of antlers from a godown in Saharanpur district. This is the second time this month that such a large quantity of antlers has been recovered from the district.

On Monday, Chand's poisoning of the court said. "The population of tigers and leopards was declining because you (Sansar Chand) are trading in skins of tigers and leopards. There is no tiger left in Sariska (tiger reserve)." The judges rejected the contention of counsel for the petitioner, Siddhartha Luthra, that his client was not involved in poaching. Luthra had said that if his client was involved in poaching, how was possible that poisoning was going on even after his arrest.

Bill proposes higher fine for killing wild animals

Experts Welcome Amendments, Expect Better Implementation

Pravara News Service NEW DELHI

The death of a tiger in the wild is a crime under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. The bill proposes a fine of up to Rs 2 lakh for killing a tiger in the wild. The bill also proposes a fine of up to Rs 1 lakh for killing a leopard in the wild.



Planned changes: The bill proposes a fine of up to Rs 2 lakh for killing a tiger in the wild. The bill also proposes a fine of up to Rs 1 lakh for killing a leopard in the wild. The bill also proposes a fine of up to Rs 50,000 for killing a wild animal in the wild.

Over 130 leopards killed this yr: Report

81 Deaths In Utkhand Alone

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Lucknow: The leopard deaths are continuing in the country. The anti-poaching cell of Uttarakhand forest department seized two leopard skins on Wednesday night from Chakrata in Dehradun district. There have been about 130 leopard deaths so far this year. Most of them have been reported from Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.



Vanishing spots

Conservationists fear that the leopard population in the region is declining. The leopard is a vulnerable species and is being hunted for its skin and bones. The leopard is also being hunted for its fur and is being used in traditional medicine.

Sweeper held for trying to sell tusks worth ₹4 lakh

HT Correspondent Mumbai

The police on Monday arrested a 40-year-old sweeper from Dadar for allegedly attempting to sell two elephant tusks estimated to be worth Rs 2 lakh each.



Ashok Nanji Madu, was arrested at Dadar station where he was allegedly waiting for a backhish from humans and animals. Senior police inspector Sunil Deshmukh said that the man was arrested for trying to sell two elephant tusks worth Rs 4 lakh each.

The declining prey base as a tip-off that the big cat is venturing out of its forest area. When it attacks humans and livestock, it has been a backhish. The experts on the view that it will try to find its prey in the human community and around forest areas, a leopard attacks them or it kills them. An officer of the Wildlife Department said that the leopard is a versatile animal which is not selective about its habitat. Maximum number of leopards are found in UP, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

60 poachers caught off Andamans

Were trying to extract molluscs, sea cucumbers

PHS NEW DELHI

The Indian Coast Guard has apprehended as many as 60 Myanmar poachers of the Andamans islands in less than a week. The poachers were trying to extract molluscs and sea cucumbers, which fetch high prices in international market because of their medicinal qualities and are abundantly available off the Andamans.



and caught 24 poachers. While undertaking a routine patrol in the Northern Andaman Sea the ship's Commandant, Vijay Singh, noticed suspicious movement of two boats, away from each other by five miles, approaching from the direction of the Coco Islands. As the CGS Aruna Asaf Ali chased one boat, the other boat tried to slip away and was caught after a high-speed chase and warning shots. Over the last weekend, between September 18 and September 20, the ship apprehended a total of 36 poachers from three boats. All the boats carried sufficient fuel and provisions to sustain at sea for prolonged duration and were equipped with diving equipment.

The Coco Islands in Myanmar, which is just about 26 nautical miles from the Indian territorial waters, makes it easier for poachers to sneak into the Indian waters. Following heightened surveillance and vigil by the Coast Guard ships, helicopters and Dornier surveillance aircraft along the Andamans archipelago, the ICG has apprehended 88 Myanmar poachers alongwith seven boats this month.

At Kaziranga, five elephants die in six days

SAMUDRA GUPTA KASHYAP GUWAHATI, OCTOBER 12

AS MANY as four wild elephants have died around the Kaziranga National Park within six days, ringing alarm bells among the authorities. A domestic elephant owned by the forest department died of cancer last week. While carcasses of two elephant calves were found inside the Difloo tea estate adjoining the national park on October 6, the carcass of a pregnant elephant was discovered on Monday inside

the Panbari reserved forest that is contiguous to the World Heritage Site. The death of a fourth elephant has been reported from Dolamora in the Karbi Anglong hills that form part of the Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong elephant reserve. The police and forest officials have rounded up a few persons on suspicion that they had a hand in the deaths. Last week, another elephant was sighted limping inside a tea estate close to the park before it disappeared into the forests.

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