

TRAFFIC POST

the wildlife trade monitoring network

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TRAFFIC INDIA NEWSLETTER ON ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA

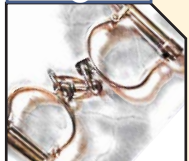


TRAFFIC INDIA
UPDATE

- **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
- **Tie up** with Disney Adventures
- **TRAFFIC and SACEP signal intention** to curb illegal wildlife trade in South Asia



OUTPOST



TRAFFIC
'ALERT'

- **Latest news on the most unique and alarming** illegal wildlife trade trends in India



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.

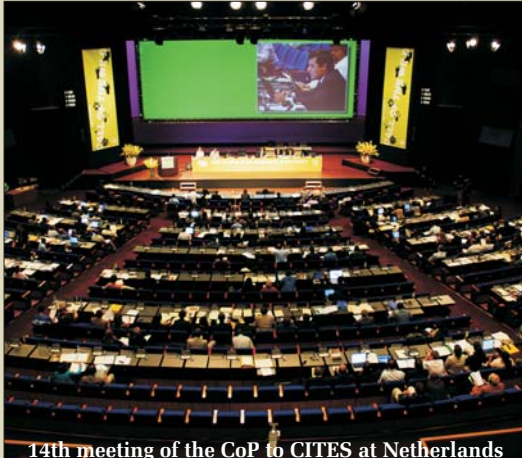


Photo: Samir Sinha

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."

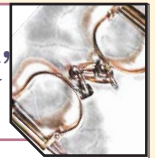
WWF-India and TRAFFIC launch a 'Signature Campaign' for the Tigers in the wild



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



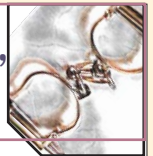
TRAFFIC India has collaborated with Disney Adventures magazine to spread awareness among children on issues related to illegal wildlife trade. This tie up will allow TRAFFIC India to reach out to over 40,000 children every month and especially in those areas where

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/south-asia/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

Illegal wildlife trade thrives in India

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.



Salman faces 5 years in jail



Salman faces 5 years in jail. Loses appeal in Black Buck case, Jodhpur court issues arrest warrant

Comeback of ivory trade?



Four pieces of ivory weighing over 100 kilograms seized in Kerala recently is expected to have come from the killing of three male elephants in the Nilgiri forests, are caused by ivory poachers

A tiger killed every day

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

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 1,200 and 1,500. That's more than 2,000 tigers up in smoke.

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.

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TRAFFIC
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is a joint programme of

WWF **IUCN**
The World Conservation Union