

TRAFFIC POST

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TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



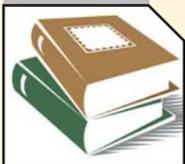
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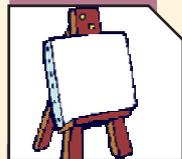
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South Asia unites to curb illegal trade in endangered wildlife



The eight countries of South Asia—India, Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka—joined forces and established the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) to collaborate and co-operate on strengthening wildlife law enforcement in the region. The network was officially launched at an inter-governmental meeting hosted by the Royal Government of Bhutan on 29–30 January 2011 in Paro.

This opens a new chapter in regional co-operation in South Asia for strengthening wildlife law enforcement. During the meeting a decision was also taken to base the SAWEN Secretariat in Nepal.



© Sonam Wangdi, Wildlife Conservation Division, Bhutan

Illegal wildlife trade is a form of trans-national organized crime that threatens many iconic species across the world. South Asia, home to a diverse network of natural ecosystems and varied biodiversity, is especially vulnerable to such threats. Apart from key species such as Tigers, elephants and rhinos, there are a variety of medicinal plants, timber, marine species, birds and reptiles that are threatened by illegal exploitation and trafficking.

During the meeting in Paro, the Hon. Minister for Agriculture and Forests, Bhutan, Dr. Pema Gyamtsho welcomed the establishment of SAWEN that will help agencies and officials across the region to share good practices and resources to co-operate and co-ordinate actions to apprehend poachers and traffickers.

In his message on this occasion, Shri Jairam Ramesh, Hon. Minister of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India stated the avowed goal to strengthen regional co-operation among the eight South Asian countries in combating illegal trade of wild animals. He said that the establishment of SAWEN is a crucial, timely and much needed step forward to institutionalize the collaborative efforts of member nations in controlling wildlife crime in the region. India had taken the lead in flagging the need to control wildlife crime at various forums, leading to the establishment of SAWEN. On this occasion, he also reiterated India's support and commitment to work together to protect our precious natural resources from illegal pillage and plunder.

Country delegates and experts from the governments of member countries, inter-governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations including the CITES Secretariat, Interpol, ASEAN-WEN, Global Tiger Forum, World Bank, USAID, WWF and TRAFFIC participated in the two day meeting. The critical points discussed and agreed upon by the Experts Group during the meeting were:

- An agreed action-oriented work plan for joint activities, some of which would begin immediately and continue to intensify further as the network gathered strength;
- Establishment of the SAWEN Secretariat, which would be hosted by the Government of Nepal;
- An agreed governance and operational structure for SAWEN;
- The need for strategic collaboration on communications and fundraising.

“With the formal operation of SAWEN beginning forthwith, the countries of the region have now reached a milestone in their efforts to counter the spectre of illegal wildlife trade,” says Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India. “This forms an essential piece of the collective effort to conserve the outstanding biological richness and diversity of the region.”

The meeting was organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Royal Government of Bhutan with technical support from TRAFFIC and WWF Bhutan. TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, has been providing technical support for the SAWEN process since its inception and acknowledges the generous funding support of the US Department of State.

Mr. Krishna P. Acharya, Director General, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Government of Nepal is the first Chief Enforcement Coordinator of the SAWEN Secretariat. The office of the Secretariat was opened on the premises of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Nepal and can be contacted at South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network-SAWEN, Office of the Secretariat, P O Box 860, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Officers from Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal sharpen skills on wildlife law



As part of the Strategic Development Dialogue (SDD) between the Governments of India and the UK, TRAFFIC India, in association with the Wildlife Institute of India and the State Forest Departments, conducted a series of wildlife law enforcement training workshops in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal.

Besides officials from the respective forest departments, the workshops were also attended by officials of the DRI (Directorate of Revenue Intelligence), SSB (Sashastra Seema Bal), police, marine intelligence, Railway Protection Force, Customs, postal and transport departments.

The aim of the workshops was to sensitize participants on issues related to illegal wildlife trade and give them an overview of the latest tools and technology available for combating such crime.

1. Workshop in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, 22–23 December 2010.
2. Workshop in Mumbai, Maharashtra, 13–14 January 2011.
3. Workshop in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, 14–15 February 2011.
4. Workshop in Kolkata, West Bengal, 10–11 March 2011.

Raja and Jackie: The new champions fighting wildlife crime



Jackie, one of the newly qualified sniffer dogs under TRAFFIC India and WWF-India's sniffer dog training programme, along with her handlers Mr Padam Singh Rajput and Mr Shivram, helped apprehend two poachers in Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh in October 2010. Several traps for catching wild animals and six live Grey Francolins *Francolinus pondicerianus* were recovered from the two poachers.

Similarly in September 2010, Raja, another trained sniffer dog posted at Bhramपुरi Wildlife Division, Maharashtra, helped solve a Leopard *Panthera pardus* poaching case that led to the arrest of seven involved. Some villagers in Buldhana district had killed a Leopard and hidden its body parts. Raja, along with handlers Mr Ansari and Mr Andraskar helped track the hidden Leopard parts and also trace the accused.



© TRAFFIC India

Jackie, one of the sniffer dogs deployed by the Forest Department of Madhya Pradesh

Jackie and Raja are from the group of five German Shepherd dogs especially trained to sniff out illegal wildlife products. They joined the ranks of the Forest Departments of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Jharkhand in July 2010. The dogs have been trained to detect items such as bone and skin of Tiger and Leopard, and bear bile. Earlier, two such dogs were trained and made available to the states of Uttarakhand and Haryana.

TRAFFIC has helped establish sniffer dog programmes to detect smuggled wildlife parts in several countries including in the Russian Far East and Europe. It is the first time that sniffer dogs have been used to curb illegal wildlife trade in India.

Mr Ravi Singh, Secretary General and CEO of WWF-India said, "We see the sniffer dogs as game changers in the fight against illegal wildlife crime, if they are used judiciously and to their full potential. I am sure this is the beginning of many more such successful operations".

World leaders echo support to ensure doubling of world's wild Tiger population



Leaders from the Tiger range countries that came together during the Tiger summit organized on 21–24 November 2010 at St Petersburg, Russia, have endorsed a Global Tiger Recovery Program (GTRP) that aims to ensure a doubling of the world's wild Tiger population by 2022.

The high level meeting was organized to deliberate on measures to save this iconic species from extinction as its survival is under threat due to ever-diminishing habitats and the even more imminent threat of poaching and trafficking of body parts. The insatiable demand for parts is fuelling the poaching of Tigers, especially in South-East Asia and India.

Steven Broad, Executive Director of TRAFFIC, addressed the forum at the St Petersburg summit during a session on illegal trade. He focused on the results of a recent TRAFFIC investigation, which found that over a decade, parts of at least 1069 Tigers had been illegally trafficked in 11 of the Tiger range countries. At least 469 of these Tigers were killed in India.



© Martin Harvey/WWF-Canon

The key to the GTRP's success in addressing illegal Tiger trade will be the effectiveness of enforcement efforts by the Tiger range countries, as well as close regional and international co-operation between them. The forum stressed the need for strengthening regional law enforcement activities to combat illegal Tiger trade through bilateral and multilateral arrangements, including the ASEAN-WEN (ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network), SAWEN (South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network) and bilateral protocols between key Tiger range countries.

The cost of implementing the GTRP is an estimated USD350 million. At the Forum, several governments and organizations announced a commitment towards the significant amount of funding required for Tiger conservation. WWF committed to spend USD50 million over the next 5 years on Tiger conservation, and set a goal of increasing that to USD85 million.

To find out more, please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2010/11/24/world-leaders-aim-for-deal-to-save-the-Tiger.html>

Efforts augmented to ensure sustainable harvesting and trade of MAPs



Implementation of the International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (ISSC-MAP) received a major boost with the agreement to combine ISSC-MAP with the "fair trade" standard developed by the FairWild Foundation. The new FairWild Standard provides a unified modular system incorporating requirements of both the standards for assessing harvests of wild plants against ecological, social and economic requirements.

Use of the FairWild Standard will augment efforts to ensure plants are harvested and traded in a way that maintains healthy populations in the wild and benefits rural producers.

The merger was formalized during the IUCN World Conservation Congress (October 2008) with the signing of an agreement with the FairWild Foundation by representatives of ISSC-MAP's four founding institutions: the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), IUCN, WWF Germany, and TRAFFIC.

In India, these standards have been promulgated by TRAFFIC India in the States of Karnataka and Uttarakhand. For more information on FairWild Standards, please visit www.FairWild.org

TRAFFIC India's film "Don't Buy Trouble" now available in Hindi



TRAFFIC India's five minute film "Don't Buy Trouble" which captures glimpses of the burgeoning illegal wildlife trade in India that threatens the country's precious flora and fauna is now available in Hindi. This version of the film entitled "Musibat Na Mole Lein" was released during a wildlife law enforcement training workshop in Mumbai in January this year. The film is a crucial part of TRAFFIC India's consumer awareness campaign that advises against buying illegal wildlife products. The film was shot by renowned wildlife filmmaker Himanshu Malhotra and has been produced with support from WWF-India.

Mr Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India said, "The purpose of translating the film in Hindi is to reach out to wider audiences across the country. We might consider translating this into other regional languages".

OUTPOST:

Experts link up to combat illegal wildlife trade in Sri Lanka



In January 2010, national and international experts met in Colombo to focus on concerted action required to combat illegal wildlife trade in Sri Lanka. An initiative from the country's Department of Wildlife Conservation, along with Police, Customs and other relevant government institutions and experts, saw the birth of the Sri Lanka Wildlife Enforcement Network (SLaWEN).



© Samir Sinha

Hon. Patali Champika Ranawaka, MP, Minister of Power and Energy, Govt. of Sri Lanka addressing the audience at the meeting

The meeting "Linking up with South Asia" was successful in bringing together representatives of the Sri Lanka Wildlife Enforcement Network with those from international agencies involved in regulation of wildlife trade, including INTERPOL, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), IUCN and TRAFFIC.

Emerging from years of civil conflict, the economy of Sri Lanka is rapidly developing, and the nation's rich biodiversity offers great potential for increased

ecotourism. But the need for safeguards is clearly apparent to combat any illicit activities that may accompany the country's nascent trade boom.

Leopards in Sri Lanka are particularly at risk from poaching to meet demand for their parts elsewhere in Asia. The Sri Lanka Navy has reported a number of recent arrests of people allegedly involved in the illicit conch trade as the polished shells are smuggled to India and beyond.

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TRAFFIC Alert



Guard held with zebra skin

On 23 November 2011 the south district police of New Delhi arrested a 31-year-old security guard who had stolen a zebra skin from the house of a Mumbai-based businessman. The animal skin had been made into a trophy measuring 3x2 m. The accused, Deepak Yadav, was apprehended from near Jor Bagh area after a tip off. He was planning to sell the trophy to another businessman. On interrogation, Yadav revealed that he had stolen the skin from the house of a leading businessman residing in Sheetal Bagh area of Mumbai, in 2004 when he was working there as a guard.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

There are three species of zebra - Common Zebra or the Plain Zebra *Equus quagga*, Grevy's Zebra *Equus grevyi* and Mountain Zebra *Equus zebra* and many subspecies. Zebras are found in southern and eastern Africa.

Besides habitat loss, poaching for their skin is a threat to these species in the wild. Grevy's Zebra and the Cape Mountain Zebra (a subspecies of *Equus zebra*) are listed in **Appendix I** of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), with the Hartmann's Mountain Zebra (a subspecies of *Equus zebra*) in **Appendix II**.

In the above zebra skin seizure case, it is important to find out how this skin was brought into the country. Were the necessary permits obtained, including those from the CITES authorities and also under the EXIM policy of India? It is important that those who make wildlife purchases that are not directly regulated under the Wildlife Protection Act of India, be aware of the necessary laws that govern such trade.

Source:

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Pvt-guard-held-with-zebra-skin/articleshow/6978365.cms>
<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/zebra-habitat.html>
http://www.defenders.org/wildlife_and_habitat/wildlife/zebra.php

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Briefing participants, Dr Chandrawansa Pathiraja, Director General of the Department of Wildlife Conservation, Sri Lanka repeatedly stressed the need to conserve wildlife in order to develop the ecotourism industry which has the potential to be one of the country's main foreign revenue earners.

James Compton, TRAFFIC's Senior Director for Asia-Pacific emphasized that the strategic need for wildlife enforcement networks in tackling illicit activity has been amply demonstrated, and the initiatives here in Sri Lanka to forge national structures will serve as a backbone for collaborative action throughout the wider Asia region.

TRAFFIC's efforts to catalyse national and inter-governmental wildlife enforcement networking in South Asia are generously supported by the US Department of State.

TRAFFIC Alert



Customs officials seize ornamental fish at Coimbatore Airport

On 6 January 2011 Customs officials seized hundreds of ornamental fish from a passenger when he arrived at Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu) Airport from Singapore.

After collecting his two suitcases, the passenger attempted to pass through the green channel. When Customs officials enquired whether he had any dutiable goods to be declared, he replied in the negative. However on checking the suitcases, the officials found ornamental Arowana and Tiger Loach fish in his baggage packed in 15 polythene bags. The passenger maintained that he had been given the suitcases by a person in Singapore for delivery in India. Some of the fish died shortly after discovery.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Arowana fish are popularly known as dragon fish. There are four varieties of Asian Arowana *Scleropages formosus*—Red, Gold, silver and Green. Arowanas are highly prized as they are considered auspicious and popularly used in Feng shui.

Asian Arowanas are listed in Appendix I of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), thus restricting their trade. As per the CITES guidelines, captive bred Asian Arowanas can be traded if the specimen is tagged with a microchip. It must be at least second generation and the breeder must be registered with CITES. *Syncrossus hymenophysa* commonly known as the Tiger loach is found largely in Borneo & Sumatra, Indonesia and Peninsular Malaysia.

Ornamental fishes like Arowanas command very high prices and this seizure clearly indicates there is demand for these fish in India, with buyers presumably willing to pay large sums for these products.

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CITES UPDATE: Email alerts on CITES related issues now available by subscription



In a new endeavour to disseminate information on wildlife trade widely, the CITES Secretariat has created a facility on the CITES website to subscribe to email alerts concerning CITES related issues. The facility is open for viewing by the general public. This was communicated through a Notification dated 6 December 2010. For more information, please visit <http://www.cites.org/eng/notif/2010/E040.pdf>

CITES UPDATE: Tiger killers will be brought to book, says CITES Secretary General



During the Tiger summit in St Petersburg in November 2010, the CITES Secretary General, John Scanlon, sounded an alarm call for saving wild Tigers by stating that poachers would be brought to book. Highlighting the need for better enforcement efforts throughout the world to save this iconic species, Mr Scanlon informed the participants of the formation of ICCWC (International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime), a consortium of enforcement agencies coming together to tackle the international trade in Tiger products comprising the CITES Secretariat, INTERPOL, World Customs Organization, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Bank. The goal of ICCWC (pronounced 'eye-quick') is to launch a new era in wildlife law enforcement by drawing upon the complementary skills of the Consortium.

A letter of understanding has been signed recently by representatives of all the organizations to make this partnership a reality. Whilst acknowledging that although enforcement efforts are taking place to protect Tigers, Mr Scanlon highlighted that current efforts are not enough and more concerted moves are required to stem the trade of Tiger products in the international arena. To find out more, please visit http://www.cites.org/eng/news/press_release.shtml

TRAFFIC Alert



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This development must be seen with concern as India is largely regarded as a source country for wildlife products and not as a consumer.

Source:

<http://www.hindu.com/2011/01/07/stories/2011010757110500.htm>

Five tonnes of Red Sanders seized at Gujarat port

On 7 January 2011 officials of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized Red Sanders logs weighing five tonnes from Gujarat's Tuna port, which is under control of the Kandla Port Trust. The logs were seized from a small vessel which was on its way to Dubai. The logs were transported to Gujarat from South India and initially loaded at Sikka port in Jamnagar for being shipped to Dubai.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Red Sanders *Pterocarpus santalinus* is endemic to the southern parts of India's Eastern Ghats, mainly in the State of Andhra Pradesh. The tree species has been heavily overexploited even though 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).

The wood is in great demand in China, Japan and the Middle East, where it is used to make furniture and carvings as well as traditional medicines in Asia. In India it is used to make a dye. Preliminary research by TRAFFIC suggests that whilst the use of the rare timber for furniture may be the most significant driver of recent Red Sanders smuggling, some of the wood is siphoned off to be sold into the traditional medicine trade.

In India, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade allows export of wildlife species only through seven ports—Mumbai, Kolkata, Cochin, Delhi, Chennai, Tuticorin and Amritsar. In the above case, the logs were being smuggled from Sikka port.

Some indication of the extent of the illicit trade is evident from the large number of seizures conducted over the last few years. In 2010 alone, at least 130 tonnes of Red sanders were seized by enforcement officers across the country, although seizures alone are only an indication of the on-going over-exploitation of this wood species. For more details on this trade, please see TRAFFIC Post Issue VIII (February 2010) at http://www.wwfindia.org/about_wwf/enablers/traffic/newsletter/

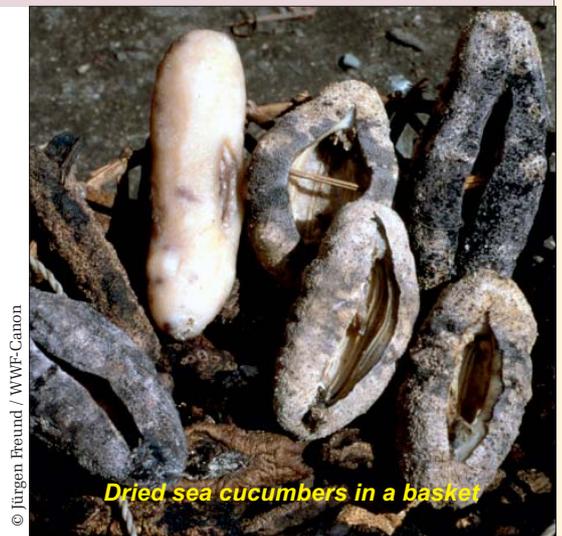
Source:

<http://news.in.msn.com/national/article.aspx?cp-documentid=4777770>
TRAFFIC India database on Red Sanders

Four tonnes of Sea cucumber seized in Tamil Nadu

On 22 February 2011, four tonnes of Sea Cucumber, a group of threatened marine echinoderms, were seized and 15 fishermen arrested near Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu. Marine Commander (Police) B T Bharadwaj, quoting Naval commander Saurab Agarwal, said they were patrolling the sea when they saw four boats moving about suspiciously. Later, the boats were seized and their occupants arrested after they were found to be carrying large numbers of Sea Cucumber.

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Dried sea cucumbers in a basket

© Jürgen Freund / WWF-Canon

TRAFFIC Alert



Continued from page 7

TRAFFIC India adds.....

This is the second seizure of Sea Cucumbers in the last four months. On 14 December 2010 the Q Branch police of Ramanathapuram detained a fisherman and seized 800 kg of live Sea Cucumbers.

In India, Sea Cucumbers *Holothurians* are listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. However, the animals continue to be smuggled to China and many Southeast Asian countries where they are boiled, dried or smoked to prepare a delicacy known as *beche de mer*. Apart from their demand as a delicacy, Sea Cucumbers are also used in traditional Chinese medicine. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands have the richest diversity of Sea Cucumbers in India, followed by the Lakshwadweep Islands, Gulf of Mannar, Palk Bay and Gulf of Kutch.

Reports indicate that Sea cucumbers are primarily collected from the Gulf of Mannar and are smuggled from the Ramanathapuram-Tuticorin coast in Tamil Nadu to countries such as China, Japan and Malaysia. Trade in marine species has received relatively little attention to date, and it is high time that enforcement agencies, NGOs and other institutions and individuals focus attention on illegal trade which threatens these species.

Source:

<http://ibnlive.in.com/generalnewsfeed/news/sea-cucumber-seized-15-fishermen-held/586071.html>

<http://www.hindu.com/2010/12/16/stories/2010121664890600.htm>

<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>

http://www.icsf.net/icsf2006/uploads/publications/samudra/pdf/english/issue_36/art06.pdf

IN FOCUS:

India ranks highest in Tiger parts seizure over last decade



The parts of at least 1069 Tigers have been seized in Tiger range countries over the past decade, according to a new analytical exercise undertaken by TRAFFIC. The report **Reduced to Skin and Bones** released in November 2010, shows that from January 2000 to April 2010, parts of between 1069 and 1220 Tigers were seized in 11 of the 13 Tiger range countries i.e. an average of 104 to 119 animals per year. To download the report, visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2010/11/9/more-than-1000-Tigers-reduced-to-skin-and-bones-in-last-deca.html>

Of the 11 Tiger range countries, India, China and Nepal ranked highest in the number of Tiger part seizures, with India having by far the highest number of Tiger seizures at 276. Seizures represent a minimum of 469 Tiger and a maximum of 533 Tigers. China, with 40, had the second highest number of seizures representing 116-124 Tigers, and Nepal reported 39 seizures, or 113-130 Tigers, according to the report. Seizures of skins are highest in India and Nepal and are also relatively frequent in China, Russia and Indonesia.

The seizures reported in Tiger trade ranged from complete skins, skeletons and even whole animals—live or dead, and of bones, meat, claws, teeth, skulls, penises and other body parts. Bones and skeletons are often seen in seizures in China, Indonesia, India, Malaysia, Russia and Nepal. Claws are most often found in India and Malaysia. Seizures in Viet Nam and Thailand consist of a large part of whole dead Tigers, although China, Russia, Malaysia and Indonesia also show a relatively high number of dead Tigers in trade.



© Staffan Widstrand / WWF

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High seizure rates in China, India, Nepal, Indonesia and Viet Nam can be explained either by relatively high enforcement efforts in these countries or by their significance in the Tiger trade chain, or both. Therefore, while seizure data can give some indication, these do not give a definite picture of actual levels of trade, and may even be misleading. **However it is quite apparent that whereas India, home to half of the world's wild Tiger populations, is a major source country and Nepal is a major transit country (as well as being a source), China certainly appears to be the largest consumer country of Tiger parts and derivatives.**

The report also notes an apparent increasing number of seizures in Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand and Viet Nam. Some areas stand out in the report as hot spots in the illicit trade, including Nepal as a transit country, and the India-Myanmar, Malaysia-Thailand, Myanmar-China and the Russia-China borders. Additionally, many seizures take place within 50 km of protected Tiger areas, such as those in the Western Ghats, Sundarbans and Terai Arc.

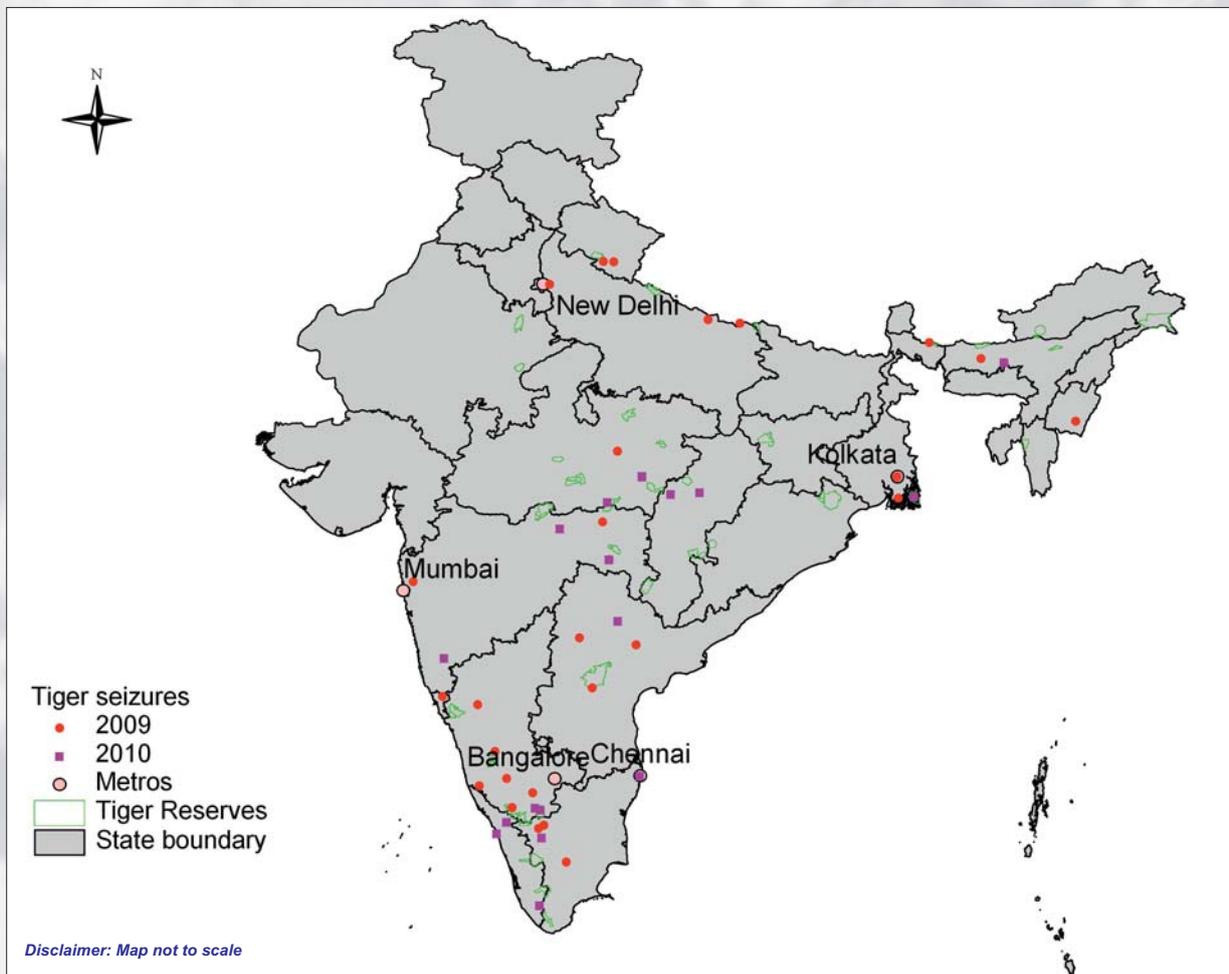
“Good enforcement alone will not solve the problem. To save Tigers in the wild, concerted action is needed to reduce considerably the demand for Tiger parts in key countries in Asia,” said Steven Broad, Executive Director of TRAFFIC.

Mr Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India said “A paradigm shift in terms of commitment is needed and all stakeholders will have to join forces to create intelligence-driven, well co-ordinated, trans-boundary networks to provide a sustained push against forces driving one of the most legendary species on Earth to extinction”.

Wild Tiger numbers are in steep decline, caused by a combination of poaching and illegal trade in the animals coupled with habitat loss and encroachment and excessive poaching of key species which Tigers prey upon. It is estimated that a century ago there were around 100 000 wild Tigers across the world, today the figure is believed to be as few as 3200.

As per Tigernet (a comprehensive database on Tiger mortality and seizure across India, launched by the National Tiger Conservation Authority, Govt. of India with support from TRAFFIC India in 2009), in the last two years a total of 106 cases of mortality of Tigers (66 in 2009 and 40 in 2010) and 45 cases of seizures of Tiger body parts were recorded (29 in 2009 and 16 in 2010).

For more information, please visit www.tigernet.nic.in



WILD CRY

(Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.)

Pangolins in peril

Pangolins are unique among mammals in having large keratin scales covering their body. When threatened by predators, pangolins roll into a ball, presenting their hard scales to the enemy. Pangolins lack teeth and feed entirely on ants and termites; their extremely long and sticky tongue which extends into the abdomen is an adaptation for this purpose. Due to their scales and ant-eating habits, pangolins are popularly called 'scaly anteaters'.

Two species of pangolins found in India:

Indian Pangolin *Manis crassicaudata*

Chinese Pangolin *Manis pentadactyla*

Distribution: The Indian Pangolin occurs sporadically throughout the plains and the Himalayan foothills to southern India. In the north-east it is replaced by the Chinese Pangolin, a species whose range extends to South-East Asia.

Legal status:

Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I (Both)

IUCN Redlist: Near Threatened (Indian Pangolin); Endangered (Chinese Pangolin)

CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora): Appendix II (Both – but currently with zero export quotas for wild-sourced specimens)

Threat: Although Pangolins are traded locally throughout India (Mitra 1998), the main threat to their survival comes from the high demand from international markets in China and South-East Asia both for their flesh, which is considered a delicacy and a 'tonic food' for its alleged medicinal properties, and for their scales. Currently all international trade in Asian pangolin species is not permitted under CITES.

Until recently, it appears that most illegal pangolin trade was focused on South-East Asia, but there now appears to be a growing international trade from India too, with traders targeting areas as far as the interior peninsular region. (See TRAFFIC post October 2010, http://assets.wwfindia.org/downloads/traffic_post_issue_10.pdf and <http://www.deccanchronicle.com/bengaluru/1000-pangolins-hunted-2-months-020>).



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© Leanne Clark / Carnivore and Pangolin Conservation Program

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WILD CRY

(Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.)

Pangolins in peril

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Listed below are some of the large seizures of pangolin scales in India since 2009. These consignments have been detected either at airports or in states with international borders with Myanmar. **The total amount of scales seized account for more than 1400 animals (1.5 kg per individual—estimates for Indian Pangolin, from Mitra 1998).** A species which perhaps naturally occurs at low densities may not be able to sustain such a rapacious harvest for long.

At the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES in 2000, India along with Nepal, Sri Lanka and the USA proposed an uplisting of all Asian pangolins from CITES Appendix II to I, which would have stopped all trade in wild caught pangolins. Though the proposal for uplisting was not accepted, a zero quota for wild caught specimens was imposed, making trade in wild-sourced Asian pangolins illegal.

The proposal had given a grim warning “Given the level of trade that appears to be occurring in other Asian pangolin species, it is reasonable to assume that as these species become rarer and more difficult to obtain, that trade would shift to *M. crassicaudata* “(the Indian Pangolin). The current volume and nature of trade seems to vindicate this.

Details of pangolin scales seized since 2009

No	Date	Seizure of Pangolin scales (kg)	Location
1	12 January 2009	116	Pallel gate, Imphal (Manipur)
2	17 June 2010	164	Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi Airport, Guwahati (Assam)
3	19 June 2010	146.8	Railway mail service station, Guwahati (Assam)
4	20 June 2010	555	Guwahati airport (Assam)
5	19 November 2010	650.	Kolkata airport (Kolkata, West Bengal)
6	27 November 2010	501	Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport, Kolkata (West Bengal)
	TOTAL	2133.05 Kg	

References:

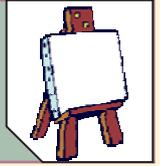
Mitra, S. 1998. On the scale of the Scaly Anteater *Manis crassicaudata*. Journal Bombay Natural History Society 95(3): 495-497.

For more information on Indian Pangolins, see: <http://envfor.nic.in/news/janmar03/pangolins.pdf>

For proposal on the uplisting of Asian Pangolins at CITES CoP 11 in 2000, see:

Prop. 11.13. *Manis crassicaudata*, *Manis pentadactyla*, *Manis javanica*. Transfer from Appendix II to Appendix I (India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, United States). Available at: <http://www.cites.org/eng/cop/11/prop/13.pdf>.

SIGNPOST: Other Significant news stories to read



Ten poachers surrender in Kaziranga; 26 November 2010

Ten poachers surrendered before forest authorities following an ultimatum served by the villagers in Assam's Kaziranga National Park. Three villages located on the fringes of the park had served an ultimatum to these poachers who were hiding inside the forest.

Read more at <http://news.chennaionline.com/newsitem.aspx?NEWSID=06547678-9469-4351-968c-48e34353b875&CATEGORYNAME=NATL>

Private airlines aiding illegal wildlife trade; 21 January 2011

Two major private airlines have been found to be aiding in smuggling of endangered species in the north-eastern parts of India. A huge consignment of wildlife body parts, including that of a Tiger, was confiscated at Guwahati (Assam).

Read more at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/Pvt-airlines-aiding-illegal-wildlife-trade/H1-Article1-652747.aspx>

Shark populations dwindle as top catchers delay on conservation actions; 27 January 2011

A decade after members of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UN FAO) approved an international plan to conserve sharks, a new analysis finds that it is yet to be fully implemented. With 30 percent of all shark species now threatened or near threatened with extinction, there is little evidence that the plan has contributed significantly to improved conservation and management of these animals.

Read more at <http://www.traffic.org/home/2011/1/27/shark-populations-dwindle-as-top-catchers-delay-on-conservat.html>

Reptile and amphibian reporting needs tightening; new study; 30 March 2011: Wide discrepancies in the numbers of live reptiles and amphibians reported in the pet trade to Thailand indicate misreporting or deliberate violation of international trade rules, according to a paper published in PLOS ONE. Authors Vincent Nijman of Oxford Brookes University and Chris R. Shepherd of TRAFFIC Southeast Asia examined how records supplied to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) on the commercial trade in reptiles and amphibians exported to Thailand between 1990 and 2007 reflected changes in trends, species composition and numbers of wild-caught versus captive-bred specimens.

Read more at <http://www.traffic.org/home/2011/3/30/reptile-and-amphibian-reporting-needs-tightening-new-study.html>

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.

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TRAFFIC POST

the wildlife trade monitoring network

ISSUE 12
JULY, 2011

TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



TRAFFIC INDIA UPDATE

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- **TIME magazine exposes plans for Chinese rhinoceros 'farming'** Pg 9



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CITES UPDATE

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- **CITES expedites efforts to combat organized crime targeted at elephants and rhinoceroses** Pg 10



IN FOCUS

- **Trouble in Parrot Paradise: Trade in Alexandrine Parakeets** Pg 11



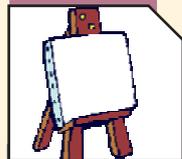
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TRAFFIC ALERT

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

- **Facebook brings down Goa frog poacher** Pg 7
- **Poachers kill a rhinoceros in Kaziranga and remove its horn** Pg 8
- **Assam Rifles seize 15 kg of Tiger bones, skulls in Manipur** Pg 9



SIGNPOST

SIGNPOST: Other significant news stories to read such as Sharks in soup (India goes against world in not banning shark fin trade); Live Leopard and other animals found in a luggage at Bangkok airport and more... Pg 16

WILD CRY

Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.

Unearthing secrets of a "double-headed" snake: Red Sand Boa

Pg 13

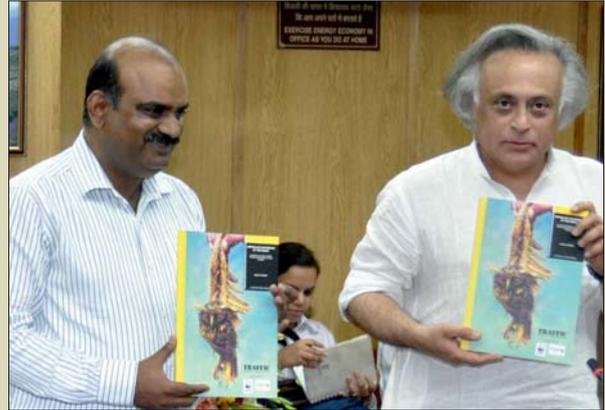
South Asia: Fighting 'tooth and nail' to address wildlife crime in the region



On the occasion of World Environment Day, celebrated on 5 June every year, the Office of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) conducted an interview with Mr Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India, on issues related to wildlife crime in South Asia and associated implications for the region. The interview, as given below, was published on the website of UNODC at <http://www.unodc.org/southasia/en/frontpage/2011/june/interview-samir-sinha-on-wildlife-crime.html>

Wildlife trade refers to the commercial use by people of wild animal and plant resources. While most of this trade is legal, a significant portion of it is not. Over the years illegal wildlife trade has emerged as a form of transnational organized crime that is threatening the existence of many wild species across the globe.

Please explain what is wildlife crime and how does it impact society. There are many elements of nature whose sustainable utilization is critical to human livelihoods. For example, medicinal plants, marine harvests, food products of wild origin etc. Wild products are also used for fuel and fodder, as building material, to make clothing, handicrafts, ornaments etc. Eco-tourism is another important potential contributor to livelihoods. Regarding the ecosystem values of such natural elements, they play a key role in ensuring clean air and water, amongst other necessities and mitigating various environmental threats.



Left to right: Mr. Samir Sinha with the Hon. Minister of Environment and Forests, Shri Jairam Ramesh, at the launch of TRAFFIC India's report on illegal trade, trapping and use of owls in India in November 2010

© TRAFFIC India

Illegal wildlife crime, by its very nature, destroys and removes - mostly unsustainably - these elements of natural wealth of a region that rightfully belong to its people, putting at stake their well being and livelihood opportunities for short term gain. It has the potential to threaten social equity and sustainable inclusive growth. It also presents risks to human health and bio-security. It results in significant loss of revenue to governments while generating massive proceeds for criminals, which may include insurgent groups. Some of these ill gotten proceeds of crime can be directed against State institutions themselves, thus threatening the security of States and communities.

What are the main factors that drive wildlife crime? The prime factors that drive wildlife crime include a burgeoning demand for natural products such as Tiger parts (e.g. claws, bones, skins, whiskers) and their derivatives, Rhinoceros horns, ivory, various medicinal plants, timber, reptile skins, birds, turtles and tortoises, marine products, including shark derivatives, sea cucumbers etc., across international borders, coupled with poor understanding of the elements of such crime amongst law enforcement agencies and the judiciary. Wildlife crimes are usually seen as crimes without a visible victim and not as something that affects society at large, thus receiving low priority and poor attention from enforcement agencies and society. Sometimes, the high economic incentives offered by such crimes coupled with the low probability of getting caught and the even lower probability of getting convicted, serves as an incentive for many to get involved in such crimes.

What have been the general trends of wildlife crime in South Asia? Have there been any recent changes in the trends? During the past two decades, we have witnessed a sudden increase in the demand for wild animals and plants from South Asia. The products mentioned earlier are some of the examples. Most species are in demand in China and South-east Asia whereas several have specialized markets (like Agarwood in the Middle East) that include countries in the Far East and Europe. All the species mentioned are protected by domestic laws or international conventions. Perceived earlier as a local criminal activity, wildlife crime has today emerged from the shadows as a form of transnational organized crime, with organized criminal syndicates operating poaching and trade networks involving endangered species. By its very nature, wildlife crime is dynamic in nature. The target species, methods of wildlife crime, concealment, transport, routes etc., all can be seen to change rapidly from time to time to keep a step ahead of law enforcement efforts. As a classic example, the illegal trade in Red Sanders wood has seen a dramatic shift in recent years, with earlier demand from Singapore and Japan being presently dominated by a huge demand from China.

Continued on page 3

Continued from page 2

Many truckloads of this valuable timber have been intercepted while being transported across India from the states of Andhra Pradesh and a small part of Tamil Nadu - where the species is endemic - to Nepal, Myanmar and even directly to China across Ladakh! Several hundred tonnes of this wood have also been seized in Nepal in the last few years.

What are the existing policies and mechanisms to address wildlife crime at the international and regional level? How can these translate into results? Most countries across the region have strict national laws to protect their wildlife resources and also a good system of nature reserves. Strong and well implemented national laws are the key to secure such resources systems. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) remains the umbrella international agreement on trade in wild species of flora and fauna. Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. All countries of South Asia except Maldives are signatories to the CITES Convention.

There is also a series of bilateral agreements - already in place or under development - amongst several countries in the region including India-Bangladesh, India-Bhutan, India-China, India-Nepal and Nepal-China that focus on collaboration to deal with wildlife crime.

The Member States of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) recently adopted the SAARC Convention on Cooperation on Environment at Thimphu, Bhutan on 29 April, 2010. The scope of this Convention includes collaboration on wildlife conservation and combating illegal trade in wildlife and bio-resources.

The recent establishment of the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) in January 2011 in Paro, Bhutan, is a milestone in the region's efforts to address wildlife crime in the region. Led by member nations of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, the establishment of SAWEN has been facilitated by TRAFFIC, with support from agencies like the CITES Secretariat, UNODC, INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization and NGOs including WWF. The US Department of State has supported this initiative with a grant.

These collaborative efforts will certainly yield very good results in curbing wildlife crime as countries and agencies will be able to share information on such crimes and criminals in an effective manner. Also, this would strengthen common approaches to investigations and learning from each other's best practices. The support of organizations like UNODC, INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization and the CITES Secretariat would be crucial to the success of such efforts. Improving awareness of wildlife crime issues across the region would facilitate greater compliance and prevention of this crime.



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Can you give examples of good practices which have helped to prevent these crimes? Wherever agencies have collaborated and come together to share expertise and information, results have been there to see. There have been several instances where poachers have been arrested and wild products have been seized on the basis of shared information. NGOs like TRAFFIC and WWF have played a catalytic role to improve understanding of such issues amongst enforcement agencies and to strengthen their capacity to respond effectively to such challenges. We have been privileged to work with various agencies including Forest Departments, Police, Army, Paramilitary, Customs, Railways and the Central Bureau of Investigation, etc., towards such efforts. Technical support has also been provided by agencies like the Wildlife Institute of India.

Introduction of wildlife sniffer dogs, use of metal detectors to detect snares and traps and promoting the use of better forensic tools to deal with wildlife crimes, as has been pioneered by TRAFFIC in the region, have

yielded very good results in prevention and investigation of these crimes.

What needs to be done further to strengthen wildlife law enforcement and prevent wildlife crime? Constant collaboration, sharing of expertise and information as well as a joint effort across Government agencies and other relevant agencies and institutions is the key to securing the natural heritage of our region against pillage and plunder. Development of knowledge and skills amongst agencies across various levels is crucial. Fighting wildlife crime needs to become a national, and thereby, a regional and global priority. Support of specialist agencies like UNODC would also be vital to secure the success of such efforts. TRAFFIC, with its expertise in monitoring wildlife trade, is committed to work together with countries and key stakeholders in the region to help ensure that wildlife crime does not become a threat to the survival of species in the wild.

Wildlife officials across Indo-Nepal border meet to curb wildlife crime



On 16–17 May 2011, Uttar Pradesh Forest Department (Govt. of India) and WWF-India organized an Indo-Nepal trans-boundary meeting to discuss issues related to wildlife conservation across their shared borders. TRAFFIC India participated in this meeting along with the park managers from both countries, senior officials from the Wildlife Departments of the Governments of India and Nepal, officials from WWF-India, WWF-Nepal, TRAFFIC India and the Wildlife Institute of India.

The meeting was the first consultative meeting organized after a formal agreement between India and Nepal was signed in 2010 for better management of forest areas along the 1751 km Indo-Nepal border.

TRAFFIC India, represented by MKS Pasha, Coordinator of TRAFFIC India, provided an overview of the species and their parts which are most common in the illegal wildlife trade; existing treaties, instruments, bilateral agreements that regulate this trade; the role of other enforcement agencies such as police, Customs, border security forces, etc., in curbing wildlife crime; need for co-ordination between such agencies; a centralized crime database which could be easily available to both countries; formulation of joint wildlife task forces and special squads; specialized joint training of enforcement officers in both countries that also allows participants to exchange experiences and knowledge; the role of SAWEN (South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network) for curbing international wildlife crime and various other significant aspects pertaining to this trade.

At the meeting, TRAFFIC India was asked to help conduct special wildlife law enforcement training programmes for various concerned agencies of both countries; establish an information network in the region; create a common wildlife crime database and introduce a sniffer dog training programme in Nepal for detecting snares and traps set up by poachers.

Mr Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India, commented, "It is encouraging to see that our experience and knowledge in the field has been appreciated by the governments of both countries. We are looking forward to working with them on every aspect of curbing wildlife crime in the region".

Besides issues related to wildlife trade, other aspects of wildlife conservation such as monitoring Tiger and prey populations, developing national action plans to protect key species, intensifying joint patrolling of border areas, restoring border habitats etc., were also discussed in detail.

Key trans-boundary areas to benefit from this collaboration include Sukhlaphanta-Lagga Bagga-Pilibhit, Bardia-Katerniaghat-Khata, Banke-Suhelwa, Jhapa-Darjeeling and Kosi Tappu.

"E-8" a new hope for elephant conservation



© Ola Jennersten / WWF-Canon

On 24 May 2011, eight range countries of Asian and African Elephants pledged to eradicate the smuggling of ivory and poaching of the species to ensure their survival for future generations. The pledge was taken in New Delhi at the 'Elephant-8 Ministerial Meet' which brought together Ministerial and high level delegations in charge of wildlife in eight countries that are home to the most significant populations of Asian and African Elephants. The meeting was jointly organized by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, in collaboration with the National Tiger Conservation Authority, the Wildlife Trust of India and the Wildlife Institute of India.

The eight participating countries – Botswana, Congo, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Thailand – have decided to lead efforts in their respective regions to ensure the long-term survival of the elephant and its habitat. This is a major step forward in securing the long term future of the elephant in all range countries, through collaborative global action.

Continued on page 5

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Introducing the event, India's Minister of State (I/C), Environment and Forests, Shri Jairam Ramesh said: "This Ministerial marks the start of a concerted global effort to secure the future of the elephant, not just in India, but in all the 50 countries in which it is found. The elephant is an iconic cultural symbol across many countries including ours, and I look forward to India's continued leadership role in its conservation efforts".

TRAFFIC India was invited to participate in this meeting and provided inputs on elephant poaching and illegal trade in ivory. The threat from poaching and illegal trade in ivory was identified as one of the most important threats to the future of elephants in the wild. TRAFFIC requested all participants to co-operate in strengthening trans-boundary enforcement, including adopting a joint strategy for controlling and monitoring elephant populations across borders.

Mr MKS Pasha, Co-ordinator of TRAFFIC India who represented TRAFFIC at this summit said, "E-8 should eventually evolve into a significant platform for consultative processes and agreements pertaining to decisions related to ivory trade". This suggestion was welcomed and put forward for further deliberation.

Mr Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India added, "Illegal trade in live elephants across borders has hardly been documented. There is a strong need for monitoring this. Further, a detailed database of the elephants in captivity should be maintained to monitor their birth and death. These initiatives will definitely have a huge impact on ensuring a safe and secure future for wild elephants".

Other key issues discussed during this important meeting were: building knowledge on conservation, skills and resources to eradicate poaching of the species in the wild and illegal trade of ivory and other elephant parts; reduction in human-elephant conflict; engaging with local communities in the management and conservation of elephants and their habitats and to launch programmes to create general awareness about the significance of elephants and their habitats.

India releases Tiger population estimates



A Tiger population estimation report released by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, in March 2011 estimates the national population as 1706 animals, substantially more than the 1411 animals reported following the previous Tiger population estimation in 2007.

The latest total includes 70 Tigers found in the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve, which were not included in the previous survey because of the difficulty in surveying mangrove habitats. This time however, camera-traps and DNA analysis were used to estimate Tiger numbers in the reserve.

But even without the Sundarbans, the latest figures indicate a 12% increase in the overall Indian Tiger population, which the Hon. Minister of Environment and Forests, Shri Jairam Ramesh described as "a very encouraging sign."

The current figures were released at the start of a three-day international conference on Tiger conservation organized in New Delhi in March 2011. The conference brought together Tiger experts to review implementation of the Global Tiger Recovery Program (GTRP), a worldwide plan finalized by world leaders at the historic Tiger summit held in November 2010 in St. Petersburg, Russia, to bring Tigers back from the brink of extinction.

Mr Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India said, "Poaching driven by illegal wildlife trade is the most significant threat to the Tiger today. The growth in Tiger numbers indicates that measures undertaken by the Government to curtail poaching have begun to have an impact on Tiger numbers. However, the efforts need to be intensified and accelerated for it to show long term results".

The final All India Tiger Estimation Report that includes landscape and site specific estimates of Tigers and prey along with detailed methodology used, camera trapped area in each site, effective sampled area, estimates of each site as obtained by different methods of analysis, population estimates, and discussion of the results, will be released on 25 July 2011 by the Hon. Minister of Environment and Forests, Shri Jairam Ramesh.



© GS Bhartiwal

Customs Department sharpen skills to fight wildlife crime in Maharashtra



© TRAFFIC India

The National Academy for Customs, Excise & Narcotics (NACEN), Western region, with support from TRAFFIC India, organized a workshop in Mumbai on 14–15 June 2011 on “Strengthening Wildlife Law Enforcement”. Thirty officials from the Customs department and the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence of the Western region, Mumbai, participated.

The two-day workshop aimed to provide participants with an overview of organized illicit wildlife trade and introduce them to the latest tools and techniques available to curb it. The workshop was inaugurated by Mr Arun Tondon, Additional Director General, NACEN. Dr A. R. Rahmani, Director of BNHS (Bombay Natural History Society) was the Guest of Honour. Also present were Mr T. K. Samant, Joint Director and Mr B.P. Singh, Deputy Director of NACEN.

Mumbai's well established air, sea and land route connections prompt illegal wildlife traders to smuggle their goods through this city. Marine species like seahorses, shells and corals are

smuggled to other parts of the world through Mumbai which also serves as a major smuggling route for other wildlife and related goods including Red Sanders, ivory, live birds and other animals.

Mr Arun Tandon, expressed his concerns over the illegal wildlife trade and stressed the vital role of Customs in the enforcement and control of such trade. He reminded participants about the largest-ever snake skin seizure that took place in Mumbai on 20 December 2005, when a staggering 55 000 reptile skins were seized by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence at Mumbai Port.

Mr Tandon congratulated TRAFFIC India for their leading role in arranging specialized training events in wildlife law enforcement for Customs officials.

Mr Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India, described the need for sophisticated methods to tackle organized transnational wildlife crime and also reinforced the significant role played by Customs in curbing illegal wildlife trade.

Dr Deepak Apte, of BNHS, conducted a special session with the participants on marine trade issues and identification of shells, corals and other marine products in illegal wildlife trade.

Relevant materials, including a compendium of recent wildlife seizures in the region and the listing of relevant laws, were distributed to participants. Other material distributed included CDs on various related themes and books, posters, etc., pertaining to wildlife law and enforcement issues.

A wildlife forensic sample collection kit developed jointly by the Wildlife Institute of India and TRAFFIC was also distributed to participants. The customized kit enables officers to collect samples for forensic analysis as per prescribed protocols. An identification kit for ivory was also distributed. This kit has been uniquely designed and adapted to test ivory on the spot and will be of immense value to Customs officers.

NACEN will continue to organize such workshops for its officers in the future. There are plans to organize annual training programmes for its officers in order to curb wildlife crime and TRAFFIC India has been asked to conduct these specialized training sessions.

Besides conducting specialized training with the Customs in Mumbai, TRAFFIC India has regularly organized similar workshops on wildlife enforcement for an array of audiences across the country. So far, TRAFFIC India has conducted more than 40 wildlife enforcement workshops and provided specialized inputs and training at an additional 40 workshops organized by other agencies.

TRAFFIC India at international conferences on wildlife protection



© Chris Shepherd

Conservation of Asian Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles Workshop in Singapore:

Wildlife experts from TRAFFIC along with other experts from around the world met in Singapore on 21–24 February 2011 to deliberate on the future of Asia's tortoises and freshwater turtles.

Seventy experts present at the workshop evaluated the current status of these species in Asia and confirmed that freshwater turtle and tortoise populations around the world are bearing the brunt of years of illegal and unsustainable trade. They are among the world's most threatened groups of animals. Perhaps nowhere is the situation more critical than in Asia.

The participants stressed that illegal and unsustainable trade was the greatest threat to the survival of this highly threatened group of species and that laws and conventions in place to protect these animals were simply not being enforced.

TRAFFIC India, represented by MKS Pasha, provided an overview of the tortoise and freshwater turtle trade in South Asia including the trade in Star Tortoises from India. He said, "India is the largest source country for illegal trade in Star Tortoises. Most of the trade from India is towards Malaysia and Thailand and is usually routed by air. Between 2000 and 2010, 42 cases of seizures of Star Tortoises have been recorded in India of which 96% have been at airports. The total number of tortoises seized was more than 26 000".

He further commented, "Efforts need to be intensified at the field level so that enforcement officials can curb illegal collection of Star Tortoises from the wild. Currently nearly all seizures are taking place at airports. Specialized training programmes need to be conducted on detection of this species, especially when being brought to the airports".

To learn more about the workshop and the key findings, please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2011/2/28/too-little-done-to-address-trade-threat-to-asias-tortoises-a.html>

Asia for Animals workshop in China: TRAFFIC participated in the Asia for Animals conference, one of the largest gatherings for animal protection in Asia, held from 10–14 June 2011 in Chengdu, Sichuan province of China. TRAFFIC's role at the conference was to share with the audience an overview of illegal wildlife trade, the impact it has on our wildlife, the *modus operandi* of this trade, laws pertaining to this trade and other related issues. TRAFFIC India was represented at the meeting by Shubhobroto Ghosh, Programme Officer.

TRAFFIC India's film depicting illegal wildlife trade in India entitled "Don't Buy Trouble" was showcased and helped create awareness of this issue. More than 300 conservationists and animal protectionists from 25 countries attended the meeting that was being held for the first time in China.

TRAFFIC Alert



Facebook brings down Goa frog poacher

On 9 June 2011, Goa forest officials raided the house of a youth in Ribandar village after his posts on the social networking site Facebook of killing and eating Indian Bullfrogs. The post tipped off a network of wildlife NGOs in the State. During the raid, the officials found traces of cooked frog meat, which was seized as a part of the investigation. The youth however managed to escape and fled to Mumbai.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

The Indian Bullfrog *Hoplobatrachus tigerinus*, is a large species of frog found in India, Pakistan and Nepal. In India, it is protected under Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. This prohibits hunting of, or trade in the species and its parts. The species is also listed in Appendix II of CITES (Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) that prohibits export of the species for commercial purposes from India. Despite legal protection, the trade in frog's legs in the Jumping Chicken (a popular name for Indian Bullfrogs), a local delicacy in Goa, continues in alarming numbers.

Of late, illegal wildlife trade has also gained ground on the Internet. A wide range of protected species are openly advertised on popular websites around the world. While efforts have been intensified to strengthen on the ground enforcement to curb this trade, regulating Internet based trade has not been sufficiently addressed. There is a need to monitor these 'virtual' markets in order to bring an end to this growing threat.

Source:

<http://www.savethefrogs.com/frogblog/frog-news/the-indian-bullfrog-in-imminent-danger/>
<http://www.indiablooms.com/EnvironmentDetailsPage/environmentDetails100611a.php>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hoplobatrachus_tigerinus
<http://www.ias.ac.in/currsci/25mar2011/806.pdf>
<http://www.cites.org/eng/news/world/19/6.shtml>

Promoting responsible trade in wood products



WWF-India in collaboration with the United Nations Information Centre, Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), Federation of Rajasthan Home Textiles and Handicrafts Exporters (FORTHE), Federation of Rajasthan Handicraft Exporters (FORHEX) and other project associates organized a conference on “Responsible wood trade, forest certification and market links” on 27–29 May 2011 in Jaipur, Rajasthan. The European Union had provided funding support for this project.

TRAFFIC India actively participated in this conference that aimed to share knowledge on various international laws and treaties that regulate this trade. The participants included SME (Small and Medium Enterprises) wood processors and timber traders, exporters of wood-based products, forest and plantation managers, growers, timber traders and trade associations, paper and pulp companies, retailers, representatives from the Government, certification bodies and NGOs.

The objective of the conference was to understand various approaches towards and best practices of responsible wood trade in the context of increased environmental measures in both domestic and international markets; share the experiences of Indian industry on sustainable sourcing of wood from forests and outside forest areas; conduct business to business meetings among the companies committed to promote market links for responsible wood trade and credible forest certification and, lastly, build capacity among SME wood processors and traders to supply only certified forest products.

TRAFFIC India delivered a talk on “Legality in Wood Trade - Compliance in Export Markets of Europe and USA”. The presentation aimed to guide those involved in exporting plants and plant products to the USA as well as to Europe.

TRAFFIC India also shared information with regard to various laws and court rulings which are relevant to forest conservation in India especially for the three Indian states of Kerala, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, where the present project (Sustainable and Responsible Trade Promoted to Wood Processing SMEs through Forest and Trade Networks in China, India and Vietnam) is being implemented.

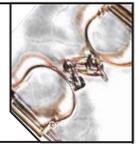
New forensic manual to identify Shahtoosh wool and shawls



WII (Wildlife Institute of India) has brought out a manual that provides details of various forensic techniques to identify Shahtoosh wool and shawls and presents an overview of the illegal trade in these items. The publication was printed with support from TRAFFIC India and Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Government of UK) and will be used for wider dissemination amongst enforcement agencies.

Tibetan Antelope or Chiru *Pantholops hodgsonii* is an endangered species found in the Tibetan plateau and surrounding high altitude areas. At least three to four Tibetan Antelopes are believed to be slaughtered to make one Shahtoosh shawl. Although the antelopes are killed in the Tibet Autonomous Region, their wool is woven nearly exclusively by weavers of Jammu & Kashmir in India. Therefore, almost all the Shahtoosh enters India and exits as shawls, all illegally.

TRAFFIC Alert



Poachers kill a rhinoceros in Kaziranga and remove its horn

On 14 May 2011, poachers killed a rhinoceros at Kaziranga National Park in the Gopaljaroni area of Sonitpur east forest division in Assam, near the Biswanathghat forest range of the park. The rhinoceros was killed while it was wandering outside the park. Besides its horn, the poachers also removed the animal's bones and flesh.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

The Great Indian Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* is poached for its horn which is used in traditional medicines in East Asia. Reports have indicated that the horns are usually traded as a single piece and can fetch 5–10 times the price of an African rhinoceros horn. The poaching of rhinoceroses for illegal wildlife trade is one of the major threats to the species in the wild. Since the beginning of 2011, two rhinoceroses have been poached in Assam.

The Great Indian Rhinoceros is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 and Appendix I of CITES (Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). These legislations prohibit all domestic and international trade in the species.

Of late, illegal wildlife trade has also gained ground on the Internet. A wide range of protected species are openly advertised on popular websites around the world. While efforts have been intensified to strengthen on the ground enforcement to curb this trade, regulating Internet based trade has not been sufficiently addressed. There is a need to monitor these 'virtual' markets in order to bring an end to this growing threat.

Source:

<http://www.deccan.com/nation/nationalnews.asp#Rhino%20poachers%20want%20horn.%20tail>
<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/environment/article4152951.ece>
http://www.rhinoresourcecenter.com/ref_files/1175862313.pdf
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/India/Poachers-kill-rhino-in-Kaziranga-chop-off-its-horn/articleshow/8351415.cms>

OUTPOST:
TIME magazine exposes plans for Chinese rhinoceros 'farming'



The 13 June issue of TIME magazine reveals a secret plot in China to breed imported White Rhinoceroses commercially for their horns to be used in medicine even though this activity would be in direct contravention of national and international laws, and which contradicts statements made in 2010 by Chinese officials at an international meeting and representatives of the traditional Chinese medicine industry.



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In March 2010, members of the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies, whose headquarters are in Beijing, made a declaration saying they did not want their industry tainted by the use of parts and derivatives of endangered species.

Later that month, Chinese officials had affirmed to world governments at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) that there were no intentions to permit rhinoceros farming in the country, yet a TIME reporter uncovered detailed business plans by an ammunition's company to sell and market rhinoceros horn pills, with an aim to generate a 60 million dollar profit annually.

Asian demand for rhinoceros horn is fueling a rhinoceros poaching spree in southern Africa, which has seen the number of animals illegally killed in South Africa alone rise to 333 in 2010, and shows no signs of abating.

The plan to profit commercially from the importation of live rhinoceroses into China, as alleged by TIME, is also problematic for South African authorities who have reportedly allowed the exportation of 103 live White Rhinoceroses since 2007. TIME reveals that these animals' horns may be whittled down by up to one kilogramme each year, using a "self-suction living rhinoceros horn-scraping tool". None of the live rhinoceroses sent to China were meant for commercial purposes.

For more information, please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2011/6/7/time-magazine-exposes-plans-for-chinese-rhino-farming.html>

CITES UPDATE:
Geneva to host the 61st meeting of the CITES Standing Committee



Geneva, Switzerland, will host the 61st meeting of the CITES Standing Committee on 15–19 August 2011. An agenda and working documents will be posted on the CITES website before the meeting at: <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/SC/index.shtml>

TRAFFIC Alert



Assam Rifles seize 15 kg of Tiger bones, skulls in Manipur

On 1 May 2011, Assam Rifles personnel seized a large quantity of Tiger parts, including 15 kg of bones and skulls from four smugglers at Sita track in Manipur's Chandel district bordering Myanmar. Having discovered the transportation route of banned wildlife parts, the troops launched an operation and intercepted a jeep headed towards the border town of Moreh, carrying four individuals along with the animal parts. The four smugglers are residents of Tengenoupal in the district.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

The Assam Rifles is the oldest Central Para Military Force in India. The Force was raised mainly to guard the alluvial plains of Assam and since then has always extended a helping hand to humanitarian causes and in natural calamities.

Over the years, many seizures of Tiger parts, Red Sanders and other wildlife have been undertaken by these paramilitary forces in the region.

TRAFFIC India expresses deep appreciation for the efforts undertaken by Assam Rifles for helping to curb wildlife crime in the region. It is heartening to learn that agencies other than forest and wildlife agencies are interested in carrying out wildlife seizures and have taken a leadership role in reducing wildlife crime.

Source:
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/guwahati/Assam-Rifles-seizes-15-kg-tiger-bones-skulls/articleshow/8146821.cms>

CITES UPDATE: CITES expedites efforts to combat organized crime targeted at elephants and rhinoceroses



The Ivory and Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) met in Gigiri, Kenya, on 17–19 May 2011, to discuss urgent actions against crimes targeting these two pachyderms.

Despite considerable successes on the part of the law enforcement community, the smuggling of elephant ivory continues to occur at significant levels and those behind the illegal trade do not appear to be deterred by the regular losses they are suffering at the hands of border control agencies.

The status of some populations of rhinoceros species also seems bleak. For instance, South Africa has seen dramatic increases in rhino poaching in recent years: 13 rhinoceroses poached in 2007, 83 in 2008, 122 in 2009 and 333 in 2010. This level of poaching is putting South Africa's rhinoceros population, estimated at about 21 000, under pressure.



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The market dynamics of the illegal trade in ivory and rhinoceros horn, including supply and demand mechanisms which have led to a sharp increase in black market prices, are not yet fully understood.

This significant meeting in Kenya was attended by 20 top law enforcement officers representing wildlife authorities, Customs, investigators, national parks, the police and enforcement agencies from 12 countries (China, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nepal, the Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, the United Kingdom, the United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe). The Task Force also deliberated on the intelligence supplied by Australia, Canada and the USA.

Four of the five organizations of the recently-formed International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (a partnership between CITES, INTERPOL, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Bank and the World Customs Organization) were also present at the meeting and offered their support to the national agencies in their battle against organized criminal groups and networks. A representative of the Lusaka Agreement dealing with regional enforcement issues in East Africa also attended.

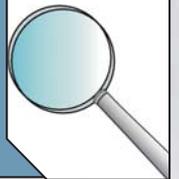
The Task Force learned of possible new demands for rhino horn from the art and antiques trade, which would require further investigation.

The participants agreed that greater communication, collaboration and co-ordination was needed at national and international levels and they committed to increase exchanges of information.

John Scanlon, Secretary-General of the CITES Secretariat, said: "The CITES Secretariat has issued several alerts and intelligence briefings to national and international law enforcement agencies in recent years. These have contained information to enable them to improve their risk-assessments, targeting and profiling in relation to illegal trade in elephant ivory and rhinoceros horn. The Task Force meeting has enabled us to acquire the most up-to-date overview of what is happening and we will soon prepare and circulate fresh briefings. It has also confirmed suspicions we held regarding new 'markets' or consumption areas in relation to rhinoceros horn."

For more information, please visit <http://www.unodc.org/documents/E-PR-Enforcement-Nairobi.pdf>

IN FOCUS:
Trouble in Parrot Paradise: Trade in Alexandrine Parakeets



Abrar Ahmed, ornithologist and a consultant to TRAFFIC India on bird trade related issues, highlights the illegal trade in Alexandrine Parakeets which has become a threat to the species in the wild



© Abrar Ahmed

The Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria* is one of 12 parrot species found in India. It is found throughout the country and is the most preferred species in the Indian live bird trade. Its predominantly green hue, large size (53 cm compared to other parakeets that are about 35 to 42 cm) and distinctive red shoulder patch distinguishes it from other Indian parakeets.

The species is listed under Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 which prohibits its poaching and trade. International trade is further regulated through CITES where it is listed in Appendix II. However, illegal trade continues with hundreds of captive specimens kept as pets throughout India (Ahmed, 1997).

The Alexandrine Parakeet has always been a popular species in the pet trade market. The alluring red patch on its shoulders, the red ring around its collar, its ability to survive in captivity, its comparatively large size and relatively long life span make it an attractive species for bird-keepers and traders. (Ahmed and Menon, 1995).

This parrot is traded throughout the year but the bulk of the trade is in chicks of between three and four weeks' old that are collected from various forest areas in India in the months of April–May, while fledged chicks are trapped in July–August (Ahmed 2001).

The collection of chicks is principally carried out in parts of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Punjab, from where the birds are transported, accompanied by traders, to bird markets in Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Patna, Lucknow and Kolkata. Some specimens are smuggled by Indian dealers via Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh to bird markets in the Gulf region.

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Seizure reports such as that of nearly 200 Alexandrine Parakeets in Bangladesh en route to Pakistan in July 2010, and a recent seizure in May 2011 in Delhi of 52 birds indicate that there is both a domestic and overseas market for this species.

The scarcity of old cavity bearing trees used for nesting, along with rampant trade in the species is believed to be impacting on the wild population.

This could be counteracted through concerted enforcement actions at the grassroots level where the actual collection of chicks occurs, combined with regular raids at existing bird markets coupled with campaigns to create awareness among buyers about the legal implications of buying parakeets. Adequate rescue and rehabilitation facilities for the seized birds are also required at key areas to ensure the welfare of seized specimens.



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References:

Ahmed, A. and Menon, V. (1995) India's Illegal Trade in Alexandrine Parakeets. *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 15(2): 97-98. TRAFFIC International.
 Ahmed, A. (1997). Live Bird Trade in Northern India. WWF/TRAFFIC India, New Delhi.

Parakeets seized in Ahmedabad

WILD CRY

(Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.)

Unearthing secrets of a “double-headed” snake: Red Sand Boa



Red Sand Boa *Eryx johnii*, also commonly known as the Indian Sand Boa, is a non-venomous species found throughout the dry parts of the Indian subcontinent. It is variable in colour and may occur as reddish-brown to dark brown, black or speckled grey and even yellow. It is a medium sized, thick-set snake, growing to an average of up to 75 cm. Unlike most snakes the tail is almost as thick as the body and gives the reptile the appearance of being “double-headed”.

Legal status:

Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule IV

IUCN Redlist: Not listed

CITES: Appendix II

Collection of and trade in this species is banned in India; international trade is restricted under CITES.

Threat: Until recently, the Red Sand Boa did not face any serious threat other than being popular with snake charmers who displayed it as a “double-headed” snake. However, now this morphological curiosity has landed this harmless snake in serious trouble. In recent years, India has witnessed a massive upsurge in demand for Red Sand Boas in its domestic illegal market. Reports have indicated that new age superstitions are a major driver in illegal trade of the species. These range from the more common ones such as they bring good luck to their keepers, to the more bizarre ones like the claim that the snake contains Iridium (one of the rarest elements in the Earth's crust and highly expensive) and hence has supernatural powers.

Continued on page 14

WILD CRY

(Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.)

Unearthing secrets of a “double-headed” snake: Red Sand Boa

Continued from page 13

“The smugglers claim that a meteor shower in South India between 1000 AD and 1300 AD had deposited isotopes of iridium on earth which accumulated in the tissues of the sand boa. This 'bio-iridium' claims to give magical and supernatural properties to the animal and that the extract from the snake could cure several chronic diseases like AIDS. This extract and even the blood of the snake finds a place in the illegal trade as these are also used as an aphrodisiac in Gulf countries. It is claimed that the snakes are being smuggled to China, South East Asia and Gulf Countries via Chennai and Bangalore” reports Deccan Herald in its article Victim of Recession.

Reports also suggest that the red colour of the snake is due to the accumulation of the iridium deposited in its skin. Reports have further indicated that this belief has created such demand for this snake that hundreds of thousands of Indian Rupees are being quoted for its purchase. This clearly indicates that the prices are at best ridiculous and meant to dupe people. Hundreds of messages can be seen on some websites soliciting buyers or sellers for the 'double-headed snake', '*do muha saarp* (Hindi, two-headed snake)' or more frequently the code word 'double engine' or simply 'DE', all referring to the supposed double headedness of the snake. The heavier the snake, the higher the value it commands. Snakes weighing above 3.5 kg are most in demand. The snakes are not just being sold but also rented out for hefty sums.

The scale of this trade has reached such levels that people have begun stealing specimens of this species from zoos and other guarded facilities. The latest example was at Jija Mata zoo in Byculla, Mumbai, where a Red Sand Boa was stolen on 29 May 2011. Two more thefts have been reported in Kerala, from Thiruvananthapuram zoo and from the Government Ayurveda College Research Centre.

The southern states of India are the worst affected. The Andhra Pradesh Forest Department is investigating 60 cases of trade in this snake. Chikballapur near Bangalore in Karnataka is another centre of poaching of this species. However, cases have also turned up from across the country.

Mr. Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India adds, “It is perturbing to learn that new age superstition is a likely driver of this trade. This implies that those involved are well educated people. At this stage, it is important for enforcement agencies to understand the dynamics of this new trade and plan action accordingly”.

Sources:

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/21088/victim-recession.html>

<http://www.kingsnake.com/sandboa/johnii.html>

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Daniel, J.C. (1983). The book of Indian Reptiles. Bombay Natural History Society, Bombay
Andhra Pradesh Forest Department.



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Continued on page 15

WILD CRY

(Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.)

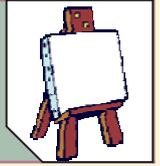
Unearthing secrets of a “double-headed” snake: Red Sand Boa

Continued from page 14

SOME SEIZURES OF RED SAND BOA SINCE 2009

S. No	Date of seizure	Number of snakes recovered	Location
1	10/01/2009	3	Bibinagar, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh
2	07/05/2009	2	Palakkad, Kerala
3	10/07/2009	1	Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala
4	30/07/2009	1	Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala
5	12/12/2009	1	Silvassa, Gujarat
6	07/01/2010	2	Kubeer Mandal, Adilabad, Andhra Pradesh
7	06/02/2010	1	Kamalpur, Gulbarga, Karnataka
8	02/03/2010	1	Kamalapur village, Gulbarga, Karnataka
9	09/06/2010	1	Thottapalayam village, Sathyamangalam, Tamil Nadu
10	23/06/2010	2	Ludhiana, Punjab
11	30/07/2010	21	Jaipur, Rajasthan
12	08/09/2010	1	Thottapalayam village, near Sathyamngalam, Tamil Nadu
13	25/09/2010	1	Khanna, Punjab
14	09/10/2010	1	Bangalore, Karnataka
15	15/10/2010	1	Kalmeshwar, Maharashtra
16	05/11/2010	1	Pathapalya police station, Bagepalli Taluk, Chikballapur dist, Karnataka
17	03/12/2010	1	Bajaj Nagar Square, Nagpur, Maharashtra
18	07/12/2010	1	Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu
19	15/01/2011	2	Slums in Gajanan Mandir locality, Chandrapur, Maharashtra
20	05/03/2011	1	Rabale, Mumbai, Maharashtra
21	29/04/2011	1	NH-3, Ulhasnagar, Thane, Maharashtra
22	01/05/2011	1	Ulhasnagar, Thane, Maharashtra
23	29/05/2011	1	Byculla Zoo, Mumbai, Maharashtra
24	06/07/2011	1	Koppa, Chikmagalur, Karnataka
25	05/11/2011	2	Balrampur, Uttar Pradesh

SIGNPOST: Other Significant news stories to read



Disclaimer: Links to external news items as given below are provided for information only and are not intended to represent TRAFFIC's policies, positions, opinions or views on the issues raised in the items.

Sharks in soup (India goes against world in not banning shark fin trade): Shark fins fetch a lot of money. It is not the hammerhead which brings the best price, but the smaller milk shark. Shark fins reportedly sell for ₹ 250-400 per kg in the wholesale market. As the capture and slaughter of sharks is not banned in India, the practice, illegal in several other countries, takes place openly. Read more at <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/sharks-soup>

Moreh worry for wildlife bureau: The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has expressed serious concern over Manipur's Chandel district bordering Myanmar becoming the preferred transit point for the smuggling of animal parts and forest products from India to South-east Asia. The issue came up during a meeting convened by the Bureau on 6 June 2011 at Guwahati, Assam, for controlling poaching and illegal trade in wildlife in the north-east. Read more at http://www.telegraphindia.com/1110607/jsp/northeast/story_14079257.jsp

Live Leopard and other animals found in luggage at Bangkok airport: Passport, tickets, Leopard cubs? That's exactly what a United Arab Emirates man was found carrying when police arrested him at the Suvarnabhumi International Airport on 13 May 2011. Seven live infant animals—four Leopards, a bear, a gibbon and a marmoset—were found in the suspect's bags. Read more at <http://www.traffic.org/home/2011/5/13/live-leopards-and-other-animals-found-in-luggage.html>

Future of Asian snakes at stake: A crucial meeting on the future of Asia's traded snake species took place in April 2011 in Guangzhou, China. Some 60 experts representing close to 20 governments and international and national organizations met to consider conservation priorities and management and enforcement needs related to the trade of snakes. They focused on the markets and commercial trade in snakes originating in East, South, and South-east Asia. Read more at <http://www.traffic.org/home/2011/4/12/future-of-asian-snakes-at-stake.html>

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TRAFFIC POST

the wildlife trade monitoring network

ISSUE 13
NOVEMBER, 2011

TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



TRAFFIC INDIA UPDATE

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- **South Asian countries upscale skills** on wildlife law enforcement Pg 3



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- **SAWEN releases its first newsletter** on wildlife trade issues Pg 4
- **China, India and Nepal meet** to strengthen co-operation for curbing wildlife trafficking Pg 4
- **New forensic manual** to identify guard hair of Indian mammals Pg 5
- **WWF and TRAFFIC India** organize wildlife quiz Pg 5



OUTPOST

- **Jakarta's illegal trade in threatened tortoises and turtles flourishing**, warns TRAFFIC Pg 5



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CITES UPDATE

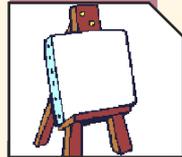
- **EU States urge stricter CITES regulations** for captive bred specimen Pg 7



IN FOCUS



TRAFFIC ALERT



SIGNPOST

- **Spotlight on Indian Bullfrog trade** Pg 8



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

- **Spot-bellied Eagle-owls rescued** from poachers, tantrics Pg 5
- **Shahtoosh shawls seized** at Delhi airport Pg 6
- **Snake venom seized in Maharashtra**, three arrested Pg 7

SIGNPOST: Other significant news stories to read such as Live ornamental turtles seized from a passenger at Cochin airport; Indonesia foils pangolin smuggling attempt; Javan Rhino extinct in Viet Nam etc Pg 12

WILD CRY

Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.

'Hare' raising truth: Poaching and trade of Indian Hare

Pg 10

Judiciary in Manipur and Mizoram take lead in fighting wildlife crime



The judiciary plays a significant role in championing the cause of forest and biodiversity conservation. The higher level judiciary has shown support for issues related to wildlife conservation, however there is a need to extend this to the judiciary at the district level. TRAFFIC India recognizes this need and has been conducting orientation programmes on wildlife conservation for the judiciary across the country. In northeast India, the Gauhati High Court has taken a lead to update the judiciary regularly on the status of forest and wildlife legislations, international conventions on related issues and enforcement of wildlife laws in India. They had asked TRAFFIC India and WWF to help conduct such workshops in Mizoram and Manipur. TRAFFIC India has also conducted similar programmes in Karnataka, Assam, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi.

Mizoram: The Gauhati High Court in partnership with TRAFFIC India and WWF-India conducted a two day orientation programme on wildlife conservation for the judiciary from Mizoram at Guwahati on 10–15 September 2011. The programme was attended by 30 judicial officers of the Mizoram Bench. The workshop was held at the Administrative Training Institute, Aizawl, Mizoram and was inaugurated by Dr Garbyal, IFS, Principal Secretary & Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Environment and Forest, Government of Mizoram. Mr R Thanga, Registrar, Aizawl Bench also presided over the inaugural function.

Dr Garbyal said “Implementation of wildlife laws will depend on the perception of the judicial officers and judges. When environment and wildlife related cases come to court, the understanding of the judges towards such issues is necessary for undertaking the right decisions. Therefore without proper orientation and training regarding these laws, the judiciary will not be able to do justice to our environment”.

The state of Mizoram in northeast India is strategically located between the neighbouring countries of Bangladesh and Myanmar and has shared borders with the Indian States of Tripura, Assam and Manipur. It has been acknowledged as a hotspot for illegal trade in various wildlife products including pangolin scales, live birds, Red Sanders and medicinal plants.

Manipur: The Gauhati High Court - Imphal Bench, in association with TRAFFIC India and WWF-India organized an orientation programme on wildlife conservation for the judiciary from Manipur at Imphal on 24–25 July 2011. Twenty seven senior officials of the Manipur Judiciary participated in the programme that was inaugurated by Hon. Justice TNK Singh, Judge, the Gauhati High Court - Imphal Bench.

Shri A Kharsi-ing, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF), Manipur was the Guest of Honour at the inaugural session. Shri A.K. Joshi, Special Secretary - Forests, Manipur was also present during this occasion.

In his key note address, Hon. Justice TNK Singh, Judge, Gauhati High Court - Imphal Bench said: “The Indian Judiciary has played an important role in helping conserve the rich natural heritage of our country. However, it is important that it is regularly updated on the latest developments in this field. Such programmes will go a long way in addressing this crucial need for this region which is a hotspot of biodiversity.”

Broad topics covered during the orientation programme for the judiciary included: issues related to biodiversity conservation; forest and wildlife wealth of the states; role of local communities in conservation; laws on biodiversity conservation including the Wildlife (Protection) Act of India and discussions of case laws.

South Asian countries upscale skills on wildlife law enforcement



Under the aegis of the newly established SAWEN (South Asian Wildlife Enforcement Network), a training programme on “Strengthening Wildlife Law Enforcement for Wildlife Protection in South Asia” was organized at the University of Forensic Sciences, Gandhinagar, Gujarat on 11–15 July 2011. It is the first such training to be organized for SAWEN members on wildlife law enforcement and was inaugurated by Shri Balwant Singh, Additional Chief Secretary, Govt of Gujarat.

Continued on page 3

Continued from page 2

Senior-level government officials working in the field of wildlife conservation of South Asian countries—Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka—attended the programme which was organized by TRAFFIC with support from the Global Tiger Forum, the Directorate of Forensic Sciences, Govt. of Gujarat and the Gujarat Forest Department.

The participants received comprehensive inputs on the present scenario of wildlife crime and trade in South Asia and its implications for field conservation. They were also introduced to the modern tools and techniques used in strengthening wildlife law enforcement.

Hon. Chief Minister, Gujarat, Shri Narendra Modi said in a statement to the meeting: “I welcome all wildlife experts representing various countries to the State of Gujarat. It is high time that the law enforcement agencies' focus is channeled towards prevention and detection of crimes. Gujarat State has taken a lead in this direction by establishing an important branch called 'Wildlife Forensics' at the State Forensic Laboratory. I compliment the SAWEN Secretariat for organizing this workshop”.

In a message by former Minister of Environment and Forest, Govt. of India, Shri Jairam Ramesh said, “The establishment of SAWEN is a very crucial, timely and much needed step forward to institutionalize the collaborative efforts of member nations in controlling wildlife crime in the region. I am especially happy to note that under the SAWEN work plan, the first multi country training programme on Strengthening Wildlife Law Enforcement for Wildlife Protection in South Asia is being held in Gandhinagar. Gujarat has some very good successes to share in this direction”. Shri Balwant Singh, Additional Chief Secretary, Govt. of Gujarat said: “Illegal wildlife trade is a serious issue and requires concerted and well co-ordinated action to curb it. The newly formed South Asia Enforcement Network should help in this direction.”

Mr Krishna Prasad Acharya, Chief Enforcement Coordinator of SAWEN & the Director General, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Nepal said: “Illegal wildlife trade is a form of trans-national organized crime that threatens many iconic species across the world. National Governments in South Asia recognize this threat and are committed to work together to counter such threats. The establishment of SAWEN is an expression of this commitment. This training programme, the first of its kind under SAWEN, will support our common cause and will surely be the first of many more such collaborative efforts.”

The programme brought together various national and international experts and agencies working in this field to exchange ideas, experiences and knowledge on curbing illegal wildlife trade. This initiative further helped to strengthen regional collaboration amongst various South Asian countries and wildlife law enforcement agencies across the region.



© TRAFFIC India

Participants during hands-on training on identification of wildlife products



© TRAFFIC India

Participants during a demonstration on various tools used for investigating a crime scene

The key resource people at the training programme included experts from the Gujarat Forensic Sciences University, Central Bureau of Investigation, Financial Intelligence Unit, Govt. of India, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Wildlife Institute of India and TRAFFIC.

Financial support for this important regional training event was generously provided by the US Government's Department of State, implemented through a grant to TRAFFIC International, with additional support from the Global Tiger Forum.

The training was followed by a field visit to Gir National Park, Gujarat where the participants interacted with the park management authorities and learned about various mechanisms put in place for strengthening the Protected Areas. The Field Director of Gir further familiarized the participants with the field based anti-poaching and wildlife conservation systems in place for the National Park.

SAWEN releases its first newsletter on wildlife trade issues



In October 2011, the SAWEN Secretariat launched its quarterly newsletter entitled 'The SAWEN Bulletin'. The newsletter was especially published for the members of the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network, covering issues related to illegal wildlife trade and wildlife crime in South Asia. The Bulletin aims to highlight and disseminate information on developments in the region with respect to wildlife crime and trade. It will additionally give an overview of the reported wildlife seizures in various South Asian countries. Any relevant updates on CITES (Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), INTERPOL and other similar organizations will also be communicated through this newsletter.



China, India and Nepal meet to strengthen co-operation for curbing wildlife trafficking



© Stefan Widstrand / WWF

A two-day meeting between China, Nepal and India was held on 12–13 October 2011 in Chengdu, capital of China's Sichuan Province, to collaborate action for stopping wildlife trafficking. Specific issues related to optimizing co-operation to prevent smuggling of wildlife such as Tiger and other Asian big cats, Red Sanders, otter skins, Shahtoosh, pangolin and several species of endangered medicinal plants were discussed in detail by the delegates of the three countries.

This important workshop was hosted by China's CITES Management Authority and was the second workshop on CITES Implementation and Enforcement with China, India and Nepal addressing common concerns for the three countries, including their commitments to the Global Tiger Recovery Program. TRAFFIC and WWF provided the technical and financial support for holding the trilateral meeting.

In addition to this trilateral dialogue, the meeting also built upon existing bilateral Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) between China and India, and China and Nepal.

China expressed its intention to engage productively with the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN), the Secretariat of which is hosted by the Government of Nepal.

Effective law enforcement is seen as a fundamental platform for sustainable economic development, the management of natural resources and protection of ecosystems.

“Establishing functional exchange of information will enable more effective law enforcement action between the three countries, and between China and SAWEN,” said James Compton, TRAFFIC's Senior Director for Asia-Pacific.

New forensic manual to identify guard hair of Indian mammals



The WII (Wildlife Institute of India) with support from TRAFFIC India and Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Government of UK) has recently published a comprehensive manual on the protocols for identifying 53 species of wild animals from their guard hair. It depicts microphotographs of guard hair of various mammalian species in a systematic user friendly manner. The manual is the outcome of painstaking research by a team of wildlife forensic researchers and scientists from the WII.

WWF and TRAFFIC India organize wildlife quiz



© WWF India

Every year, WWF-India with support from TRAFFIC India organizes a wildlife quiz entitled "Wild Wisdom" to commemorate national wildlife week (October 2-8). The week provides an opportunity to engage with children, to inspire, educate and empower them, thereby creating a more informed, aware and environmentally responsible future generation.

This year, Wild Wisdom 2011 (Delhi & NCR) was held on 19 October 2011 at the WWF-India auditorium. Thirty two schools participated in this event. Vishwa Bharti Public School (Noida) won the competition while Air Force Golden Jubilee Institute, Subroto Park (Delhi Cantt.) ended in second place. Third place was taken by Apeejay School, Saket. The winner will now represent Delhi at the national level quiz due to be held on 17 November 2011. Eighteen cities are participating in this mega quiz. Log on to www.wfindia.org to catch more action.

OUTPOST: 'Jakarta's illegal trade in threatened tortoises and turtles flourishing, warns TRAFFIC



TRAFFIC's latest report entitled "The trade in Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles in Jakarta, Indonesia revisited" released in August 2011, has revealed persistence of the illegal freshwater and turtle pet trade in Jakarta's markets, with an apparent increasing emphasis on rare and threatened species.

Surveys in the Indonesian capital's animal markets, reptile expos and pet stores showed that there were more species in trade in 2010 (49 species) than recorded in a similar study in 2004 (47) by the wildlife trade monitoring network, TRAFFIC. It was also found that over 70 per cent of species seen in trade in Jakarta originated outside Indonesia, compared to just over half in 2004. Much of these were from other parts of Asia, with the highly-prized Indian Star Tortoise topping the list.

Continued on page 6

TRAFFIC Alert



Spot-bellied Eagle-owls rescued from poachers, tantrics

People's ignorance and superstition is decimating the population of two species of owls. Spot-bellied Eagle-owls and Barn Owls are being caught by poachers as they are in great demand for pooja and black magic rituals. Several of these birds have been rescued from captivity in Hyderabad and in Maredumalli in East Godavari district. Mr P. Prabhu of the Asian Wildlife Foundation said, "A Spot-bellied Eagle-owl was found in a remote tribal village near Maredumalli. It was brought down by the tribal youth. It was rescued and treated."

Mr Raja Ramana Reddy, the forest range officer said, "We have rescued Barn owls in the Hyderabad city and outskirts which are used for black magic and to remove bad omens."

TRAFFIC India adds.....

In India, owls are highly prized and in demand for black magic purposes, despite legal protection under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and their inclusion in Appendix I or II of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). TRAFFIC India undertook a study on illegal trade, trapping and utilization of owls in India, findings of which have been documented in a report entitled "Imperilled Custodians of the Night" released in November 2010.

The report found that out of 30 species of owls found in India, at least 13 species have been recorded in domestic live bird trade. These species include Spotted Owlet *Athene brama*, Barn Owl *Tyto alba*, Rock Eagle-owl *Bubo bengalensis*, Jungle Owlet *Glaucidium radiatum*, Collared Scops-owl *Otus bakkamoena*, Brown Fish-owl *Ketupa zeylonensis*, Dusky Eagle-owl *Bubo coromandus*, Mottled Wood-owl *Strix ocellata*, Asian Barred Owlet *Glaucidium cuculoides*, Collared Owlet *Glaucidium brodiei*, Brown Wood-owl *Strix leptogrammica*, Oriental Scops-owl *Otus sunia* and Eastern Grass-owl *Tyto longimembri*.

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© Chris R. Shepherd / TRAFFIC Southeast Asia

Indian Star Tortoise *Geochelone elegans*

Indian Star Tortoise *Geochelone elegans* is a species of tortoise found in dry areas and scrub forest in India and Sri Lanka. In India, the species is included in Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and poaching of or trade in the species is banned. Further, the export of the species from India is also prohibited and the species is listed in Appendix II of CITES.

The 2010 observations found a total of 139 individuals of seven species listed in Appendix I of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), compared to 113 individuals of six species observed in 2004—such species are prohibited from international commercial trade.

Those found in 2010 were the Black Spotted Pond Turtle *Geoclemys hamiltonii*, Egyptian Tortoise *Testudo kleinmanni*, Indian Peacock Softshell *Aspideretes hurum*, Indian Softshell Turtle *Aspideretes gangetica*, Ploughshare Tortoise *Astrochelys yniphora*, Radiated Tortoise *Astrochelys radiata* and Spider Tortoise *Pyxis Arachnoids*.

Also found were native species like the Pig-nosed Turtle *Carettochelys insculpta*, New Guinea Snapping Turtle *Eiseya novaeguineae* and the Malaysian Giant Turtle *Orlitia borneensis*, all protected under Indonesian national law.

“The 2010 data confirm previous findings about the levels of illegal trade in freshwater turtles and tortoises in Jakarta’s markets and also demonstrates how it has persisted,” said Carrie J. Stengel, researcher with TRAFFIC Southeast Asia.

“Of further concern is the apparent and threatened species in the pet trade.”

With more Asian freshwater turtles and tortoises expected to become Critically Endangered in the coming years, the ramifications of such targeted and persistent illegal extraction and trade will be enormous. To download the report, please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2011/8/17/jakartas-illegal-trade-in-threatened-tortoises-and-turtles-p.html>

increasing emphasis on rare



TRAFFIC Alert



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The Spot-bellied Eagle-owl *Bubo nipalensis* has only once previously been recorded in domestic trade in India, in 1998.

Use of owls in black magic and sorcery linked with superstition, totems and taboos drives the illegal trade of owls in India. Shaman or black magic practitioners frequently referred to as tantriks in India, prescribe the use of parts from live owls such as skull, feathers, ear tufts, claws, heart, liver, kidney, blood, eyes, fat, beak, tears, eggshells, meat and bones for ceremonial pujas and rituals. The trapping of owls largely takes place in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Uttarakhand while the main owl trading centres in India are Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Bihar.

Source:

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/channels/cities/hyderabad/spot-bellied-owls-rescued-poachers-tantrics-227>
<http://www.traffic.org/home/2010/11/2/black-magic-behind-illegal-owl-trade-in-india.html>

Shahtoosh shawls seized at Delhi airport

Customs officials at Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi arrested a resident of Srinagar on 13 September 2011 carrying 25 Shahtoosh shawls, 89 Pashmina shawls and 55 stoles. The accused had arrived in Delhi from Washington on Tuesday night. On detailed examination 114 shawls, stoles, three watches and other expensive items were recovered from his luggage. An inspector from the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) identified 25 shawls made from the highly endangered Tibetan Antelope.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

The underfleece of the Tibetan Antelope *Panthelops hodgsonii* commonly known as Chiru is used to weave Shahtoosh shawls.

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CITES UPDATE:

EU States urge stricter CITES regulations for captive bred specimens



Expressing concern that illegal trade in wild specimens declared as captive bred is occurring and is being conducted globally on a large scale, the European Union (EU) and Member States have produced a document to focus attention on the detrimental aspect of this unregulated activity. Captive bred and ranched animals represent a lion's share of overall trade in CITES listed specimens, especially reptiles and birds. The document provides an overview of the problems encountered and sets out possible solutions for the CITES Standing Committee to consider better implementation and enforcement of the provisions relating to captive bred and ranched specimens. TRAFFIC and UNEP-WCMC have provided inputs for the preparation of the document.

Between 2000 and 2009, captive bred and ranched specimens amounted to 75% for live reptiles (approximately 1.2 million specimens) and 33% for live birds (equating to 200 000 specimens in 2008 alone). Trade in captive bred specimens constitutes many different species from a large number of countries. The EU has been regularly faced with reports relating to trade in specimens declared as captive bred for which there are serious doubts as to whether they fulfill the conditions under the CITES Convention and associated Resolutions on captive breeding. While ranched specimens are not subject to the same provisions, the EU and its Member States have also been confronted with cases whereby specimens appear to have been incorrectly declared as "ranched."

Currently, trade in captive bred specimens is not subject to a specific and systematic monitoring mechanism under CITES. In view of this, the EU would like each of the Member States to carry out a comprehensive review of the difficulties encountered by the Parties in implementing the provisions related to captive breeding and ranching and to ensure that these are effectively and consistently implemented by all Parties.

Read more at <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/sc/61/E61-27.pdf>

Snake venom seized in Maharashtra, three arrested

On 26 September 2011, Thane police arrested three persons and seized 600 g of rare snake venom. Acting on a tip-off, police nabbed the three from near the railway station. A police team is carrying out further investigations.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

In India, the trade of 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 mainly extracted from 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 who may not have scientifically collected the venom. Many such attempts to buy or sell such products are usually with the intention of trying to cheat gullible people, often by creating a hype around such products regarding their value and use.

Source:

<http://news.in.msn.com/national/article.aspx?cp-documentid=5473727>
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/rssarticleshow/msid-2296621.prtpage-1.cms>
<http://www.deccanherald.com/Content/Aug212007/national2007082020383.asp>

TRAFFIC Alert



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In India, there are very few Chirus left in the wild. Most of the global population survives on the Tibetan plateaus, where there numbers are declining. However, most of the weaving is undertaken in the Kashmir valley. There are reports confirming that there is an unhindered supply of its wool for Kashmir's weavers who make these luxurious shawls.

The above incident is alarming and clearly implies that despite the strict ban, trade in Shahtoosh shawls continues. Usually the shawls are smuggled from India to affluent markets in other countries. It is surprising to learn that the shawls have come back to India. This suggests that the traders are confident of smuggling shawls easily to and fro, as and when they like.

There is a need for stricter enforcement initiatives especially at airports. There is also a need to create awareness about this trade so that demand for the

Source:

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-09-15/delhi/30159624_1_shahtoosh-shawls-tibetan-antelope-pashmina
<http://www.wildlifetrustofindia.org/project-in-focus/sept2009-shahtoosh-workers-rehabilitation-project.html>
<http://199.48.254.95/~wtiorgin/publications/beyond-the-ban.pdf>

IN FOCUS:

Spotlight on Indian Bullfrog trade

An overview of the ongoing trade in Indian Bullfrog between the states of Nagaland and Assam

Text and images by Abrar Ahmed, Consultant, TRAFFIC India



Frogs and toads are amphibians, belonging to the order Anura (the largest subdivision with the most diverse set of species in the Class Amphibia). About 216 species of frog and toads, representing six families are presently known in India (Daniel 2005). Among these species, the Indian Bullfrog *Hoplobatrachus tigerinus* formerly *Rana tigrina* is undoubtedly the most commonly known frog.

The Indian Bullfrog can be identified by its large size and the bold tiger-like stripes on its pale skin. It has a broad white-yellow vertebral stripe. The breeding males turn bright lemon yellow (Daniel 2005).

The Indian Bullfrog is found in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan. (Daniel 2005). It is found in a wide variety of habitats ranging from sea level to 2000m above sea level. It is, however more often found in hills, mainly inhabiting rice plantations, irrigation channels, ponds and sides of streams.

Indian Bullfrogs like many other frog species are largely exploited for food. Frogs' legs are a well known delicacy of French and Cantonese cuisine. However, they are also eaten in many other parts of the world. In some regions of India, frogs are called "jumping chickens," as their taste is similar to chicken. Their palatability amongst humans is why billions of frogs are consumed annually (Altherr *et al.* 2011).

Trade in Indian Bullfrog

Export of frog legs from India started in the early sixties and over a period of time it was evident that this would be harmful to agriculture. In 1987, based on a pioneering study on the export of frog legs from India by the Bombay Natural History Society, the Government of India decided to ban the export of frog legs (Beauty Without Cruelty 2011).

Before the blanket ban, India was as a major exporter of frog legs with 3000-4000 tonnes exported each year (Abdulali 1985). The Indian Bullfrog being the largest frog (in fact the largest of the Indian amphibia), was in highest demand in the frog leg trade.

Trade in Indian Bullfrog

In 1985, as a consequence of unsustainable exploitation, the Indian Bullfrog was listed in Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (Rajalakshmi 2011). In India, all freshwater frogs, including the Indian Bullfrog, are listed in Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Despite the protection, there is continued illegal local collection, trade and consumption of Indian Bullfrogs in some states in India such as Assam and Nagaland. Local utilization of frogs has also been reported from Goa, Kerala, Gujarat, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh (Abdulali 1985).

Frog meat in Nagaland is not only considered a delicacy but is believed to have medicinal properties. A short term survey conducted on behalf of TRAFFIC India in Nagaland has revealed large scale trade in the species. The survey was undertaken in the New Market and Super Market in Dimapur and the vegetable market in Kohima in Nagaland in July 2008 and again in August 2011. On average, about 2500-3000 frogs were sold per day in the above markets. There were about 15-20 stalls in Dimapur and about six stalls in Kohima vegetable markets selling frogs on a regular basis.

Frogs play an important role in the ecosystem both as predators and prey. They help in balancing or stabilizing aquatic environments. As prey, frogs contribute to the diet of many species. As predators, they consume agricultural pests and mosquitoes. Their absence could have a detrimental effect on agriculture and crops.

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The small sized (up to 5-6 cm) live frogs were sold together in a group of 30-40 individuals in plastic bags or in open tubs and were priced between INR 100-150 per group. The large sized (about 15 cm) frogs were tied by their bellies with jute strings and sold in a bunch of 3-6 individuals and were priced INR 100 for three frogs. These were most preferred and valued. Unlike the exclusive demand of frog legs for export purposes, in this case entire frogs were being traded in Nagaland.

The hind legs were broken at two joints so that the frogs, even when kept in open dishes, could not jump away. The practice of cutting off the legs was not recorded.

On interviewing many of the frog traders, it was found that the frogs were caught and transported from the neighboring state of Assam. Certain trappers from the Cachar and Garo districts catch and bring the frogs by passenger trains or night buses to Dimapur, from where they are further sent to Kohima and other small markets. Most of the retail trade is handled by women dealers but most of the catching is done by men.



Live frogs for sale at a vegetable market in Kohima, Nagaland



Live frogs for sale at a supermarket in Dimapur, Nagaland

The collection of frogs in Assam and organized interstate trade with Nagaland needs to be investigated in detail. However, some recent seizures are indicative of the ongoing collection of frogs in Assam. For instance, in September 2007, 3000 Indian Bullfrogs were seized in 14 jute bags on a highway near Kaziranga National Park. Earlier that year 85 Indian Bullfrogs concealed in a container were seized in Guwahati (Hussain 2007). In April 2007, 71 frogs were seized in another incidence in Guwahati Railway station (Siddiqui 2011).

Besides the trade in live frogs, trade in dried frogs was also observed during the study.

Mr Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India adds, “Frogs are an essential element of a healthy ecosystem. The open trade in species that is legally banned and at a such high level is extremely alarming. There is an urgent need to investigate further the ongoing collection of frogs in Assam and organized interstate trade between Assam and Nagaland, and to undertake effective enforcement initiatives to curb this menace.”

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WILD CRY

(Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.)

'Hare' raising truth: Poaching and trade of Indian Hare



© Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj

The Indian or Black-naped Hare *Lepus nigricollis* belongs to the order Lagomorpha which includes rabbits, hares and pikas. The Indian Hare is one of four species of hares found in India. Hares are distinguished from rabbits by their larger size, longer ears and longer hind legs. Young rabbits are born blind, naked and helpless, but baby hares are born fully furred and with their eyes open. The Indian Hare weighs around 3 kg and is a solitary creature. It is a crepuscular or nocturnal animal, preferring to remain hidden during daytime.

Distribution: It is found widely in the Indian Subcontinent and occurs in most habitat types, including forests and grasslands, except for mangroves and tall grassland habitats. It prefers relatively open habitats and can be seen along forest roads, forest openings and edges.

Status:

Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule IV

IUCN Redlist: Least Concern

CITES: Not listed

Hunting of, or trade in the species is banned in India.

Threats:

Although the Indian Hare is a widespread species, its population continues to face serious fragmentation (Maheshwaran and Jordan 2008). Threats to the species include destruction and conversion of its forest and grassland habitat for agricultural purposes; feral dogs causing mortality near settlements and hunting.

Intensive hunting by local communities for meat is also emerging as a serious threat. Indian Hares are often hunted illegally by many communities for consumption or sale in local markets. The recent discovery of a specialized commercial illegal trapping operation has added an altogether different dimension to this otherwise low-key illegal operation. The arrest of 21 alleged poachers from Virudhunagar district in Tamil Nadu in September 2011 has been an eye-opener. The target of the poachers was specifically the Indian Hare and they carried specialized gear to catch them. As well as members of a particular community from the Sivakasi and Virudhangar districts in Tamil Nadu, those involved included college students. Twenty six hares were recovered from the poachers. In the month of July, more than 100 hares were found in gunny bags on the top of a public bus.

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WILD CRY

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'Hare' raising truth: Poaching and trade of Indian Hare

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Dr. Shekhar Kumar Niraj, Conservator of Forests, Virudhunagar Circle, and Director of Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve who led this investigation reported that the poaching gangs involved are well networked. They hunt and send the dead animals to different districts using public transport. They also have specialized tools to catch the hares. The trap consists of a conical shaped strong net and searchlights fitted with buzzers that attract the animals towards the light at night. (As quoted on <http://indiasendangered.com/poachers-new-target-the-indian-hare/>)

Hares are an important part of the ecosystems they inhabit. They are a key herbivore and important prey species for a range of small carnivores such as the Jungle Cat, foxes, and mongooses. Larger predators such as the Jackal, Indian Wolf and Leopard will also often eat them. Large scale removal of the animals from the wild is a matter of concern.

Abrar Ahmed, Consultant-Bird Trade Project, TRAFFIC India, during his nationwide study on bird trade in India, has documented trapping and trade of Indian Hares. His key observations are:

1. A large number of grassroot tribes still continue with their traditional vocation of trapping and selling birds and mammals for the food and pet trades. One of the mammals commonly seen with these trappers is the Indian Hare. In peninsular India, especially in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh, the Pardhis go on exclusive hunts for hares. In the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala, the Narikurava and Hakkipukki trappers target mongoose, hares and field rats with the hares forming the major catch. In north and eastern India the Baheliya and the Harries are professional trappers. In eastern India the Kurmi-baheliyas and the Mirshikar trap hares.
2. Major trade locations for the hares were recorded in Ahmedabad (Vagri basti, Dilli darwaza), Bhopal (Jehangirpuri and Barigarh (Pardi Basti)), Hyderabad (Chowk Market, Lingampally, Pardiwarda), Uttar Pradesh (Pasiyana – Jhansi, Chprana Bazaar in Unnao), Agra (Nai-ki Mandi), Jaipur (Shikari Basti), Cuttack (Thoria sahi), Pakshirajpuram – Nagahole-Hosur road and sometimes Rusell market in Bangalore and vegetable markets in Yavatmal and Wardha - Maharashtra. Hares were also sold in Tamil Nadu (Sangam market in Madurai and Ulkadam market in Coimbatore).
3. Hares are considered a delicacy by the Gujarati cloth vendors, while several other communities also consume hare meat.
4. Domestic rabbit's meat is often sold as wild hare meat. In certain cases, dead albino rabbits or pied rabbits from the pet trade are fraudulently dyed a brown and natural mud colour and sold as hare meat. Wild caught hares do not survive in captivity for more than a week as they do not accept feed easily and die of stress.

The exploitation and utilization of hares remains largely undocumented. There is an urgent need to study the dynamics and scale of this illegal trapping and trade and undertake enforcement actions accordingly.

Reference:

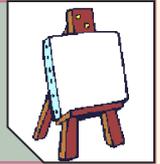
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Conical shaped net used for trapping Indian Hares



SIGNPOST: Other Significant news stories to read



Disclaimer: Links to external news items as given below are provided for information only and are not intended to represent TRAFFIC's policies, positions, opinions or views on the issues raised in the items.

Live ornamental turtles seized from a passenger at Cochin airport: Officials of the Air Customs Intelligence Unit at Cochin International Airport on Tuesday seized about 6000 live ornamental turtles from a passenger who arrived from Singapore. The passenger attempted to pass through the green channel and told customs that he was not carrying anything that needed to be declared. However, he was stopped by officials on suspicion. When his baggage was checked, officials found that he had concealed live ornamental turtles in it. For more information, please visit <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Kochi/article2220714.ece>

According to TRAFFIC India's source, the turtles that were smuggled were Red-eared Sliders *Trachemys scripta elegans*

Indonesia foils pangolin smuggling attempt: In September 2011, Marine police in North Sumatra seized over a hundred pangolins and arrested three men who were en route to Malaysia with the animals. The Sunda Pangolins *Manis javanica*, hidden in 20 gunny sacks, were found in a boat seized in waters off Belawan. The smugglers were believed to have left from Pantai Cermin, a popular holiday beach resort near Medan. For more information, please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2011/9/30/indonesia-foils-pangolin-smuggling-attempt.html>

Survival of Snow Leopards Endangered: Expert: Poaching, mining and invasion of herders are threatening the survival of the Snow Leopard, one of the world's most endangered animals, an official of WWF in Mongolia warned. Illegal trade of skins and skulls of Snow Leopards, and a new trend of mining operations in the Snow Leopard's habitat also pose major threats to the big cats. For more information, please visit http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2011-10/17/c_131196684.htm

Chinese demand for ivory threatens Kenya's elephants: Officials in Kenya say Chinese demand for ivory has prompted a surge in elephant poaching and the illegal smuggling of elephant tusks. Now authorities are looking at ways to curb demand and to defend the elephant population better. For more information, please visit <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/Chinese-Demand-for-Ivory-Threatens-Kenyas-Elephants-131600618.html>

Javan Rhino extinct in Viet Nam: The last Javan Rhinoceros in Viet Nam was shot and its horn removed, presumably by poachers, according to a new WWF report. The Javan Rhino was confirmed extinct in the country after genetic tests confirmed that all 22 rhino dung samples collected between 2009-2010 in Cat Tien National Park in southern Viet Nam originated from a single animal. For more information, please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2011/10/25/javan-rhino-extinct-in-viet-nam.html>

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TRAFFIC POST

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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- **TRAFFIC India's sniffer dog programme** leading to early successes Pg 2



Courtesy: Kamlesh Pandey

- **Forest departments of West Bengal and Karnataka** gear up to fight wildlife crime Pg 3
- **TRAFFIC accelerates efforts to curb illegal parrot trade** in India Pg 3
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OUTPOST

- **Rhinoceros poaching deaths continue to increase** in South Africa Pg 5



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CITES UPDATE

- **International zoo community steps in** to help efforts against illegal wildlife trade Pg 6



IN FOCUS



- **Scorpions—stung by wildlife trade** Pg 8



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

- **Police seize 30 kg of seahorses** in Tamil Nadu Pg 5
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TRAFFIC ALERT



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Chitra indica

- **Poacher arrested from Guwahati Zoo** whilst attempting to kill Rhinoceroses Pg 8

WILD CRY

Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.

Indian Rhinoceroses face poaching threat Pg 10

India and China share expertise on use of sniffer dogs for curbing wildlife crime



In December 2011, a first-of-its-kind meeting was organized by the General Administration of Customs of China (GACC) in collaboration with TRAFFIC to exchange information and expertise with China's Customs officials regarding use of wildlife detector (sniffer) dogs. TRAFFIC India, represented by MKS Pasha, Interim Head, participated in this meeting along with the world's leading experts on training and use of sniffer dogs. The participants shared first-hand knowledge and experience on training and deployment of sniffer dogs in India for curbing illegal wildlife trade.

Despite efforts to counteract it, illegal wildlife trade continues to prevail and has evolved into an increasingly organized activity threatening the survival of many species across the globe. In order to curb this growing menace, it is necessary that the best enforcement practices are deployed. Use of sniffer dogs for crime detection and prevention is one of the proven practices TRAFFIC has experience of instituting in several countries.

A sniffer dog training programme was started in India in year 2008 and subsequently seven dogs and 14 handlers have been successfully trained. The dogs have been trained to detect hidden wildlife articles such as Tiger bone, Tiger skin, Leopard bone, Leopard skin and bear bile and are located with the Forest Departments of Haryana, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand.

Besides India, countries including Germany, Kenya, Russia, Thailand and the UK all have sniffer dogs as part of their detector dog programmes, and they are proving to be a highly effective enforcement tool, both to detect smuggled wildlife goods and to act as a deterrent.

The meeting on sniffer dogs in China was held in response to the rising number of cases where illegally traded wildlife products, such as elephant ivory and agarwood, have been found at China's ports. Officials aim to stop such trade through the deployment of these dogs. The first dog in China specifically capable of locating wildlife products is currently being trained at Beijing's Drug Detector Dog Training Centre.

TRAFFIC India's sniffer dog programme leading to early successes



© Kamlesh Pandey

Tracey, a two-year old female Alsatian dog trained to sniff out wildlife products, has helped recover two elephant tusks, weighing over 32 kg, from the forests of Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary in Jharkhand, India. The recovery took place on 30 January 2012.

The tusks were from an elephant that had died two days earlier, but when forest officials inspected the carcass they found the tusks had been removed. Tracey was brought in from nearby Betla Tiger Reserve to help locate the missing tusks. She searched the area extensively and led the team to the spot where the tusks were hidden. The whole operation was successfully co-ordinated by Mr Kamlesh Pandey, DFO, Wildlife Division, Ranchi.

Tracey is currently deployed by Betla Tiger Reserve and is one of the seven sniffer dogs trained under TRAFFIC India/WWF-India's sniffer dog training programme, the first of its kind in India to use dogs for detecting illegal wildlife products.

Earlier, Jackie, another sniffer dog from the programme, apprehended two poachers in Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh. Raja, another of the trained dogs, posted at Bhramपुरi Wildlife Division, Maharashtra, helped crack a Leopard poaching case that led to the arrest of seven involved.

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Ravi Singh, SG & CEO, WWF-India added, “We are proud to have initiated this innovative programme that is leading to early successes. The dogs are being used regularly for patrolling and are proving to be a strong deterrent”.

MKS Pasha, Interim Head—TRAFFIC India said, “Though the dogs are trained to detect hidden wildlife articles such as Tiger bone, Tiger skin, Leopard bone, Leopard skin and bear bile, they are proving effective in detecting other wildlife products as well”.

Forest departments of West Bengal and Karnataka gear up to fight wildlife crime



West Bengal: On 12-13 January 2012, TRAFFIC India was invited by the West Bengal Forest Department to share knowledge and skills on curbing illegal wildlife trade at a workshop organized in Buxa Tiger Reserve. The workshop dealt with the various aspects of strengthening wildlife law enforcement. Forty five senior and middle level forest officials participated in the workshop that was inaugurated by Mr V K Yadav, Special Chief Conservator of Forests and Mr R K Saini, Chief Conservator of Forests and Field Director, Buxa Tiger Reserve.

West Bengal with its large biodiversity has been one of the prime targets of wildlife trade in India. It is a major hub for turtle and bird trade. Bordering three countries-Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal- it acts as an important transit point for wildlife smuggling from India including fur trade.

Karnataka: On 18-19 February 2012, TRAFFIC India in association with the Karnataka Forest Department organized a similar workshop on strengthening wildlife law enforcement at Anshi Tiger Reserve, Dandeli. Seventy forest officials participated in the workshop. The chief guest was Shri BK Singh, IFS (PCCF-Wildlife). Participants included 72 forest officials from 6 forest divisions of Karnataka.

At both the workshops, TRAFFIC India provided the participants with an overview of the illegal wildlife trade and shared knowledge and skills regarding the various tools and techniques available to curb this trade. Demonstration on the use of deep search metal detectors for locating traps and snares set up to catch wild animals was also conducted by TRAFFIC India.

TRAFFIC accelerates efforts to curb illegal parrot trade in India



© Abrar Ahmad

A parrot in captivity is one of the more visible symbols of illegal trade in India, where all native wildlife is fully protected. To help enforcement officers identify native parrot species, and thereby clip the wings of the illegal bird trade, TRAFFIC India with support from WWF-India has produced an identification poster entitled “Parrots of India in Illegal Trade”.

Identification of parrots and other species in trade is a major challenge. The new poster will help enforcement officers identify the 12 native Indian parrot species. The posters will be distributed to Police, Customs, Forest Departments, Railway Protection Forces and educational institutions, such as schools and colleges.

Despite the blanket ban since 1990-91 on trade in all Indian bird species, hundreds of parrots are collected and traded annually in India. They are taken from the wild and smuggled to various parts of the country and beyond. The bulk of the trade is in three- to four-week old chicks. Parrots are caught using nets and bird-lime. Adult parrots are traded throughout the year, with chicks arriving in trade between December and June. For every bird that reaches the market place, several are believed to die en route.

Of the 12 native species, eight are regularly found in illegal trade. These include Alexandrine, Rose-ringed, Plum-headed, Red-breasted, Malabar, Himalayan and Finsch's Parakeets and Vernal Hanging-parrot.

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Abrar Ahmed, ornithologist and a bird trade consultant to TRAFFIC India, said “The Alexandrine Parakeet is one of the most sought after species in the Indian live bird trade and is traded in large volumes throughout the year. The chicks are collected from forested areas and transported to bird markets in Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Patna, Lucknow and Kolkata. Many specimens are smuggled by Indian dealers via Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh to bird markets in various parts of the world. Chicks are dyed in various colours and sold off as non-native species”.

MKS Pasha, Interim Head-TRAFFIC India, said: “Few know that our favourite and well-known ‘mithu’ is a protected species in India. Their chicks are captured remorselessly from the wild, and many do not make it to the final destination”.

The parrot trade is substantial and well organized, but it can be counteracted through concerted enforcement actions at the grassroots level and through mass awareness campaigns. TRAFFIC India's new poster is a step in this direction. For more information on illegal bird trade please visit <http://www.traffic.org/birds/>

TRAFFIC
The wildlife trade monitoring network

Parrots of India
in Illegal Trade

India is home to 12 species of parrots - 11 parakeets and one hanging parrot. Two of the parakeet species, the Malabar Parakeet *Psittacula kramouli* and the Red-bellied Parakeet *Psittacula erythrogastra* are endemic to India.

TRAFFIC is a member of the **WWF** network.

TRAFFIC India carries out research and provides analysis, support and management to enforce laws to ensure that wildlife trade is sustainable and non-harmful to the environment.

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Japanese delegation visits India to exchange knowledge about responsible & sustainable trade in medicinal plants

A Japanese delegation including representatives from leading companies dealing in medicinal and aromatic plant products visited India 6–10 February 2012 to learn about sustainable practices used in plant harvesting and collection. They visited the Medicinal Plant Conservation Area field study sites in Karnataka, and met with the local communities, traders and key companies. The visit, facilitated by TRAFFIC and the Institute of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine, was part of a drive to promote responsible and sustainable trade in medicinal and aromatic plants between the two countries.

India is the second-largest supplier of medicinal and aromatic plants to Japan (after China) and many of them are wild-sourced. At the same time, almost 1000 medicinal plant species in India are of conservation concern, and over-exploitation of wild medicinal plants remains a major environmental protection issue.

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Trade of aromatic plants such as Sandalwood *Santalum album*, and also various edible plants and spices such as tea *Camellia sinensis* and cinnamon *Cinnamomum zeylanicum*, is particularly notable. Other commonly traded plants sourced from the wild in India include Banaba *Lagerstroemia speciosa*, Indian Frankincense *Boswellia serrata*, Salacia *Salacia reticulata* and Gotu kola *Centella asiatica*.

In 2010, TRAFFIC drew attention to the value and significance of the trade in medicinal and aromatic plants to Japan for both manufacture and end-consumption in a report entitled *State of Wildlife Trade in Japan*. The need for conservation of wild medicinal and aromatic plants was also high on the agenda at the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD CoP10), held in Nagoya, Japan that same year. The next CBD CoP will be held in October this year, in Hyderabad, India.

Non-sustainable harvest practices, coupled with accelerating trade demands, can lead to losses of large numbers of individual plants within populations, local population depletions and eventually extermination of the species. The private sector is considered one of the most important and influential stakeholder groups along the trade chain. Working with industry members, therefore, is a key step in the promotion of sustainable practices for harvesting and collection of medicinal plants from the wild.

MKS Pasha, Interim Head-TRAFFIC India said “This visit was a critical step towards TRAFFIC’s aim of bringing positive behavioral changes in the herbal industry—a sector which deals with cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and food products manufactured from wild medicinal and aromatic plants. The FairWild Standard can help the industry become more responsible in trading in medicinal plants collected from the wild”.

The Fairwild Standard is an internationally recognized standard for ensuring sustainable collection of wild plant resources. Development of the Standard was originally led by IUCN’s Medicinal Plant Specialist Group in collaboration a number of organizations, including TRAFFIC and WWF.

The Japan-India exchange of experience and knowledge was organized by TRAFFIC with support from I-AIM (I-AIM: formerly known as FRLHT (Foundation for the Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions). The Japanese delegation was led by Kahoru Kanari of TRAFFIC and included representatives from leading companies dealing in herbal-based traditional Japanese incense and pharmaceutical products. The project is supported by the Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund.

The delegates also visited Natural Remedies Pvt. Ltd., a leading herbal pharmaceutical company in India, headquartered at Bangalore. Representatives of Natural Remedies showcased their good practices for procurement of medicinal plants, intending to assist in promoting sustainable trade practices for long-term conservation. The delegates also interacted with local communities at Savandurga-MPCA (Medicinal plant Conservation Area), a sustainable harvesting site, and with the grassroot organization CCD, based at Madurai, and Laxmi Seva Sangh at Dindigul.

TRAFFIC Alert



Police seize 30 kg of seahorses in Tamil Nadu

On 15 December 2011, dried seahorses were seized from a bus bound for Chennai from Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu. The smuggling was detected when the bus company owners became suspicious of two parcels and informed the police. On examination, the two parcels were found to contain 30 kg of dried seahorses which were to be delivered to Chinthathiripet in Chennai.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Seahorses belong to the genus *Hippocampus* and enjoy the same protection status as the Tiger. They are listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, which bans poaching of and trade in the species. International trade is regulated under CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

Despite this protection and regulation, the trade in seahorses is burgeoning in India and beyond its borders. Seahorses are highly sought after in the exotic pet trade and fetch high prices in the aquarium business. These animals usually fare badly in captivity because they have specific needs that cannot be met properly. High death rates in captivity spur demand to replace dead animals in aquaria.

Seahorses 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 smuggled to international markets. Often, dried seahorses are smuggled along with dried chillies to mask their smell. Since they resemble the dried chillies they are sometimes traded illegally under the name of “guntur chilli”.

TRAFFIC India calls for more vigilance and strengthening of enforcement efforts to protect this unique marine denizen.

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OUTPOST:

Rhinoceros poaching deaths continue to increase in South Africa



Despite increased law enforcement efforts, rhinoceros poaching accelerated in South Africa in 2011. The country lost 448 rhinoceroses to poaching, including 19 critically endangered Black Rhinoceroses of which fewer than 5000 remain in the wild.

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© Martin Harvey / WWF-Canon

In 2010, 333 South African rhinoceroses were killed by poachers, nearly three times the number killed in 2009.

“The rate of poaching increase may appear to be faltering, but the bottom line is more rhinos than ever were poached in 2011”, said Dr Colman O’ Criodain, WWF’s wildlife trade policy analyst. “If left unchecked, poaching gangs could put the survival of these iconic species in jeopardy”.

More than half of South Africa’s rhinoceros deaths occurred in the world-famous Kruger National Park. The popular safari destination lost 252 rhinoceroses in 2011 and witnessed the poaching of an additional eight rhinoceroses in the first weeks of 2012.

The recent upsurge in rhinoceros poaching has been tied to increased demand for rhinoceros horn in Asia, particularly Viet Nam, where it is valued as a luxury item, as a post-partying cleanser, and also as a purported cancer cure. According to traditional Chinese medicine experts, rhinoceros horn has no proven cancer treating properties. Contrary to popular myth, it has never been used in traditional medicine as an aphrodisiac.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) has found that consumer demand in Viet Nam is driving much of the rhinoceros poaching. CITES has also ruled that Viet Nam needs to show progress in curtailing illegal trade in rhinoceros parts and derivatives.

Since South Africa is the home to most of the world’s rhinoceroses it has been the centre of the poaching activity. However, rhinoceroses in other African and Asian range countries are also being targeted by poachers.

Read more at <http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/1/12/rhino-poaching-deaths-continue-to-increase-in-south-africa.html>

TRAFFIC Alert



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Source:

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Four Sloth Bears killed in Kanha’s reserve forests in Madhya Pradesh

In the last three months, four Sloth Bears have been killed by poachers in the buffer zone of Kanha Tiger Reserve, indicating that an organized gang might be operating in Madhya Pradesh. Carcasses of two Sloth Bears were recovered in early January 2012 from the jungle of Indira village of Sijhora forest range in Mandla district which happens to be the buffer zone of Kanha. Both carcasses were without teeth and nails, suggesting that they had been killed for the body parts.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

India is home to four species of bear—Himalayan Black Bear *Ursus 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 of and trade in all four species is banned under this Act. Furthermore, international commercial trade in these species is restricted or prohibited under CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

Until recently, Sloth Bears were widely used in roadside performances. Due to stricter enforcement efforts and increased awareness, the activity has declined.

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CITES UPDATE

International zoo community steps in to help efforts against illegal wildlife trade



The Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Executive Director of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 20 December 2011, to facilitate access to expertise for the care of confiscated live animals, and with provision for training and raising public awareness in the implementation of CITES, as part of the UN International Decade of Biodiversity.

The main purpose of the collaboration is to facilitate the use of expertise available in the WAZA network to assist CITES Parties in implementing the Convention, and to support the activities of the CITES Secretariat for the benefit of conservation and sustainable use of species of wild fauna and flora.

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Major fields of co-operation include: care and placement of confiscated live animals; gathering information about current wildlife trade issues; the transport of live animals; research and science, with a focus on Appendix-I species; communication and awareness; training; and capacity-building. Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction that are or may be affected by trade, and CITES prohibits international trade therein (except for non-commercial purposes, such as scientific research).

Co-operation between CITES and WAZA will also help guarantee the safe transport of wild animals between countries, whether it be for commercial trade, breeding, research or conservation purposes. Read more at http://cites.org/eng/news/press/2011/20111220_cites_waza.php

TRAFFIC Alert



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The main threat to the bears in India is from the illegal trade in bear gall bladders, bile and other body parts. Bear bile is used in medicines in China, Japan and South Korea, amongst others, and is also used occasionally in Ayurvedic and Tibetan medicines. Gall bladders and bile extracts are often smuggled out as frozen food and cannot be easily distinguished from those of cattle, sheep or pigs, thus making

detection extremely difficult for the enforcement agencies. Bear paws, meat, and fat are also traded and are considered a delicacy in many Asian countries. TRAFFIC has conducted an extensive study on bear bile farms in South-east Asia in collaboration with Animals Asia Foundation to study the impact of bear bile farms on wild bear populations.

The case above gives an indication that the demand for bear body parts other than gall bladders seems to be worth noting. Past seizures including bear paws in Russia further validate this view.

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Traders arrested with 4000 turtles in Uttar Pradesh

On 9 January 2012, 4000 turtles were seized from a truck at Jalaun, crossing in Auraiyya (a neighbouring town of Etawah district), in Uttar Pradesh and two persons were arrested. The vehicle was on its way to West Bengal. Wildlife experts said that the consignments were also meant to reach the north-east of the country, including Assam, via train. From West Bengal turtles are often smuggled to countries like Thailand and Malaysia through a sea route.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

According to the Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA), three species of freshwater turtles seized in Uttar Pradesh were identified as 4255 Indian Flapshell Turtle *Lissemys punctata*, one large female Indian Softshell Turtle *Nilssonina gangeticus* and one Narrow-headed Softshell Turtle *Chitra indica*. TSA provided assistance in identification of the species and after care of the seized turtles.

All three turtle species are protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The Indian Flapshell Turtle and the Indian Softshell Turtle are listed in Schedule I of the Act while the Narrow-headed Softshell Turtle is listed in Schedule II. Trade of all of these is further regulated under CITES.

Despite the protection, trade seems to be flourishing. This is clearly evident from the recent spurt in seizures of freshwater turtles in the region. The illegal trade of freshwater turtles, that was largely domestic, has escalated to meet international demands, moving through Bihar and Kolkata to Bangladesh, and from there to South-east Asia. The above seizures, coupled with many others that continue to take place all across India, and a reported hundred thousand in Bangladesh, paint an alarming picture. Besides their involvement in the pet trade, turtles and tortoises are traded for meat, medicines and their carapaces. The current rate of completely unsustainable consumption of turtles and tortoises in India could lead to swift extinction of several their species. Turtles and tortoises play an important role in an ecosystem, where they are scavengers. There have been several international alerts issued on the devastating impact of their illegal trade in recent times. TRAFFIC India maintains that efforts need to be urgently intensified in the field so that enforcement officials can curb illegal killing, trafficking and consumption of these animals.

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TRAFFIC Alert



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Poacher arrested from Guwahati Zoo whilst attempting to kill Rhinoceroses

On the morning of 15 January 2012, guards at the Assam State Zoo in Guwahati caught a poacher from near the rhinoceros enclosure. The man had scaled the wall at night with a 303 rifle, six-round bullets and an axe in a bid to kill as many rhinoceroses as possible. The zoo has nine rhinoceroses. He was apprehended and handed over to the police.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

It is a matter of concern that captive-animal facilities, considered relatively safe as havens for animals, are now being targeted by poachers in their efforts to obtain wildlife products. The recent incident in Assam stands out in its boldness, illustrating that poachers will go to great lengths to kill an animal, as long as there is a demand for its body parts. Add to this the recent theft of rhinoceros horns from museums in Europe and there seems to be a discernable pattern of desperation in these attempts to obtain rhinoceros horns that are in high demand. TRAFFIC India has contributed intelligence towards saving wild rhinoceroses and calls for greater vigilance in captive animal facilities to ensure that these endangered animals are protected there too.

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IN FOCUS:

Scorpions—stung by wildlife trade

Text and images by Abrar Ahmed, Consultant, TRAFFIC India



The scorpion, popularly known as the '*bichchu*' in India, may be in big trouble, finds TRAFFIC. The unrestricted scorpion trade in the country could be posing a serious conservation risk to the species in the wild.

Scorpions are invertebrate animals with eight legs, recognized by a pair of grasping claws and a narrow, segmented tail, often carried in a characteristic forward curve over the back, ending with a venomous stinger (Tikader & Bastawade 1983); (Frembgen 2004).

In India, there are 120 species/subspecies of scorpion (Sardesai 2010). Scorpions are nocturnal hunters and live in warm dry regions throughout India. They inhabit commonly the crevices of dwellings, underground burrows, under logs or debris, agriculture fields and plantations.

Scorpions are infamous for their sting and venom, and to the general public have a reputation of being a dangerous killer. Due to their fearsome reputation they have been extensively cited in Indian poetry, folk and film songs. The sexual imagery of scorpion bites is widespread in the Indian subcontinent (Frembgen 2004); (http://allpoetry.com/poem/8592075-Night_of_the_Scorpion-by-Nissim_Ezekiel)



Scorpion medicines for sale at Charbagh railway station, Lucknow

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Trade and use of scorpions in India

Scorpions are traded as museum specimens, for colleges, and used in folk medicine in South Asia as an antidote for scorpion stings. The importance of scorpions in the preparation of folk remedies and magic by Hakims and Jogi type healers and medicinal practitioners, especially in Lahore & Peshawar (Pakistan) and Kabul (Afghanistan), has been well documented in Muslim folklore (Frembgen 2004).

Reports have further indicated that in India youths purposely get stung by scorpions. They pay the scorpion owners money to be stung on their hands and feet. The sting is painful, but is believed to give a drug like high (<http://www.treatmentsolutionsnetwork.com/blog/index.php/2011/04/08/uses-for-scorpion-venom/>).

In India, the scorpion trade was first seen by the author in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh in 1999, outside the Charbagh Railway station (Ahmed & Nambiar 1999). Scorpion trade was also encountered in Aligarh railway station, and Hapur (MKS Pasha *pers. comm*) Uttar Pradesh, and the bus stand in Jaipur, Rajasthan, in subsequent years. In January 2012, during a study on bird trade, the author came across oil prepared from scorpions that was on sale at local railway stations within Kolkata in West Bengal at least twice.

From the author's observation in the field, and other reports, it is clear that the trade in scorpions in India has an organized market. Through interviews with snake-charmers in Kanpur and Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, the author found out that traditional snake-charmers from north India regularly and systematically collect scorpions for use in folk medicines and for live shows. The main collection states suggested by the those engaged in scorpion trade are Gujarat and Rajasthan and collection is done when the snake charmers are collecting snakes, monitor lizards *Varanus bengalensis* and Spiny-tailed Lizards *Uromastyx hardwickii*. Reports also suggest that in Uttar Pradesh the scorpions are collected and traded by the Mongia, Jogi or Nath-saperas (snake-charmers), Kalbeliya and Pardhi tribes. These tribes also often display similar kind of oils for similar ailments prepared from *Uromastyx* spp., snakes, hornbills and herbs.

Scorpions are boiled in oil along with certain herbs. The 'medicated oil' is then marketed and is believed to provide relief from numerous ailments, such as rheumatism, joint-pain, headache, toothache and sinus. However, there is no scientific evidence to support this belief, though there is documentation on scorpions in *unani* folk medicine (Frembgen, 2004). From the surveys conducted and through published information, the author found that the majority of folk medicine prepared using scorpions was marketed for curing sexual disorders. A popular belief that the oil extracted from the sting of the scorpion is useful for restoring or increasing virility is a key reason for sale of the scorpion oil-product.

The oil is sold through vocal street displays with the help of signage advertising the oil's medical properties and also advertising leaflets distributed at railway stations and bus stands. On average, the vendors were observed to have kept more than 300 scorpion body parts (oil extracted) on display, with about five to six live scorpions and a few museum specimens, mounted and bottled. Scorpion stings could be life-threatening, especially for villagers who do not have easy access to emergency medical facilities and hence may be enticed to engage in scorpion trade.

Legal implications

Currently, Indian scorpions are not listed in the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 nor in CITES. Lack of significant trade data on the extent and impact of local trade makes the trade difficult to control. Also the international demand for scorpions from India is yet to be ascertained. However, it is clear that the trade in this lesser known species is on-going and may be taking place in large, unsustainable numbers. The volume of trade and collection should be a subject of further investigation so that conservation strategies can be devised accordingly.

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Remains of scorpions after oil has been extracted. They are displayed by shopkeepers to convince the customers that the oil is 'genuine'

WILD CRY

(Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.)

Indian Rhinoceroses face poaching threat

© Michel Gumther / WWF/Canon

The Indian Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis*, also called the Greater One-horned Rhinoceros and Asian One-horned Rhinoceros, belongs to the Rhinocerotidae family. The Indian Rhinoceros is an herbivorous grazer and is one of the three species of rhinoceroses native to Asia. It weighs between 1800 and 2700 kg and has a life span of 40 to 50 years.

Distribution:

The preferred habitat of an Indian Rhinoceros is the alluvial flood plains and areas having tall grasslands along the foothills of the Himalayas. Formerly, extensively distributed in the Gangetic plains, today the species is restricted to small habitats in Indo- Nepal terai and North Bengal, and Assam. In India, rhinoceroses are found in the Kaziranga Tiger Reserve, Orang National Park, Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, Jaldapara Wildlife Sanctuary and Dudhwa Tiger Reserve.

Status:

Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I
IUCN Redlist: Vulnerable
CITES: Appendix I

Hunting of, or trade in Rhinoceros is banned in India. The international trade is further restricted under CITES.

Threats:

Rhinoceroses in India are illegally slaughtered for the insatiable demand for their horn. Demand for medicinal products containing rhinoceros horn continues to increase in Viet Nam and other parts of Asia. Rhinoceros horn has no proven ability to treat cancer and is no longer a part of the official Chinese traditional medicine pharmacopeia. However, it continues to be smuggled illegally to international markets having a demand for illegal wildlife products.



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Continued on page 11

WILD CRY

(Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.)

Indian Rhinos face poaching threat

Continued from page 10

Traditionally, the two main markets for rhinoceros horn are in Yemen, where they were used for dagger handles, and in East Asia, for traditional medicine, for treatment of high fever. However, the latest poaching spree appears centred on demand from Viet Nam, and recent unsubstantiated beliefs that horn can cure cancer, act as a cleansing agent, and where horn is given as a prestige gift.

The total rhinoceros population estimate in May 2007 was said to be 2575 individuals, with estimates of a total of 378 in Nepal and 2200 in India (Asian Rhinoceros Specialist Group 2007). The populations have gradually increased over the years, however the spate of rhinoceros killings in 2011 in India could pose serious risk to the species in the wild. In this year alone, at least 24 rhinoceroses were poached with a maximum number of cases having been reported from Kaziranga, Assam. Even though statistics show that the rhinoceros population has been increasing, the escalation in poaching cases is alarming.

While India suffered heavy rhinoceros losses in 2011, Nepal celebrated a zero rhinoceros poaching year. The past statistics of rhinoceros poaching for India and Nepal clearly show a correlation in the poaching trend between the countries. Whenever there is a stricter enforcement effort in one country, the poachers shift focus to the other country. This also clearly establishes a strong link between the poaching gangs that operate in both countries.

MKS Pasha, Interim Head-TRAFFIC India said, “TRAFFIC recognizes the grave peril for the Indian Rhinoceroses and is catalysing new instruments to combat this very serious threat. The information network established by us has helped us to avert several cases of rhinoceros poaching in the country”.

“With new multilateral agreements coming into place between India and Nepal and with the establishment of the new South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN), the countries will join efforts to eradicate these poaching gangs that have been targeting the rhinoceroses in both countries” he further added.

Some of the commonly known trade points for illegal trade of rhinoceros horn in the country are Guwahati, Silchar, Imphal, Kolkata, Siliguri, Kohima, Tezpur, and Dimapur. The international trade from India is largely known to occur through the Indo-Nepal borders adjoining Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. In north-east India, international trade occurs through Moreh and Dimapur to Myanmar and through the Indo-Bhutan bordering areas.

TRAFFIC India calls for increased vigilance around the key rhinoceros habitats to curb poaching. There is also a need for the border security agencies, like the border police, para military forces and Customs, to join forces to curb the flow of illegal wildlife products from India. Enhanced intelligence-gathering and sharing can help avert poaching and curb trade. All of this coupled with increased awareness should help control the on-going crisis.

Sources:

<http://www.rhinoresourcecenter.com/species/indian-rhino/>
http://www.wwfindia.org/one_horned_rhino.cfm
<http://www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/details/19496/0>



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HEADLINES

Cobra venom, rare turtles seized on way to Nepal



Three dead cobra snakes and a large quantity of cobra venom were seized on the way to Nepal from India. The seizure was made by the Wildlife Enforcement Directorate (WED) in the state of West Bengal. The snakes and venom were found in a container belonging to a trader who was carrying them to Nepal. The trader was arrested and the container was seized. The WED officials said that the trader was carrying the snakes and venom to Nepal to sell them to the local market. The trader was fined and the container was destroyed.

Indian leopards battle against extinction



For the last year, India has had over 1,200 leopards in its parks and sanctuaries. The photo shows a leopard in a park in India.

Hunters rule the roost in Manipur

Exotic birds are killed, venison is sold at Rs 150 a kg even near police stations



Manipur is a state in the northeastern part of India. It is known for its rich biodiversity and exotic birds. However, the state is also known for its illegal bird trade. Hunters in Manipur kill exotic birds and sell their venison. The venison is sold at a high price, around Rs 150 per kg, even near police stations. The illegal trade of birds and venison is a major threat to the biodiversity of Manipur. The Wildlife Enforcement Directorate (WED) has been cracking down on the illegal trade, but the hunters continue to operate in the shadows.

Delhi's new low: Animal trafficking at all-time high

UNSAFE City a major transit point for smuggling of animals and their derivatives



Delhi is a major transit point for the illegal trade of animals and their derivatives. The city is known for its unsafe environment and is a major hub for the smuggling of animals. The Wildlife Enforcement Directorate (WED) has reported a significant increase in animal trafficking in Delhi. The illegal trade of animals and their derivatives is a major threat to the biodiversity of the region. The WED has been cracking down on the illegal trade, but the traffickers continue to operate in the shadows.

51 tigers died in '11: Report

With 14 Deaths, Uttarakhand Tops Casualty List, K'taka Second



The Wildlife Enforcement Directorate (WED) has reported that 51 tigers died in 2011. Uttarakhand has the highest number of deaths, with 14 tigers killed. Karnataka is second with 12 deaths. The remaining 25 deaths occurred in other states. The WED has identified several reasons for the deaths, including poaching, road accidents, and natural causes. The illegal trade of tiger parts is a major threat to the tiger population. The WED has been cracking down on the illegal trade, but the poachers continue to operate in the shadows.

उल्लू बेचने वाले पहुंचे सलाखों के पीछे

विकल्प (Karnataka): उल्लू बेचने की वजह से इनकी संख्या में तेजी से गिरावट आ रही है। इन उल्लू बेचने वाले को पकड़ने के लिए सरकार ने सलाखें लगाई हैं।



Ullu (Owl) sellers in Karnataka are being targeted by the government. The government has implemented a strict policy to protect the owl population. The owl trade is a major threat to the owl population. The government has been cracking down on the illegal trade, but the sellers continue to operate in the shadows.

Venomous rave parties to ring in V-Day

Wildlife activists are protesting against the use of venomous substances in rave parties.



Wildlife activists are protesting against the use of venomous substances in rave parties. The use of venomous substances is a major threat to the biodiversity of the region. The activists have been demanding that the government take strict action against the use of venomous substances. The government has been cracking down on the use of venomous substances, but the rave parties continue to operate in the shadows.

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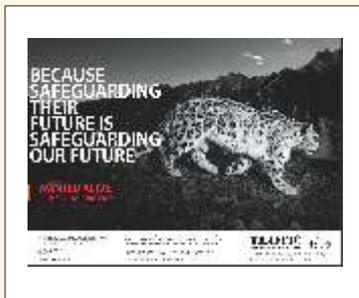
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TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



TRAFFIC INDIA UPDATE

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OUTPOST



CITES UPDATE



TRAFFIC ALERT

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IN FOCUS

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© Abrar Ahmed

WILD CRY

Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.

Selling SEASHELLS off the sea: Curio trade in seashells in India

Pg 10

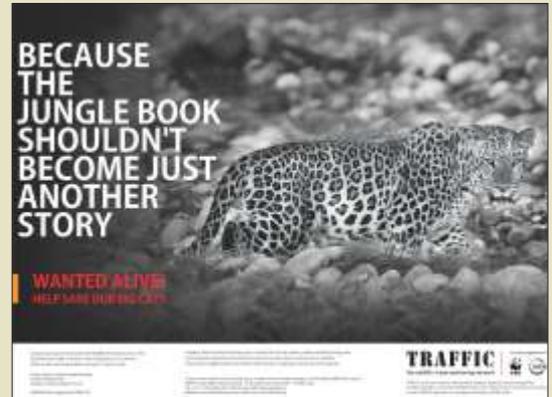
'WANTED ALIVE': New awareness campaign to curb trade in Asian big cats



With Asia's big cats increasingly under threat in the wild, TRAFFIC launched a new public service advertisement campaign in May 2012 reminding people that these felines were "Wanted Alive" in their natural habitat!

Campaign posters feature the four Asian big cats—Tiger, Leopard, Snow Leopard and Clouded Leopard—all of them threatened by illegal trade in their body parts.

Large banners have been put up at the DND Flyway in Delhi, at airports, metro stations, and other strategic locations across the country. TIMES OOH has provided generous support for the campaign by offering hoarding sites and digital screens to TRAFFIC for display across India.



A strong message carried by the campaign implores readers to do their part to ensure that these four species continue to survive in the wild. Besides existing markets, new emerging ones, such as those in Myanmar, are aggravating the situation. The threat was highlighted at the recently concluded Global Tiger Recovery Programme Stocktaking meeting in New Delhi, 15–17 May 2012, which was attended by senior government officials from all 13 Tiger range countries.



© Times OOH

Mr MKS Pasha, Associate Director and Interim Head of TRAFFIC in India stated, "Preserving our wildlife should be a concern for everyone. Protecting species, means protecting their forests and other habitats, and that also means securing the water quality in our rivers and other water sources. Wanted Alive is TRAFFIC's message to the public on conservation of Asian big cats. Inherent respect for our wildernesses will go a long way in helping secure our natural treasures."

Mr Ravi Singh, Secretary General & CEO of WWF-India added, "Poaching has become the single largest threat to these cats in the wild. WWF-India and TRAFFIC have worked tirelessly to highlight the gravity of this threat, recently at the Global Tiger Recovery Programme Stocktaking meeting. People across India need to recognize the importance of the Tiger to our country's image, and help stop those who would plunder our national treasure for their greed."

Mr Sunder Hemrajani, MD, Times OOH said, "Times OOH wholeheartedly supports the cause of protection of wildlife undertaken by TRAFFIC and WWF-India. It is important for people to understand their role in wildlife conservation. Our various premium properties offer such an opportunity to educate as they reach out to a large audience that can pioneer this change. We are happy to promote and be a part of this cause."

The campaign was designed by Crossbow Designs with support from WWF-India and WWF-UK.

To download copies of the posters, please visit http://www.wfindia.org/about_wwf/enablers/traffic/?7340/Help-save-our-big-cats



© Times OOH

TRAFFIC adopts multi-agency approach to tackle wildlife crime in Arunachal Pradesh



TRAFFIC India and WWF-India, in collaboration with the Forest Department of Arunachal Pradesh, organized a two day workshop from 1–2 May 2012 in Itanagar on wildlife law enforcement and conservation.

Itanagar is the capital of the north-eastern Indian State of Arunachal Pradesh (AP), and lies on an important illegal wildlife trade route.

The meeting brought together a number of agencies whose co-operation is necessary for curbing wildlife crime, which poses a threat to AP's rich biodiversity. Over 70 officials from the forest department, police, civil administration and ITBP (Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force) participated in the two day workshop.

The meeting was inaugurated by Shri Nabam Tuki, Hon. Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh; Shri Yeshe Tsering, Chief Secretary, Government of Arunachal Pradesh; Shri B. S. Sajwan, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Principal Secretary Environment and Forests (PCCF), Arunachal Pradesh; and Shri J. L. Singh, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife & Biodiversity).

Shri Nabam Tuki said that the meeting was a step forward for securing the future of wildlife in the region. Shri J. L. Singh noted the need to protect Namdhapa National Park given the pressure on the forests and wildlife from poaching and illegal trade activities. He also said that it was imperative to sensitize and gain the support of local communities for conservation and protection measures. Shri Singh also spoke of the success of TRAFFIC's sniffer dog training programme in India and noted Arunachal Pradesh would also benefit from the use of sniffer dogs.

Shri MKS Pasha, Interim Head of TRAFFIC in India, commented on the high level of bushmeat consumption by local communities in Arunachal Pradesh compared to most other States, and suggested that education, awareness and advocacy among and with the local communities would be the key to reducing it in the long run. He went on to introduce new tools and techniques that are available for fighting wildlife crime in India.

Resource material distributed at the meeting included a printed compendium, and CDs, books, posters etc. pertaining to wildlife law and enforcement issues, among them copies of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Criminal Procedure Code manual and a CD containing parliamentary questions 2004-2010 relating to wildlife issues.

For more information, please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/5/8/multiagency-approach-to-tackling-wildlife-crime-in-arunachal.html>

Tiger range countries meet in Delhi to review efforts on doubling the number of wild Tigers



Alleged Tiger leg bones and feet with claws for sale as medicines in China in 2006

The requirement for “urgent and elevated action needed to halt poaching” was a common concern among the Tiger range countries that met in New Delhi India, 15–17 May, for the first time since the Tiger Summit in November 2010, to review efforts on doubling the number of wild Tigers by 2022 (Tx2).

At the “Tiger Summit” in St. Petersburg, hosted by the Government of Russia and the World Bank, the 13 Tiger range governments and partners committed to this. They presented the Global Tiger Recovery Program (GTRP), which charts the way towards meeting this goal.

During the May meeting, TRAFFIC presented new figures from its latest research into the rising number of Tiger part seizures taking place in Asia. With 53 seizures on average occurring each year, levels remain high. The analysis identified persistent Tiger trade hot-spots such as Kathmandu, Hanoi and the Russia/Northeast China border.

Poaching of Tigers, to feed consumer demand for their body parts and products, is now the main factor counteracting efforts made by governments, donors and other partners working towards the 2022 goal. Nearly all Tiger range countries spoke of the poaching problem and efforts that they were taking on the ground to tackle this. It is essential that a Tiger trade monitoring system be established so that information is available to assist enforcement efforts in the field where it is most needed. Countries also considered new approaches to reduce consumer demand for Tiger derivatives.

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Continued from page 3

“We are pleased that the approaches we recommended on demand reduction are being considered to support implementation of the GTRP,” said Sabri Zain, Director of Advocacy and Campaigns for TRAFFIC. “It is critical that we implement new approaches to changing consumer behaviour if we are to stamp out poaching successfully in the long run and therefore achieve TX2.”

In a sign indicating Tiger range countries are increasingly working together to save the Tiger across their borders, the meeting witnessed the signing of a bilateral agreement on trans-border co-operation between India and Nepal and another between India and Russia.

“This gathering of Tiger range countries shows that the momentum to save Tigers is indeed building, but the pressure on the species continues,” said Ravi Singh, Secretary-General and CEO, WWF-India.

“Co-ordinated anti-poaching measures across Tiger range countries are called for. These need to be scaled up and implemented urgently to achieve zero poaching.”

Read more at <http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/5/17/tiger-recovery-efforts-progressing-urgent-action-still-need.html>

South Asian countries prioritize efforts to combat illegal wildlife trade in South Asia



The First Regional Meeting of the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) took place in Sri Lanka, 3–6 June 2012, where officials from the countries devised operational plans to combat illegal trade affecting some of the region's most threatened wildlife species. The officials also worked on an updated work programme and discussed issues such as intelligence-gathering, information-sharing, capacity-building and law enforcement co-operation.

Launched last year, SAWEN comprises member countries Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The meeting was attended by over 30 wildlife and law enforcement officials from all eight South Asian countries. Participants also included experts from INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization's Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for the Asia-Pacific, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, World Bank, the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network, the Global Tiger Forum, the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), WWF and TRAFFIC.



© Dept of Wildlife Conservation, Sri Lanka

In an important effort to address source-to-market law enforcement co-operation, the CITES Management Authority of China also joined the meeting as an observer. China shares terrestrial borders with five South Asian countries, and is a major trade partner with the region.

Officially opening the meeting, Sri Lanka's Minister of Environment, the Hon. Anura Priyadarshana Yapa, expressed his country's keen interest and commitment in co-operating and networking with other regional partner organizations for combating illegal trade. "It is extremely necessary that all South Asian countries should get together and help each other prevent illegal trade of bio-resources across their respective country borders" he said.

According to the SAWEN Chief Enforcement Coordinator, Mr Krishna Prasad Acharya, the meeting identified a number of illegal trade priorities for enhancing regional co-operation, focused on species such as Asian big cats, elephants, freshwater turtles, falcons, rhinoceroses and marine turtles. "Wildlife trade routes and hubs for these species were carefully examined and mapped," he said.

James Compton, TRAFFIC Senior Programme Director for Asia, welcomed the progress being made by SAWEN: "The establishment of SAWEN last year was a very crucial, timely and much needed step forward to institutionalize the collaborative efforts of member countries in controlling wildlife crime in the region. It is gratifying to see that SAWEN countries are now well-placed to co-ordinate law enforcement operations that will stem illegal trade flows where it matters and produce tangible conservation victories on the ground".

TRAFFIC's work in supporting SAWEN, including the holding of the meeting, has been generously funded by the US Department of State. The Government of Sri Lanka is also acknowledged for its matching the funding contributions in hosting the meeting of SAWEN.

SSB to help combat illegal wildlife trade along the Indian borders



The border guarding force of India, SSB (Sashastra Seema Bal), has joined hands with TRAFFIC to help combat illegal wildlife trade along the Indo-Nepal and the Indo-Bhutan borders. TRAFFIC India will provide training to the SSB officials to strengthen their skills for fighting wildlife crime in the region.

Illegal wildlife trade operates at an international level and porous borders allow contraband to move across freely. It is therefore imperative to strengthen enforcement efforts at the borders in order to curb this trade. SSB guards the 1751-km-long Indo-Nepal border along the States of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Sikkim, and the Indo-Bhutan border alongside the States of Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. It recognizes the threat from illegal wildlife trade to India's wildlife reserves and has come forward to help curb the crime.

In terms of training, TRAFFIC will conduct at least six training workshops for SSB officials stationed along the borders. The training will provide them with an understanding of the dynamics of this illegal trade, various tools and techniques available to fight it, and intelligence involved. The training will be conducted by experts in the various fields of wildlife law enforcement in India. The first workshop will be held in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, in July 2012.

MKS Pasha, Associate Director and Interim Head of TRAFFIC in India, said, "We are very excited to work with such a prestigious border security force. Their experience in having managed the borders for a long time now will prove fruitful in combating wildlife crime. We are also thankful to UNODC- South Asia and WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) for their support".

"Besides providing training on wildlife law enforcement, the workshops also intend to sensitize the officials on various issues related to wildlife conservation. Preserving wildlife is a national security concern and we are glad that the SSB recognizes this and has shown interest in co-operating on this issue".

Experts meet in Bhutan to review status of trade in CITES-listed Asian Medicinal and Aromatic Plant Species



© Rashid Raza

Represented by Bryony Morgan and Rashid Raza, TRAFFIC participated in a three-day meeting held 24–26 May 2012, in Thimphu, to review the status of trade in medicinal plants, its legality, sustainability and traceability. The meeting was organized by the Department of Forest and Park services, Royal Government of Bhutan in collaboration with the CITES Secretariat. WWF's Living Himalayas Network Initiative provided support to TRAFFIC India for this meeting.

TRAFFIC had helped identify seven species of Asian medicinal plant threatened by trade in its report "Review of the Status, Harvest, Trade and Management of Seven Asian CITES-listed Medicinal and Aromatic Plant Species". Of the seven species—*Cistanche deserticola*, *Dioscorea deltoidea*, *Nardostachys grandiflora*, *Picrorhiza kurrooa*, *Pterocarpus santalinus*, *Rauvolfia Serpentina* and *Taxus wallichiana*—three are found only at high altitudes in the Himalayas (*N. grandiflora*, *P. kurrooa* and *T. wallichiana*).

The Himalayas form a major part of the range of *D. deltoidea* and *R. serpentina*, while *C. deserticola* is endemic to China and *P. santalinus* is endemic to southern India.

The report was discussed in the 17th meeting of the CITES Plant committee held in Geneva, Switzerland, in April 2008. Trade in these seven species was reviewed again at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (Doha, 2010), and decisions were taken for regional co-ordinated action to improve their management. The workshop in Bhutan was held as a follow up to the decisions of CoP15 (reiterated in the 20th meeting of the Plants Committee in Dublin (Ireland), 22–30 March 2012, and aimed to examine the means for ensuring that international trade in selected Asian medicinal plant species was legal, sustainable and traceable; to initiate co-operation among range States, consumer Parties and relevant organizations; and to identify examples of good practice and any other relevant topics.

It was attended by 17 participants from range States: Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Indonesia participated to provide a perspective on sustainable trade in Agarwood. TRAFFIC participated as a non range state (x2) delegate. The range state delegates were represented by respective CITES Management Authorities and Scientific Authorities.

Continued on page 6

Continued from page 5

The workshop was inaugurated by Lyonpo (Dr) Pema Gyamtsho, Honourable Minister for Agriculture and Forests, Bhutan.

Rashid Raza of TRAFFIC India said, "We presented a global synthesis of information on the status of population, harvest and trade of the seven species. TRAFFIC emphasized the central position of India in harvest and trade of six of the seven species under discussion (excluding *Cistanche deserticola* which occurs only in China). The recommendations of TRAFFIC's report on the seven species were outlined. The FairWild standards for harvest and trade of wild plants were introduced. The economic dependence of marginal communities on collection of medicinal plants was highlighted".

Lack of appropriate data in most countries regarding the status of the species was a common concern.

Rashid Raza further commented, "It is hoped that future meetings will make better use of ever-growing knowledge on the status of these plants in range countries, so that further actions can be based on good data."

TRAFFIC Alert



Rhino horn being traded on the net

An advertisement on the website <http://www.tootoo.com/s-ps/sell-rhino-horn-acstradingcompany-at-india-dot-com--p-3819306.html>, claims to be selling rhino horn and elephant tusks. The advertisement states "We organize legal rhino horns in India and you can export your rhino horn back to your country. We are worldwide suppliers of rhino horns. We sell our horns at affordable prices. We supply buyers with all shipping documents as we are worldwide suppliers of rhino horns. We are legally licensed suppliers. We render a safe and direct delivery services to the buyers address. Contact us with a command and get your rhino horns delivered to your address within 3 days. Rhino horns between 50-60cm (5-8kg)".

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Online trade in wildlife products has reached alarming proportions and although the authenticity of the products on offer is not known, the above advertisement is apparently an example of how endangered animal parts can be sold online. Whilst some studies and investigations have been undertaken to gauge the extent and implications of this commerce, there is much to be done to stem this trade. The latest online advertisements follow evidence that genuine "antique" trophy rhino horns were being bought at auctions in the UK and Europe and exported to the Far East. Enforcement authorities have been alerted to deal with this online advertisement in India.

Source:

<http://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/online-sale-of-rhino-horn-investigated-1.1238850>
<http://www.topix.com/forum/world/cameroon/TR15N23S3479Q1DRG>
<http://www.animalpeoplenews.org/amp/2012/04/13/rhino-horn-trafficking-bust-nets-pro-rodeo-champion-wade-steffen/>

OUTPOST: Sri Lanka seizes 1.5 tonnes of ivory



© Samantha Gunasekara / Sri Lanka Customs



Customs authorities in the port of Colombo, Sri Lanka, seized 1.5 tonnes of ivory on 29 May 2012, the largest-ever haul of ivory in the country.

Customs officials seized 359 ivory tusks hidden among logs in a container marked as plastic waste. The container had originated from Uganda and shipped from Kenya and was bound for Dubai.

According to the most recent analysis of the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) managed by TRAFFIC of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES), a number of countries in Southeast Asia have emerged as ports of call, but not end-use destinations, along the main Asian ivory trade routes to markets in Thailand and China. However, James Compton, TRAFFIC's Senior Programme Director for Asia in TRAFFIC, warned that this seizure in Sri Lanka raised concerns that illegal ivory traders were developing new routes through South Asia.

"As existing transit countries for African ivory such as Malaysia, the Philippines and Viet Nam increase their enforcement efforts, smugglers will adapt and seek other trans-shipping routes and substitute ports of call," he said.

Mr Samantha Gunasekara, Deputy Director of Sri Lanka Customs, warned of the need for further vigilance in the region. "Countries in the South Asia region should be vigilant and enhance their enforcement co-operation to address illicit ivory trade, so that none of these countries become prominent and problematic players in the future."

The seizure was made following a tip-off from the World Customs Organisation's Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific region (RILO-A/P), based in Seoul, South Korea. "This highlights the crucial role that intelligence-gathering and information-sharing plays in stemming illegal ivory trade," Mr Gunasekara said.

Read more at <http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/6/1/sri-lanka-seizes-15-tonnes-of-ivory.html>

CITES UPDATE:

Asian countries encouraged to use CITES e-permitting systems to strengthen the protection of CITES species



The rapid advances by some countries in the Asian Region in use of new electronic trade standards, has highlighted the need for establishment of secure-permitting systems to: reduce fraud; improve on meeting reporting obligations; enhance permit issuance and administration; and provide up-to-the-minute data to assist with CITES scientific assessments. Therefore, the development and use of CITES e-permitting systems, and their role in ensuring legal, sustainable and traceable international trade in CITES-listed species, was the main agenda of discussion at a meeting attended by representatives of Asian countries in Guangzhou, China from 9 to 11 May 2012.

The meeting was jointly organized by the CITES Secretariat and the Government of China and made possible through the generous financial support of China and the European Commission.

In his opening remarks, Secretary-General, Mr. John E. Scanlon, noted that, "A sustainable future is being discussed in the context of the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro in June of this year, often known as Rio+20. Sustainability is not achieved through one action but through the accumulation of multiple actions. Actions such as those being taken today - namely to put into place e-permitting systems for legal, sustainable and traceable trade in CITES listed species - help build the essential foundations for environmental sustainability and sustainable development. E-permitting systems offer us one of the tools we need to reach the future we want."

During the meeting, a representative of the WCO announced the successful conclusion of an initiative to include standards of the CITES e-permitting toolkit with the new version of the WCO Data Model, scheduled for release in October 2012. The meeting concluded by recommending a number of bilateral and regional projects that will assist Parties to plan and develop e-permitting systems, benefiting from lessons learned. Recommendations were also made to begin discussions on a project between Brazil, Namibia and China on using new e-permitting technologies to ensure legal, sustainable and traceable trade.

Read more at http://cites.org/eng/news/pr/2012/20120514_e-permitting-meet.php

TRAFFIC Alert



Mongoose hair brushes seized in Agra

In May 2012, hundreds of paint-brushes allegedly made from the hair of mongoose were seized from a shop in Agra. Upon receiving a tip-off, activists led by Gaurav Gupta from New Delhi, took the police along to swoop upon the stationers and traders, who were stocking and selling the prohibited paint brushes.

While three stationers were arrested in Kharar with around 100 brushes, another stationer was nabbed in Nawanshahr, from whom 450 mongoose hair brushes were recovered. Search for the supplier of the brushes is on.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

India has six species of mongoose—the Grey Mongoose *Herpestes edwardsii*, Small Indian Mongoose *Herpestes javanicus*, Ruddy Mongoose *Herpestes smithii*, Brown Mongoose *Herpestes brachyurus*, Crab-eating Mongoose *Herpestes urva* and Stripe-necked Mongoose *Herpestes vitticollis*—all of which are protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Of these, three species of mongoose are commonly recorded in wildlife trade in India—the Small Indian Mongoose, Striped-necked Mongoose and the Indian Grey Mongoose.

Until 2002, killing of mongooses for their hair to make paint brushes, meat for consumption and for taxidermy was extensive. However today, while the taxidermy trade in mongoose species is believed to have declined, numerous pieces of evidence indicate that mongooses continue to be killed for their hair. Many of these animals have disappeared from urban and semi-urban places. Increasingly they are facing threats in the wild too. The rising number of mongoose hair seizures indicates a crying need for greater alacrity in enforcement efforts to stem this trade.

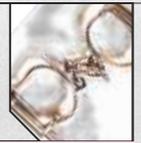
Source:

<http://www.wildlifeextra.com/go/news/mongoose-hair.html#cr>
<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/ngo-cracks-whip-against-traders-selling-mongoose-hair-brushes/470344/>
<http://in.news.yahoo.com/mongoose-hair-brushes-seized-agra-080256833.html>

Clouded Leopard skins seized in Assam

In April 2012, skins of two endangered Clouded Leopards were seized and two people arrested near Manas Tiger Reserve in Assam. Following a tip-off, a team led by Bhuyanpara forest range officer Adhan Oza, raided a shop in Milan Bazar in Baksa district some 20 km from the reserve, leading to the recovery of the skins, which were six months old. *Continued on page 8*

TRAFFIC Alert



Continued from page 7

TRAFFIC India adds.....

The Clouded Leopard *Neofelis nebulosa* is one of the most elusive big cat species in the wild. It inhabits the dense jungles of north-east India. Its beautiful coat is patterned with cloud-like markings, which gives it its name. It is a solitary animal and highly arboreal. It hunts as well as rests in trees.

IUCN estimates that there are fewer than 10 000 mature individuals surviving globally and has listed it as 'Vulnerable'. Illegal hunting for its beautiful coat is one of the major threats to the species today. There is also trade in the bones for medicines, meat for exotic dishes and live animals for the pet trade. Wild animals are likely to be the primary source, but there is also some illegal trade from captive-bred animals (Nowell, 2007). Its canines and claws are also used for decorative purposes.

Featured as an important part of TRAFFIC's new "Wanted Alive" campaign in India, the animal has been ear-marked for more in depth studies. Threats from illegal wildlife trade coupled with rapid destruction of its forest habitat and excessive hunting of its prey species has put the future of the Clouded Leopard in peril. It is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and in Appendix I of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

Source:

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-06-01/kolkata/31957920_1_leopards-neofelis-nebulosa
<http://www.wwf.org/?7322/Camera-traps-capture-exciting-animal-behaviour-across-India>
http://www.wwf.org/about_wwf/critical_regions/north_bank_landscape/news/4640/Clouded-Leopard
<http://www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/details/14519/0>

IN FOCUS:

Future of Indian lorises hangs upside down

Text and images by Abrar Ahmed, Consultant, TRAFFIC India



Large and round eyed, the lorises of India may be in peril from excessive illegal trade. Awareness and enforcement efforts required to protect the species seem to be lagging behind.

India is home to two species of loris—the Slow Loris *Nycticebus bengalensis* and the Slender Loris *Loris lydekerianus*. Both the species are listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 giving it full protection against hunting, trade or any other use. According to the IUCN Red List of Threatened species, the Slow Loris is listed as Vulnerable and the Slender Loris is listed as a species of Least Concern. International trade is further regulated under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The Slow Loris is listed in Appendix I of CITES and the Slender Loris is in Appendix II.

Ranking high on the cute-and-cuddly scale, these furry primates have long been in demand for the pet trade worldwide (<http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/4/3/loris-trade-not-so-slow.html>). Due to their small size, appearance, non-vocal behaviour, easy upkeep, availability, transportability and high profits, lorises have become one of the favourite trade commodities of wildlife traffickers and traders. This factor is considered a major reason for the decline of the species in the wild, including in India, where there is a growth in trade of exotic pet species. Exotic birds are a major attraction in most private collections, since there is no ban on the domestic trade and possession of exotic birds. A lot of large collections also include a number of small-sized exotic mammals such as Sugar Gliders *Petaurus breviceps*, marmosets (Family Callitrichidae) and bush babies (Family Galagidae). On many an occasion, traders con ignorant buyers into buying the Slow or Slender Loris and Giant Squirrel *Ratufa indica* on the pretext that these are exotic species.

Capturing of lorises has been taking place in India for many years. Lorises were exported worldwide from India along with birds until the blanket ban in 1990-91. After the ban, the trade of lorises became covert and the animals are not openly offered or displayed in India, unlike in many other Asian countries. The Slow Loris remains a common sight in wildlife markets of Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore (<http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/4/3/loris-trade-not-so-slow.html>).

Lorises have been used for a variety of purposes other than the pet trade. Prater (2005) in his book on Indian animals commented on the trade in Slender Loris, writing "As with lemurs in all countries, a wealth of superstitious beliefs centre round these animals. The eyes are said to be a potent love charm, and are also used as a cure for certain eye diseases. Hence the capture and sale of these animals, which are cruelly hawked about in the blinding glare of sunlight, to which by nature they are so ill-accustomed."

Continued on page 9

Continued from page 8



Today, the Slow Loris continues to be poached and used for food in Meghalaya (Radhakrishna *et al.*, 2010) and Mizoram (Joydeep Bose, *pers. comm.*). In north-east India, the Slow Loris is hunted by the Angamis, Apatanis, Nishis and Mizos for bushmeat (Hilaluddin *et al.*, 2005). In South India, roadside astrologers use Slender Loris for taking out fortune cards (Ahmed, 2001). Tribals in Kerala suggested that keeping a Slender Loris could ward off evil spirits. Use in traditional medicine, is another reason for their trapping, and Indian animal traders also claim that the loris in India is not sold as a toy-pet but as a collector's item.

Unlike the case in most South Asian counties, where Slow Lorises have their teeth cut or pulled out when sold in the pet trade, in India most traders or keepers keep the lorises in cages or aviaries to protect themselves from being bitten.

Until a decade ago, Slow Lorises were regularly bought for sale at the famous Sonepur mela in Bihar, while the Slender Loris was a common mammal for sale at the Shivaji bird market in Bangalore (Ahmed, 2001). A minimum of 28 Slow Lorises were recorded during eight surveys undertaken by the author between 1994 and 2010, in 11 places, in four states, while no fewer than 22 Slender Lorises were recorded in six places in four south Indian states between 1994 and 2002.

Trade in the species is not casual but rather well organized. Tribal or village-level trappers go on collection trips almost thrice a week, but even a chance encounter by trappers is an opportunity for them to sell off the captured loris. A dead animal is not wasted, it is dried and its body parts sold for use in traditional medicine. Country-wide, trade is either carried out by individuals from the Mirshikar traders from Patna or from certain tribes from South India, such as the Narikorava or Hakkipikki. The Mirshikar do not especially go for collecting the Slow Loris themselves but have the best connection with North-east sub-dealers, who in turn collect the animal from village-level trappers in Assam, Meghalaya and Nagaland and bring them to the Mirshikar traders in Patna and Siliguri. Members of the tribals of north-east India, such as the Garo, Nishi and Karbi, bring lorises from time to time to village weekly markets. The Mirshikar traders of Patna or Burdwan deliver Slow Lorises to known dealers and keepers in any part of the country.

Narikorava and Hakkipikki at times live a nomadic life and are in search of wildlife in forest peripheries. The Pakshirajpuram (a tiny settlement of professional animal trappers) near Hosur on Nagarhole road is one of a primary collection centres from where lorises are then transported to Bangalore and Chennai markets. This is unlike the situation in earlier times when the animal markets at Benson Town in Bangalore and Moore Market in Chennai openly displayed and sold these animals.

In South India, the organized trade of Slender Lorises in Kerala is conducted by middlemen in Malayttur and Angamali, who may send their supply to Coimbatore, Alwaye and Madurai markets to meet specific demands. The collection is carried out by Kani tribals or city-based organized trappers. A few Slender Lorises are collected near Wyanad forest and the stock is sent to Trissur and Calicut dealers. Some Slender Lorises are also collected by travelling Narikoravas of Villipuram in Tamil Nadu, who at times sell their catch to Chennai and other South Indian animal traders.

The Pardi tribe of Central India, who sell a lot of wild animal products, also at times sell body parts of lorises. As far as international trade is concerned, reports have indicated that lorises are smuggled via Dhaka (Bangladesh) or Karachi (Pakistan) and there is a demand for these species mainly from Thailand.

Despite the legal protection lorises are given, sadly trade in these wild creatures continues. There is a need to strengthen wildlife law enforcement efforts to protect lorises, threatened as they are by illegal trade, and awareness campaigns to help dispel superstition and generate compassion for wildlife need to be conducted at various strategic locations across India.

Examples of media reports of loris seizures:

In June 2012, a Slow Loris was rescued from a location where it was kept as a pet in South Garo Hills, Shillong (<http://www.business-standard.com/generalnews/news/endangered-bengal-slow-loris-rescued/20248/>).

Two Slender Lorises were seized in Goa, on their way to Karnataka, in September 2011 (<http://wildlifecrimeinindia.blogspot.in/2011/09/slender-loris-seized-in-go.html>).

In March 2011, two Slow Lorises were rescued in Karbi Anglong from locals (<http://www.wildlifetrustofindia.org/pages/brief-updates.html>).

Five Slender Lorises were seized and two men arrested in Honnavar, in Uttara Kannada district, Karnataka, in February 2006 by officials of CID, Forest Cell (<http://www.hindu.com/2006/02/02/stories/2006020213320500.htm>).

Lorises have a slow and a silent movement. Once disturbed, they immediately freeze and remain immobile. At times, their choice of sleeping sites on exposed branches makes them a vulnerable target for trappers. As lorises are nocturnal, when they come to feed on lower branches, the trappers use powerful torches to blind the animals temporarily. To catch the animals, the trappers pull the branches down using poles with curved knives. Some reports have also been received that Slow Lorises are collected from tree cavities or crevices when trappers are on the look-out for bird chicks, such as those of mynas, parakeets and hornbills.

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WILD CRY

(Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.)

Selling SEASHELLS off the sea: Curio trade in seashells in India



We all have heard the familiar tongue twister "She sells seashells by the sea shore". Well, not just "she" but thousands of shops all along the coasts and tourist centres in India (and indeed the world) are selling seashells. In the curio trade, seashells are big business.

Many different kinds of marine invertebrate produce shells, an outer protective layer made of calcium carbonate (common chalk!), which protects the soft-bodied animals. Among these, shells produced by molluscs are the most common in curio trade. Molluscs (Phylum Mollusca) are a very large and diverse group of organisms. Shell-bearing molluscs of class Gastropoda (snails), Bivalvia (clams and oysters) and Scaphopoda (tusk shells) are most common. In addition, nautilus shells are also much sought after. (Nautilus is a common name for a very ancient group of organisms belonging to Class Cephalopoda of Phylum Mollusca which includes squids, octopuses and cuttlefish).

While empty seashells are often picked up by beach-combers, a very large majority of seashells which are offered for sale are collected alive (largely in bulk) and then killed and cleaned, specifically for the commercial trade. Though high-value shells like the chank or the Sacred Chank *Turbinella pyrum* are mainly hand-picked by skin diving, the majority of the shells entering the market are actually bycatches of bottom-trawl fishing operations. This not only removes these animals indiscriminately but also destroys the seabed habitat on which these bottom-dwellers live. This type of large-scale exploitation can have a strong negative impact on ecosystems.

Distribution: Mainland India, being peninsular in shape, has a long coastline (7500 km approx) on the eastern and western sides. It also has two major island groups. Seashells are found all across these areas, but the Gulf of Mannar has the largest commercial shell beds in India. The Lakshadweep Islands and the Andaman & Nicobar island groups are also important shell-collection areas.

Status: There are about 3500 marine molluscs found in India, of which nine are listed under the Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act (WLP), 1972 and 15 are listed in Schedule IV. This provides these species complete protection from collection, trade and any other kinds of use and exploitation. Of these 24 species, trade in three species (*Hippopus hippopus*, *Tridacna maxima* and *Tridacna squamosa*) is further regulated by CITES (See <http://www.wccb.gov.in/mollusca.pdf> for details and a pictorial identification guide)

Threats: Marine molluscs are traded as curios and artifacts. In India, the operculum of the shell is used to make incense sticks and 'mother of pearl' (the iridescent inner shell layer produced by some molluscs) is used as jewellery—a large part of the collection is sent to Bengal for making bangles. Shells are also used as a base for some ointments and other medicines. Live shelled organisms are collected and traded for the marine aquarium trade and there is also a huge demand for the popular Sacred Chank, *Turbinella pyrum*, known in India as the *shankha*. The chank is considered auspicious among Hindus and Buddhists. The rare form in which the whorls turn in a counterclockwise spiral (if viewed from the apex of the shell) are called Dakshinavrti or "right-whorled" and are highly priced. Harvest studies done by the Central Marine Fisheries Institute (CMFRI) have suggested reducing the harvest by at least 30% for the chank fisheries to be sustainable (Jagdis *et al* 2010).

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Despite the protection to many seashell species, there is little check on their collection and trade. Study done by the Wildlife Institute of India has established the Gulf of Mannar region as the main centre for collection, processing and trade. This study also found that the average size of shells in the trade has decreased, indicating over-harvest. Danushkodi, Rameswaram, Keelakarai and Tuticorin are the main collection centres in the Gulf of Mannar region. Locally, seashells are collected from chank divers. Shells are also collected from traditional and mechanized fishing ventures.

Marine ecologist Divya Karnad says, "Fishermen may harvest sea shells in the shallows during the monsoon, when the weather is bad for fishing on the west coast of India. The erstwhile pearl divers of Keelakarai in the Gulf of Mannar, turned to harvesting sea shells and even sea cucumbers, a protected species, after the pearl oyster fisheries became unproductive in the early to mid 1900s". Near shore, the shells are collected by skin divers and traditional fisher folks. Bottom trawler bycatch is a major contributor to seashell harvest Appukuttan and Ramadoss(2000), Chaudhary *et al* (2007).

The raw shells thus collected are chemically processed, flesh and operculum are removed, and polished shells are then transported to markets in India and abroad. The raw shell processing centres are largely situated in Kanyakumari and Rameshwaram. India is also a major importer of seashells, in particular from the Maldives, Philippines and East Africa (see Chaudhary *et al*. 2007 for details).

PROTECTED SPECIES OF SEASHELLS IN INDIA			
SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	WLPA SCHEDULE	CITES APPENDIX
<i>Cassis cornuta</i>	Horned Helmet	I	
<i>Charonia tritonis</i>	Trumpet Triton	I	
<i>Conus milne-edwardsi</i>	Glory of India	I	
<i>Cypraeacassis rufa</i>	Bull mouth helmet	I	
<i>Hippopus hippopus</i>	Fluted Giant clam/ Horse's Hoof	I	II
<i>Nautilus pompilius</i>	Chambered Nautilus	I	
<i>Tridacna maxima</i>	Elongate Giant Clam	I	II
<i>Tridacna squamosa</i>	Fluted Giant Clam	I	II
<i>Tudicla spirillus</i>	Spiral Tudicla	I	
<i>Cyprae limacina</i>	Limacina Cowrie	IV	
<i>Cypraea mappa</i>	Map Cowrie	IV	
<i>Cypraea talpa</i>	Mole Cowrie	IV	
<i>Pleuroploca trapezium/Fasciolaria trapezium</i>	Trapezium Conch	IV	
<i>Harpulina arausiaca</i>	Vexillate volute/Gold Banded Volute	IV	
<i>Lambis chiragra</i>	Chiragra Spider Conch	IV	
<i>Lambis chiragra arthritica</i>	Arthritic Spider Conch	IV	
<i>Lambis crocata</i>	Orange Spider Conch	IV	
<i>Lambis millepeda</i>	Milleped Spider Conch	IV	
<i>Lambis scropius</i>	Scorpio Conch	IV	
<i>Labis truncata</i>	Truncate Spider Conch	IV	
<i>Placuna placenta/Placenta placenta</i>	Windowpane Oyster	IV	
<i>Strombus plicatus siboldii</i>	Sibbald's Conch/Pigeon Conch	IV	
<i>Trochus niloticus</i>	Commercial Trochus/Top shell	IV	
<i>Turbo marmoratus</i>	Great Green Turban	IV	

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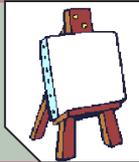
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Map Disclaimer : The designations of geographical entities in this article and the presentation of material do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of TRAFFIC or WWF-India, concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.



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SIGNPOST: Other Significant news stories to read



Sparrow's struggle for survival gets wings

The British Natural History Society (BHS) and other organisations are engaged in an effort to document the current population and distribution of sparrows...



British Natural History Society and other organisations have started an online survey to document the current population and distribution of sparrows...

India lost 337 tigers in last decade, reveals RTI

New Delhi: Over 300 tigers lost their lives in and outside national reserves in the country in the last decade, an RTI query has revealed.



New monitoring measures in place

After a lot of debate over a unreliable population monitoring methods, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) adopted new tiger monitoring protocols. The highlight of the new four-stage process is to involve qualified scientists with forest department staff to get accurate estimates of tiger population density...

Silent killers

Snares laid in inhabited areas in Goa have citizens and officials caught in a moose of concern, says anuruddha sen gupta



THE dog was barking again. The planter was startled to see a wire snare trap hanging from a tree branch. He was in Goa, where he had been working for several years. He had heard that snares were being laid in inhabited areas, but he didn't think it was his turn to be caught.

Boxing coach held for poaching, three leopard skins worth Rs 9 lakh recovered

Goa: A boxing coach was arrested on suspicion of poaching leopard skins. Three leopard skins worth Rs 9 lakh were recovered from him.



Crime branch officials led a raid on the 67 Karol Road in Outer Dable and arrested a man who was found with three leopard skins. The skins were worth Rs 9 lakh. The man was a boxing coach.

RECENT KILLINGS OF 2 TIGERS, 3 LEOPARDS PROMPT FOREST DEPT TO ISSUE ORDER

Guards told to shoot poachers on sight

Surendra Ganpat: The state forest department has issued an order empowering guards to shoot poachers on sight in Maharashtra's four tiger reserves. The order was issued after two tigers and three leopards were found killed in the last few weeks.



The state forest department has issued an order empowering guards to shoot poachers on sight in Maharashtra's four tiger reserves. The order was issued after two tigers and three leopards were found killed in the last few weeks.

act and open fire. The guards have been provided with state-of-the-art arms. They will also be given 100 vehicles. The department has been given additional funds for hiring informants, Kadam said. He said a CID probe has been announced in the killing of two tigers at the Tadoba reserve to find out whether they were electrocuted or poached. A committee of four forest officers will conduct a parallel inquiry in the killings. On April 26, a tiger was found killed and another seriously injured in the Tadoba reserve. On May 18, a tiger was found chopped to pieces. It is suspected to be a contract killing. On May 20, three leopard skins were found killed, but it is not yet clear if they died of electric shock. Praveen Pardesi, principal secretary, forest department, said the staff have been keeping vigil round the clock. "Earlier, wildlife activists and locals used to find the bodies and alert officials. But in the recent killings, it was the guards who found the dead animals," he said.

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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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- **WANTED Alive: Asian Big Cats**—TRAFFIC India's campaign update Pg 3
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CITES UPDATE



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TRAFFIC ALERT

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IN FOCUS

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WILD CRY

Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.

Tokay not okay! New threat emerges from illegal wildlife trade

Going wise over sustainable use of wild plants: TRAFFIC at CBD CoP11



By Anastasiya Timoshyna, Medicinal Plants Programme Leader, TRAFFIC

The eleventh meeting of the Conference of Parties (CoP11) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) took place in Hyderabad, India in October 2012. During the two weeks of the CoP, TRAFFIC conducted a number of side-events on the topic of sustainable use of wild medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs), with support of WWF Japan, as well as engaging on main agenda items.



© Anastasiya Timoshyna

TRAFFIC's side-events brought together the perspectives of wild MAP producers, NGOs, business, governments and academia, promoting discussion on how tools such as the FairWild Standard (www.fairwild.org) – a set of best practice guidelines for sustainable and equitable trade in wild plant resources - can help shape trade relations between producers and the wider market, and support countries' delivery of their commitments under CBD. The involvement of multiple stakeholders, including private sector, in plant conservation is critical. Over 50,000 MAP species are used globally for health, food and cosmetics, providing an important source of income for rural communities and national economies. At the same time, one-fifth of MAP species are threatened due to over-harvesting and land conversion.

One of the CBD CoP11 side-events was organized by TRAFFIC together with Botanical Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), IUCN Medicinal Plants Specialist Group (MPSG), and CONABIO, while another welcomed speakers from the FairWild Foundation, the UK-company Pukka Herbs Ltd., the Government of Madhya Pradesh, India, and the Savandurga Village Forest Committee, Karnataka, India. This event attracted over 40 participants in lively discussions on effective policy-making for sustainable use of wild plants.

TRAFFIC also contributed to the launch of the Biodiversity and Community Health Initiative, supported by the Government of India, UNDP, UNEP and others, drawing attention to the importance of conservation and sustainable use of medicinal plants to ensure their stable supply for health needs, as well as ensuring local livelihoods, and highlighting the FairWild Standard.

Within the official CBD CoP agenda, the decision related to the Global Strategy on Plant Conservation (GSPC) was adopted, approving a new toolkit for GSPC's implementation, elaborating how to achieve the targets of the strategy and laying out guidelines for monitoring progress. The toolkit will help Parties to deliver and report on progress with the GSPC's implementation, particularly for Targets 12 and 11. TRAFFIC welcomed this decision, which aims to help governments and organizations achieve delivery of the GSPC through the new toolkit.

The FairWild Standard is part of the new toolkit for implementation of the GSPC (www.plants2020.net) as a means of best practice for the delivery of Target 12 and contribution to the delivery of Aichi Target 4. TRAFFIC is also contributing to the implementation of the Strategy as a member of the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation (GPPC) (<http://www.plants2020.net/gppc/>). The FairWild Standard was developed with the involvement of TRAFFIC, IUCN, and WWF and is now maintained by the FairWild Foundation (see above and below for more details). A week prior to CBD CoP11, TRAFFIC delivered a lecture on the FairWild Standard to participants of the International Training on Medicinal Plants Conservation organized by the Institute of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine (IAIM-FLRHT) in Bangalore, India.

For more information, see www.fairwild.org

For more on TRAFFIC and CBD, see www.traffic.org/cbd

Following are the links for CBD CoP11 events relevant to sustainable use and conservation of wild plants published by TRAFFIC: <http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/10/22/focus-on-sustainable-use-of-biodiversity-at-cbd-cop11.html>; <http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/10/11/links-between-biodiversity-and-community-health-examined.html>; <http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/10/15/sustainability-of-wild-flora-use-and-livelihoodsframing-the.html>; <http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/10/18/are-you-fairwild.html>

WANTED Alive: Asian Big Cats—TRAFFIC India's campaign update



TRAFFIC India's poster campaign on the four Asian big cats—Tiger, Leopard, Snow Leopard and Clouded Leopard—all of them threatened by illegal trade in their body parts, has received tremendous response across India.

The main highway connecting Delhi to Noida had two billboards, one each on Tiger and Leopard. Twelve metro stations in Delhi feature at least one of the four species. Mumbai airport also has huge billboards featuring the campaign across terminals. A TRAFFIC film on illegal wildlife trade also plays at all the eight digital screens at Mumbai airport.

Over 1000 sets of campaign posters have successfully been distributed to schools, colleges, enforcement agencies, forest departments, Customs, media outlets, embassies, transit points, supporters, partner organizations etc.

TRAFFIC's campaign underlines the need to protect Asian big cats in the wild. Tiger, Leopard, Snow Leopard and Clouded Leopard are found in a variety of habitats across India but are being killed for their body parts which are smuggled through porous borders to clandestine international markets.

The Snow Leopard from the Himalayan mountains and the high altitude cold deserts to the north is hunted for its fur.

The little known Clouded Leopard inhabits the dense jungles of north-eastern India and is largely hunted for its beautiful coat, patterned with cloud-like markings. There is also trade in its bones for medicines, meat for exotic dishes and live animals for the pet trade. Its canines and claws are used for decorative purposes.

The Tiger is the largest cat species in the world that is threatened by illegal trade in its bones and skins. The bones are valued in traditional East Asian medicines, and the skin used by wealthy individuals to decorate their houses, tents or as clothes. TRAFFIC estimates that body parts of nearly 500 Tigers have been recovered from illegal traders in India during the period 2000-2011. Many more Tigers may have been killed and smuggled undetected.

The future of the Leopard is equally precarious. Although found all across India, Leopards are being poached in large numbers. Besides the skin that is used for decorative purposes, its body parts are used as a substitute for Tiger parts in traditional East Asian medicines.

Khalid Pasha, Associate Director and Interim Head of TRAFFIC in India adds, "We are overwhelmed by the response that this campaign has received across India. We are hopeful that the campaign will raise awareness about the issues related to trade in Asian big cats and help garner support for their conservation".

TRAFFIC acknowledges the support given by WWF-UK and TIMES OOH.



© TIMES OOH

Border security forces receive training on wildlife law enforcement



TRAFFIC, in association with SSB (Sashastra Seema Bal), organized wildlife law enforcement training workshops for officials stationed at the Indian borders in Uttarakhnad, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. The workshops took place at Gorakhpur on 12 and 13 July 2012; Purnea on 27 and 28 August 2012; Pilibhit on 14 and 15 September 2012; Pithoragarh on 17 and 18 September 2012; Ranidanga on 5 and 6 October 2012 and Jalpaiguri on 7 and 8 October 2012.

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SSB is responsible for guarding the 1751-km Indo-Nepal border along the States of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Sikkim and the stretch of the Indo-Bhutan border along the States of Sikkim, North Bengal, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. These areas remain highly exposed for illegal wildlife trafficking.

The main aim of the workshops was to sensitize the officials to various aspects of illegal wildlife trade, including wildlife law enforcement. Specialized training was also given on identifying wildlife contraband, use of forensics as a tool, and inspecting wildlife crime scenes.

These workshops are part of TRAFFIC's efforts to sensitize law enforcement agencies in illegal trade vulnerable areas.

New animation to highlight illegal wildlife trade



TRAFFIC, with support from Krayon Pictures, has brought out a new 15-second film on illegal wildlife trade.

The film features a playful Leopard cub chasing a butterfly when it accidentally puts on the TV. The cub is mesmerized looking at a wriggling snake and is further startled by a gunshot that transforms the snake into a handbag. Similarly, a Tiger is shown to turn into a rug and an elephant into ivory figurines.



"The animation is a new medium for TRAFFIC in India to spread awareness on issues related to illegal wildlife trade. It helps grab attention with its superb animated characters. We are extremely thankful to Krayon Pictures, co-producer of the Delhi Safari, India's first stereoscopic 3D animation feature film, for its efforts in putting this together" said Khalid Pasha, Associate Director & Interim Head of TRAFFIC in India.

To view the film, please visit <http://www.youtube.com/trafficnetwork>

Notorious wildlife dealer caught red-handed in India



A much-wanted, notorious illegal wildlife trader and poacher was caught red-handed carrying a Tiger skin and skeleton, two live turtles, ivory and some poaching equipment in Haryana, India.

The arrest was made on 1 August 2012 in Gurgaon, during a joint operation undertaken by Wildlife SOS, CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation), NTCA (National Tiger Conservation Authority), WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) and Haryana Forest Department with assistance from the Haryana Police.

TRAFFIC/WWF-India facilitated co-ordination among various agencies, along with Wildlife SOS, for effective action. This is not the first time the suspect has been apprehended. He was previously arrested in 2009 in Gurgaon for possessing a Tiger skin and skeleton but was released on bail and could not be traced thereafter. He was being sought in connection with a number of other cases as well.

Khalid Pasha, Associate Director and Interim Head-TRAFFIC in India, said that the seizure and the arrest were a major blow to the illegal wildlife trade nexus prevailing in India. This operation also clearly indicated the effectiveness of multi-agency collaborative efforts to fight wildlife crime in India.

OUTPOST: IUCN World Conservation Congress held in Korea



The 2012 IUCN World Conservation Congress was held on Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, from 6 to 15 September. This Congress is the world's largest and most important conservation event—bringing together top professionals from all regions and the expertise to share knowledge on how our natural environment should be managed for the continued well-being of humanity and of all life on Earth.

With over 400 journalists covering the event, at least 500 events and more than 6000 daily participants—including more than 100 State members and major NGOs such as WWF, Conservation International and National Geographic, this Congress was the largest ever event for nature. The Congress theme “Nature +” captures the fundamental importance of nature and its inherent link to every aspect of our lives. Featured at the Congress, the World Leaders Dialogues were prime time high-level sessions, organized by the Korean Government and the President of IUCN. They featured exceptional, internationally recognized experts, politicians and CEOs in a series of five moderated public debates tackling the most strategic issues related to conservation and sustainable development themes: nature + biodiversity, nature + climate; nature + people; nature + economy; and nature + food. These provided enlightening strategic thinking to guide the implementation of pragmatic solutions for a sustainable future for our planet.

Since 1948, the IUCN World Conservation Congress has been held every 2 to 4 years in all corners of the world—currently, the Congress is structured in two parts: the Member's Assembly of all IUCN member organizations; and the Forum, open to all for debating major sustainable development issues, proposing solutions and facilitating the sharing of information and experiences. The Congress outlined the debate between utilitarian and moral positions to save biodiversity. TRAFFIC was represented at the Congress. To know more, please visit <http://www.iucnworldconservationcongress.org/>

OUTPOST: New campaign to tackle wildlife crime



As poaching of African Elephants and rhinos has reached record levels, TRAFFIC and programme partner WWF have launched a joint global campaign calling on governments to combat illegal wildlife trade and reduce demand of products derived from these endangered species.



A TRAFFIC report into the rhino poaching crisis released in August 2012 documented how the numbers of rhinos illegally killed in South Africa rose from 13 animals in 2007 to 448 in 2011. The animals are poached for their horns, which are smuggled to supply consumer markets in Asia, principally in Viet Nam. Already in 2012, 339 rhinos have been killed by poachers in South Africa, with the projected total for the year expected to be more than 500 animals at the current rate.

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TRAFFIC Alert



Illegal snake venom racket busted in Maharashtra

The Maharashtra State wildlife wing has exposed a thriving illegal venom trade in the region. On 12 September 2012, 12 snake catchers were arrested for smuggling venom and 8 ml of cobra venom recovered. Forest officials also seized seven live cobras, a chameleon and a grass snake, besides six motorcycles and 14 mobile phones from the accused, who were all college students.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Besides the awe inspiring King Cobra *Ophiophagus hannah*, there are four species of cobra found in India. These include Spectacled Cobra *Naja naja*, Monocled Cobra *Naja kaouthia*, Andaman Cobra *Naja sagittifera* and Central Asian Cobra *Naja oxiana*. All of these are listed in Schedule II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 providing them complete theoretical protection against hunting and trade. They are further listed in Appendix II of CITES, which further regulates international trade in these species.

Snake venom in wildlife trade has been reported widely in South and South-east Asia but its prevalence in India remains under-appreciated. Of late, there have been media reports that there are rising instances of snake venom trade in India, including the use of snake venom for intoxication. TRAFFIC encourages urgent investigations and stronger enforcement efforts to check the growth of this trade. Greater research and attention is needed to tackle this trade before it brings irreplaceable damage to the species in the wild.

Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/Maharashtra/Illegal-venom-trade-exposed-12-held/Article1-929379.aspx>;
<http://gulfnnews.com/news/world/india/cobra-venom-drug-popular-on-delhi-party-scene-1.982082>;
<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/five-caught-with-rare-snakes/637394>;
<http://animal.discovery.com/tv/wild-recon/science-of-venom/indian-cobra-venom-cancer-killer.html>

Continued from page 5

In June, a report by TRAFFIC and other organizations submitted to CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) revealed that 2011 was the worst year on record for large-scale seizures of elephant ivory. China and Thailand were identified as the biggest consumer markets for trafficked ivory.

“Governments are largely ignoring the crisis affecting our endangered species. Throughout our global campaign, countries will hear directly from their constituents that the people expect better from them. The time to act is now while we can still save rhinos, tigers and elephants,” said Lasse Gustavsson, Executive Director of Conservation for WWF-International.

“Illegal wildlife trade is one of the most lucrative international organized crimes, yet is not treated seriously by many governments,” said Sabri Zain, TRAFFIC’s Advocacy Director and co-leader of the WWF-TRAFFIC Illegal Wildlife Trade Campaign. He further added-

“The organized criminal syndicates behind the poaching are also destabilizing national security and putting the lives of park rangers at risk. It’s high time to end their activities once and for all.”

<http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/8/29/new-campaign-to-tackle-wildlife-crime.html>

TRAFFIC Alert



Are primates seized in Delhi

In September 2012, the CISF (Central Industrial Security Force) officials at Delhi’s IGI Airport made a startling discovery while carrying out a body check on a transit passenger. Hidden between two layers of the male passenger’s undergarments was a small monkey. A search of the terminal revealed another of the same species abandoned in a dustbin. The primates, a species of the Slow Loris primate that is also found in India, were being smuggled from Bangkok to Dubai. “Three transit passengers, all residents of the UAE, had arrived in Delhi on a flight and were scheduled to fly to Dubai on a connecting flight. The monkeys that were recovered were six to seven inches long and weighed about 150 gms.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

India is home to two species of loris-- the Slow Loris *Nycticebus bengalensis* and the Slender Loris *Loris lydekerianus*. Both the species are listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 giving them full protection against hunting, trade or any other use. According to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, the Slow Loris is listed as Vulnerable and the Slender Loris is listed as a species of Least Concern. International trade is further regulated under CITES. The Slow Loris is listed in Appendix I of CITES and the Slender Loris is in Appendix II.

The animals are captured from the wild and have their teeth plucked out to make them more amenable. Whilst the scale of the trade appears quite extensive in South-east Asia, it has largely escaped public attention in India. In India, both the Slender Loris and the Slow Loris have been recorded in trade and TRAFFIC highlighted the plight of lorises in the last issue of TRAFFIC Post (Issue 15). To view the newsletter, please visit

http://www.wfindia.org/about_wwf/enablers/traffic/newsletter/

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CITES UPDATE: CITES initiatives to curb smuggling of elephant ivory and rhino horn



© WWF-Cannon / Bas Huisbrechts

The 62nd meeting of the Standing Committee of CITES adopted crucial measures to halt the escalation of ivory and rhino horn smuggling.

The decisions taken are ratcheting up pressure on a number of countries to be held accountable over their failure to deal with rampant poaching and illegal trade, but so far no sanctions or punitive measures have been agreed to.

African countries identified as the main sources of illegal ivory in trade, plus Asian and East African transit countries and the two countries with the largest illegal ivory consumer markets—China and Thailand—were given until the end of the year by the Standing Committee to provide written reports of the level of progress they have made in tackling the illicit trade.

Failure to do so could ultimately result in suspension of all trade in CITES-listed species with the concerned country.

Thailand had already been called upon to submit a report, and did so at this Standing Committee meeting. WWF and TRAFFIC expressed the view that the report was vague and non-committal, and joined others in calling for a time frame for implementing the legislative changes needed to close a gaping loophole that allows ivory from illegal sources to be laundered in the Thai marketplace.

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The country at the centre of the rising demand for illegal rhino horn—Viet Nam—was similarly instructed to report on the progress it had made in curbing rhino horn demand. In particular, Viet Nam will need to explain what measures have been initiated and implemented to prevent illegal import and trade in rhino horn, how the black market in rhino horn is being targeted in the country, and what is being done to discourage rhino horn use.

“Viet Nam is the principal driver of rhino horn trafficking and, as such, has an international obligation to curb the demand for horn, implement national trade controls and help end rhino poaching in Africa,” said Tom Milliken, TRAFFIC's rhino expert.

The Standing Committee also instructed CITES' Rhino Working Group to focus on actions needed to reduce demand for rhino horn and tasked it with developing a demand reduction strategy, taking into account the inputs from the experts' meeting convened by TRAFFIC and WWF in November last year on messaging to reduce consumer demand for Tigers and other endangered wildlife species.

The illegal trade in Tiger parts was also on the agenda of the Standing Committee, with TRAFFIC highlighting its work on reducing demand for Tiger products, while China reaffirmed its commitment to the ban on trade in Tiger parts, but made no firm statements about phasing out existing Tiger farms.

Read more at <http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/7/27/cites-bares-teeth-but-can-it-bite.html>

TRAFFIC Alert



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Source:

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-09-25/delhi/34081701_1_lorises-small-monkey-slender-loris;
<http://wildlifecrimeinindia.blogspot.in/2011/09/sle-nder-loris-seized-in-go-a.html>;
<http://www.hindu.com/2006/02/02/stories/2006020213320500.htm>;
<http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/4/3/loris-trade-not-so-slow.html>;
<http://www.internationalanimalrescue.org/projects/25/Saving+the+slow+loris.html>

Pangolin scales seized in Mizoram

More than 386 kg of pangolin scales were seized by the officials of Customs department from Tuirial Airfield village in Mizoram on 2 September 2012. Customs officials said that the scales were probably intended to be smuggled to Myanmar. The scales of pangolin, also known as 'scaly anteater', now a highly endangered species, are widely used in traditional medicines in East and South East Asia.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

There are two species of pangolins found in India—Indian Pangolin *Manis crassicaudata* and Chinese Pangolin *Manis pentadactyla*. While the Indian Pangolin is widespread within India, the Chinese Pangolin is confined to Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Tripura, Mizoram and northern part of West Bengal. Both the species are protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 of India.

It is perturbing to learn that large volumes of pangolin scales continue to be found in illegal trade. Although pangolins are traded locally throughout India (Mitra 1998), the main threat to their survival comes from the high demand from international markets in China and South-east Asia both for their flesh, which is considered a delicacy and a 'tonic food' for its alleged medicinal properties, and for their scales. Currently all international trade in Asian pangolin species is not permitted under CITES.

Until recently, it appears that most illegal pangolin trade was focused on South-east Asia, but there now appears to be a growing international trade from India too, with traders targeting areas as far as the interior peninsular region. (See TRAFFIC Post October 2010, http://assets.wwfindia.org/downloads/traffic_post_issue_10.pdf and <http://www.deccanchronicle.com/bengaluru/1000-pangolins-hunted-2-months-020>).

The above clearly implies that besides pangolins and their products being in demand in other countries, especially Myanmar, there is also an internal market for consumption. Pangolins are also important in trade in South-east Asia. TRAFFIC has compiled data on the state of this species in Indian trade and recommends stricter action to clamp down on smugglers. New trade connections between India and Myanmar may escalate the illegal trade in pangolins. IUCN has started a new Pangolin Specialist Group to highlight the plight of these species.

Source:<http://www.traffic.org/home/2010/10/28/seized-notebooks-give-unique-insight-into-scale-of-illicit-p.html>; <http://www.business-standard.com/generalnews/news/pangolin-scales-seized-in-mizoram/53362/>; <http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/species/?11100/IUCN-SSC-Pangolin-Specialist-Group-website-launched>; <http://pangolins.org/2011/11/30/pangolin-power-traffic-southeast-asia/>; <http://www.savepangolins.org/conservation/>; http://newswatch.nationalgeographic.com/2009/07/13/asian_pangolins_being_wiped_out/; Mitra, S. in litt., to TRAFFIC India, February 1999. Draft report to the CITES Animals Committee. 205 pp.

TRAFFIC Alert



Eighteen Rhino poachers arrested in Assam

In October 2012, a gang of 18 notorious Karbi poachers who were responsible for butchering at least six rhinos in Kaziranga National Park over the past three years was caught by the Assam police. Two forest employees were also held on suspicion that they were involved in killing the one-horned pachyderms. High calibre arms and ammunition including one AK-47 rifle, 37 rounds of ammunition, two .303 rifles and one gun were seized from them.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Reports continue to emanate from the media on extensive rhino poaching in Kaziranga National Park and other protected areas in Assam. The scenario seems to have taken a turn for the worse in the wake of the recent floods. Rhinos have been targeted by what appear to be new poaching syndicates that crudely hack off their horns whilst the animals are still alive. Recent reports say Kaziranga alone has lost 39 rhinos in the last 10 months. The current situation is alarming to say the least. TRAFFIC encourages stricter patrolling and greater collaboration among all enforcement agencies, both within the territory and with bordering countries to curb the ongoing rhino slaughter. TRAFFIC also recommends the documentation of existing rhino horn stockpiles and encourages efforts to eliminate the demand in rhino horn that results in the products being smuggled abroad.

Source:<http://www.thehindu.com/news/states/other-states/a-gang-of-18-rhino-poachers-nabbed-in-assam/article4002582.ece>;
<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/283172/39-rhinos-killed-10-months.html>;
<http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/at-kaziranga-hopes-dim-for-rhino-mutilated-by-poachers-273262>;
<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/vets-battle-to-save-maimed-rare-rhino/story-e6frg6so-1226483721112>;
http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/_news/2012/10/02/14183314-after-7-rhinos-slaughtered-india-races-to-protect-one-from-death?lite;
<http://www.rnw.nl/english/bulletin/poachers-target-rhinos-flood-hit-ne-india>

IN FOCUS:

Four Leopards poached every week, finds TRAFFIC's latest report on illegal trade in Leopard parts (Interview with Rashid Raza, the lead author of the report)



According to TRAFFIC's latest study "Illuminating the Blind Spot: A study on illegal trade in Leopard parts in India", on average at least four Leopards have been poached every week and their body parts traded through illegal wildlife trade channels in the last 10 years in India. The report was launched on 28 September 2012 by Dr Divyabhanusinh Chavda, President, WWF-India.

What is TRAFFIC's report 'Illuminating the Blind Spot' about?

TRAFFIC took up a study on illegal trade in Leopard skin, bones and other body parts with an aim;

- to provide indicators of the severity of the illegal trade in Leopard parts in India
- to detect illegal Leopard trade hotspots
- to identify regions where effective and enhanced enforcement measures could have a significant impact in curbing this trade.

The study compiles and analyses data for 10 years from 2001 to 2010. We enumerate only those Leopard deaths which are related to illegal trade. Many Leopards are killed due to Leopard-human conflict, we do not include these in our assessment.

Why "Blind spot" in the title?

Even though the media frequently reports on illegal trade and seizures of Leopard skins and other body parts, this subject has not received the proper attention that it deserves. The crime of illegal trade in Leopards seems to be a collective blind spot.



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What motivated TRAFFIC to take up this study?

Reports of Leopard poaching and illegal trade in Leopards in India are frequent. However, there was no systematic assessment regarding the magnitude of this trade and the prevailing trends. With no such strategy on which to base appropriate action, Leopard numbers could dwindle rapidly, just as happened in the case of the Tiger. TRAFFIC has been concerned about the future of Leopards in India and the impact the illegal trade could have on the species. It therefore initiated the study to highlight the magnitude of the trade, its hotspots, trends and to suggest remedial actions.

What is the population status of the Leopard in India?

Even though the Leopard is found all across India, there is no reliable estimate of its population. A review of literature regarding population densities in Asia indicates that although the species may have a wide geographical range, it is unlikely to occur in relatively high abundance.

What is the legal status of the species in India?

Leopard *Panthera pardus* is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The Act provides the species complete protection against hunting and trade. The Leopard is also listed in Appendix I of CITES, which prohibits its commercial international trade.

What are the main threats?

Illegal trade in Leopards' body parts, such as skins and bones, continues to be one of the major threats to the species in the wild. Besides illegal wildlife trade, conflict with humans and habitat degradation and loss are taking a toll on the species.



© Xu Ling/TRAFFIC

What drives illegal trade of Leopards in India?

The lucrative economic gains as a result of demand for skins and other body parts is the major driver of illegal trade of Leopards in India. Of the total seizure incidents recorded during the last 10-year period, almost 90% involved only skins. These are most likely smuggled to East and South-east Asian countries. In traditional Asian medicines, Leopard parts are sometimes prescribed as substitutes for Tiger body parts.

What are the key findings of the study in India?

1. Analysis of the 420 seizure incidents recorded during the 2001-2010 period revealed that body parts of at least 1127 Leopards were seized from the illegal trade. This averages out at recorded seizures of 2.2 Leopards every week.
2. TRAFFIC's study also estimates the undetected part of trade during this period. As per the analysis, the total estimated Leopards poached and in illegal trade in the decade

2001-2010 is around 2294. This gives an estimate of at least four Leopards poached and illegally traded every week for the past 10 years.

3. Delhi emerged as the most important hub for illegal trade in Leopard parts. It is followed by the bordering areas of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana. Uttarakhand emerges as a major source, in contrast to Delhi which seems to be a major collection centre.

What is the methodology of the study?

The chief sources of data on Leopard seizure incidents for the period 2001-2010 were media reports and Forest department seizure records. Other records of mortality either reported as natural or due to conflict with people were not included. All data were geo-referenced and brought into a geographic information system for visualization and further analysis. A simple mapping of seizure locations provides an approximate understanding of where the concentrations of illegal trade are likely to be.

It was possible to arrive at a minimum number of Leopards involved in each incident, based on the seizure records. For example, in cases of recovery of bones, 6 kg of bones is assumed to account for one individual, whereas five skins meant five Leopards. (See page 13 of the report for more details.)

For the undetected part of the trade, 'Mark-Recapture open population models' were used. This method is well known for its use in estimating animal populations when it is not possible to count all individuals.

What do you expect to be changed with this report?

1. Improved understanding of illegal trade in Leopards.
2. Strengthened Wildlife Law Enforcement
3. Ecological knowledge on Leopards should be gathered with a sense of urgency.

The report can be downloaded at <http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/9/28/four-leopards-a-week-enter-indias-illegal-wildlife-trade.html>



© Samir Sinha

WILD CRY

(Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.)

Tokay not okay! New threat emerges from illegal wildlife trade



© Nick Hobgood

Tokay Gecko *Gekko gecko* is a large, brightly coloured, noisy gecko found in eastern India. The loud distinctive call of the species “To-kay”, gives the species its name. Calls may be uttered under distress, but more commonly heard are the territorial calls, produced with the aid of well-developed vocal cords.

The Tokay Gecko is the second largest gecko species, attaining lengths of about 11–20 inches (28–51 cm) for males, and 7–19 inches (18–48 cm) for females, with weights of 150–400g.

They have a bluish or greyish body with spots from light yellow to bright red. The male is more brightly colored than the female.

Tokay Geckos have a really strong bite for lizards of their size.

Distribution: In India, the species is found in Bihar, West Bengal, Assam and Tripura States. Internationally, it is found in Nepal, Bangladesh, throughout South-east Asia, from the Philippines to Indonesia, and in western New Guinea. Its native habitat is largely trees and cliffs, and it also frequently adapts to rural human habitations, roaming walls and ceilings at night in search of insect prey.

Status: Tokay Gecko like many other gecko species found in India is not protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. It is also not listed under CITES.

Mr Saurabh Sharma, Senior Advocate and an expert on wildlife laws says, “In cases where an animal is not covered in schedule I to IV of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 as in the case with Tokay Gecko, no cases can be booked under this Act. However, Tokay Gecko is found in India and therefore is a biological resource as defined under Section 2(c) of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002. A foreigner is required to obtain approval from the National Biodiversity Board (Section 3) and an Indian citizen needs to get similar approval from State Biodiversity Board (Section 7) to obtain a biological resource for commercial utilization.

Where a person obtains a biological resource for commercial utilization without such approval, in the case of a foreigner the punishment would be five years confinement, or a fine of INR 10 lakh, or both [Section 55(1)], while in the case of an Indian citizen the punishment would be three years or a fine of INR 5 lakh, or both [Section 55(2)]. Noticeably, any attempt or abetment to obtain a biological resource is also an offence, with the same punishment, so the provisions of the Act are very stringent. It is further important to point out that, as per Section 58, the offences in this Act are cognizable and non bailable i.e the enforcement agency can arrest the offender without a warrant and bail can be granted only by the Court.

The Complaint in this Act can be filed by any officer authorized under Section 61(a) of the Act. The MoEF by its notification dated 7 January 2009 has authorized forest officers not below the rank of Range Officers to file complaints under this Act for violations within their respective jurisdiction. Therefore, all forest officers with a rank of range officer and above can file a complaint under Section 61(a) of the Act in the case of seizures of Tokay Geckos within their jurisdictional area”.

Threats: Increasing urbanization is an important reason behind reduction of habitat and range. However, another sinister threat looms over the future of the species in the wild. TRAFFIC found that unwarranted claims of a potential cure for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) are behind a boom in the trade of Tokay Geckos.

The animals are popular in the global pet trade and have long been traded—both legally and illegally—for use in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) in the belief they can cure various maladies including diabetes, asthma, skin disease and cancer. In parts of Asia, Tokay wine or whisky is consumed to increase strength and energy.

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Recently, however, the medicinal demand for Tokay Geckos has skyrocketed, with dozens of new websites in Malaysia, a major hub of the trade, dedicated to buying and selling Tokay Geckos. Messages have been circulating in online blogs, fora, newspaper articles, classified advertisements and amongst wildlife dealers in the region, extolling the consumption of Tokay Gecko tongue and internal organs as a cure for HIV and even cancer.

Tokay Geckos are not so popular in the pet trade. When a Tokay bites, it often won't let go for a few minutes, or even for up to an hour or more, and it is very difficult to remove without causing harm to the gecko.

Khalid Pasha, Associate Director and Interim Head of TRAFFIC in India said, "It is important that the Tokay Gecko be included in the Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972 so that it receives the necessary protection. It is evident that there is illicit trade in the species. There is an immediate need to sensitize various enforcement agencies, especially the State Forest departments, about the extent of the trade and legal provisions of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 which could help in bringing this illegal trade to a halt".

Seizures of Tokay Gecko from India in 2012

On 30 July 2012, Bishnupur District Divisional Forest Office, and Nambol police seized eight Tokay geckos in the Kamong area, Bishnupur District, Manipur. Another seizure involving this species was made in this location in the recent past, and on 10 October 2012, Manipur police seized a further 30 Tokay Geckos from two people during an operation in Thoubal district. It is reported that most of the specimens of this species caught in Manipur are taken to Thailand via Myanmar, for onward transportation to Malaysia and Indonesia. There were no arrests.

[http://sevensisterspost.com/tokay-geckos-seized-in-manipur/;](http://sevensisterspost.com/tokay-geckos-seized-in-manipur/)

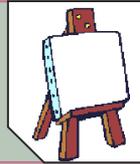
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/guwahati/30-tokay-geckos-seized-in-Manipur/articleshow/16759303.cms>

References: A photographic guide to snakes and other reptiles of India by Indraneil Das;
<http://www.traffic.org/home/2011/11/16/tokay-gecko-trade-boom-in-south-east-asia.html>



Tokay Geckos sold as a cure for lung ailments.
Hong Kong, China

SIGNPOST: Other Significant news stories to read



Conservation India » Shocking Amur Falcon Massacre in Nagaland - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

www.conservationindia.org/campaigns/amur-massacre

Conservation India » Shocking Amur ...

Shocking Amur Falcon Massacre in Nagaland

by Shashank Dalvi and Ramki Sreenivasan

This is a documentation of the shocking massacre of tens of thousands of migratory Amur falcons (*Falco amurensis*) in the remote state of Nagaland in India's northeast. We estimate that during the peak migration 12,000 – 14,000 birds are being hunted for consumption and commercial sale *everyday*. We further estimate that a mind-boggling 120,000 to 140,000 birds are being slaughtered in Nagaland every year during their passage through the state.



03:24

This is probably the single largest congregation of Amur falcons recorded anywhere in the world and it is tragic that they meet such a fate. Our team has alerted all appropriate authorities in Nagaland. Government officials we spoke to have committed to put an end to the slaughter and

TAKE ACTION

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Amurs lying in a hunter's home



About 12,000 to 14,000 birds are trapped everyday.

Document download

View more images of the Amur Falcon massacre PDF File

A hunter carrying amurs to Pangti village



Investigation by Conservation India into the massacre of Amur Falcons on their passage migration in Nagaland shocked India and the world. Read more at <http://www.conservationindia.org/campaigns/amur-massacre>

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TRAFFIC
The Wildlife Trade Information Action Center

an initiative of WWF and IUCN



TRAFFIC

the wildlife trade monitoring network

ISSUE 17
MARCH, 2013

POST

TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



**Trade, trapping
and utilization
of the
“Common” Hill
Myna and
“Lesser” Hill
Myna in India:
Wild Cry
feature.....**



TRAFFIC Post



medicinal plants.

TRAFFIC Post is TRAFFIC's newsletter on wildlife trade in India. It was started in September 2007 with a primary aim to create awareness on rampant poaching and illegal wildlife trade in India and how it affects the endangered flora and fauna. Since then it has covered not only issues related to illegal wildlife trade but also highlighted policies and trends related to legitimate wildlife trade especially in timber and

The newsletter began as a quarterly e-newsletter available only for online distribution. However after a few issues it was converted into a printed edition with three issues coming out every year. The response to the newsletter over the years has been overwhelming and the subscribers continue to increase with every issue.

Besides carrying updates on TRAFFIC's work in India in a given period, the newsletter focuses on the plight of various species in illegal wildlife trade. It also provides early warning through its various sections on illegal wildlife trade trends. The CITES section and the OUTPOST section especially is meant to keep its readers updated on global news related to wildlife trade.

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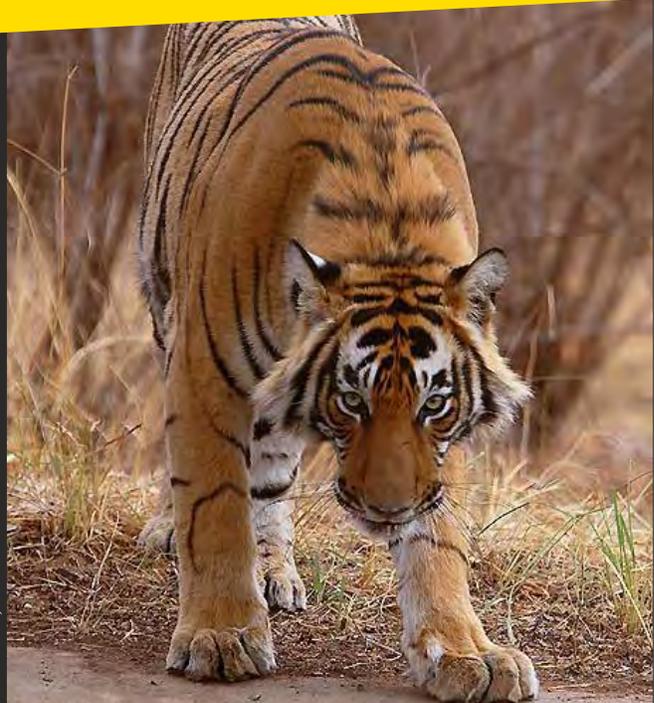
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Front cover: Common Hill-myna
picture by Abar Ahmed



TRAFFIC POST

the wildlife trade monitoring network



TRAFFIC INDIA UPDATE

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- **US and India co-operate to combat illegal trade in wildlife** Pg 4
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- **Border security forces take stock of wildlife crime** Pg 6 in the region
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OUTPOST



CITES UPDATE



TRAFFIC ALERT

- **TRAFFIC Alert (Latest news on illegal wildlife trade in India):** Pg 8
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- **Snow Leopard skin seized in Dehradun** Pg 10
- **Three arrested in Delhi for smuggling Tiger skin** Pg 11
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IN FOCUS



© Abrar Ahmed

WILD CRY

Pg 14

Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.

Trade, trapping and utilization of the "Common" Hill Myna and "Lesser" Hill Myna in India

New leadership for TRAFFIC in India



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Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj who joined on deputation as Head of TRAFFIC in India on 14 January 2013 is based at the WWF-India Secretariat.

Dr Niraj holds an MSc and an MPhil in Chemistry from the University of Delhi and a PhD in Natural Resources Studies from the University of Arizona, USA where he explored the impact of sustainable development on illegal wildlife trade and poaching for 5 years from 2004 to 2009. He also has a PG diploma in Wildlife Management and Biodiversity Conservation (1996) from the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun. He is a certified GIS practitioner from the University of Arizona, USA. Dr Niraj has about 20 years of experience with the Indian Forests Service.

During most of his tenures, Dr Niraj has dealt with issues of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife, and implementation of wildlife laws including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). He has received commendations and awards from the International Wildlife Foundation. He has published peer-reviewed papers on illegal trade, poaching and wildlife policy matters in reputed international journals. Dr Niraj has been involved in developing several government projects on biodiversity conservation focused on endangered species. Prior to joining TRAFFIC, Dr Niraj worked as Conservator of Forests and Director, Gulf of Mannar, Marine Biosphere Reserve since October 2010. He was promoted to the rank of Chief Conservator of Forests in Tamil Nadu shortly before joining TRAFFIC in India.

MKS Pasha, Associate Director, TRAFFIC in India said: “We welcome Dr Niraj to TRAFFIC and are looking forward to working with him. His experience and expertise in this field should help TRAFFIC achieve its goals of curbing illegal wildlife trade in India and the South Asia region”.

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US and India co-operate to combat illegal trade in wildlife

(Includes exclusive interview with Dr Robert D. Hormats, US Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and Environment on Wildlife Trade)



In the wake of US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's speech on protecting wildlife made in November 2012 in Washington DC, TRAFFIC in India in partnership with WWF-India and the US Embassy jointly organized a panel discussion on illegal trade in wildlife on 29 January 2013, in India. The US Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and Environment Robert D. Hormats co-chaired the discussions with the WWF-India SG & CEO Ravi Singh at the WWF-India Secretariat in New Delhi.

At the roundtable, US and Indian government officials, NGOs, wildlife lawyers and enforcement officials discussed some of their challenges and successes in combating wildlife trafficking. Dr Hormats emphasized the need for high-level political will, public outreach and greater international coordination and cooperation to combat wildlife trafficking, including the strengthening of regional enforcement networks such as the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN).



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Robert D. Hormats, US Under Secretary (right) ; Ravi Singh, SG & CEO, WWF-India

WWF-India SG & CEO, Ravi Singh elaborated on the critical link between the decline of India's wildlife species and the alarming trends in illegal wildlife trafficking. “It is imperative that issues of illegal wildlife trade should be taken up in a strategic manner, linking national agencies and senior government executives. Here, the US government can be an important partner on global wildlife intelligence, networking and sharing of best practices in enforcement.”

Continued on page 5

Continued from page 4

Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC in India highlighted the magnitude of wildlife crime and illegal wildlife trade, and how it has become one of the most important challenges in the conservation of species today. While making a presentation at the roundtable, he demonstrated the emerging linkage between the growing economy and illegal wildlife trade and poaching highlighting that these aspects must be scientifically investigated further. He said: "Whether at the local, regional or global level, the efforts to eliminate wildlife crimes need to be assisted collectively with our trained skills, scientific knowledge, and improved resources".

At this important meeting, Mr Megh Bahadur Pandey, Director General, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation in Nepal and Chief Enforcement Coordinator, SAWEN, stressed the need to strengthen cross-border cooperation for eradicating wildlife crime as manifested in the SAWEN initiative.

The US and India have worked together on wildlife conservation for over 25 years to combat poaching, manage wildlife resources, improve enforcement capacity and reduce consumer demand for illegal wildlife products.

Mr Somesh Goyal, Additional Director General, Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB); Mr Rajiv Walia and Dr G.K. Goswami, United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Mr O P S Malik, former Director General, Indian Police Service, provided their perspective and experience in tackling wildlife crime.



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Interview with Dr Hormat's on illegal wildlife trade

1. How does the United States perceive the likely overall impacts of the illegal wildlife trade on wildlife conservation globally, particularly in South Asia, and how does the US perceive India's position in controlling the global illegal wildlife trade?



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Wildlife trafficking not only seriously undermines conservation efforts globally, but also threatens international security, livelihoods and public health. While it is not a new phenomenon, there has been a significant increase in the number of poaching incidents and the sophistication of poaching operations. Unchecked demand for exotic pets, clothing and jewellery, traditional medicines, and exotic foods has driven many species to extinction or near-extinction. Wildlife trafficking is often intertwined with other illegal activities that undermine the security and stability of regions and communities. South Asia, particularly India, is a biodiversity hotspot, which also makes it attractive to poachers. A common theme we discussed at the recent wildlife roundtable organized by TRAFFIC and the US Embassy in New Delhi was how the skins and parts of endangered species are being recovered in different countries from where the animals were originally killed. This highlights the importance of international coordination of intelligence and enforcement activities. Much of the wildlife that is poached in India is

destined for markets elsewhere. India can be a leader in engaging other governments to cooperate in the fight against poaching and trafficking, while strengthening its own enforcement agencies and capabilities. India has excellent wildlife laws and can support better coordination between regional enforcement networks and promote dialogue and greater cooperation among enforcement agencies in the region. We support India's efforts in stamping out all kinds of wildlife crime, which is an important goal of the Indian government and its people.

2. What roles can TRAFFIC and WWF play in cooperating with the US government to achieve common objectives of controlling illegal wildlife trade and thus enhance conservation? Organizations like WWF and TRAFFIC play a crucial leadership role in conserving wildlife and curbing illegal trade in wildlife. The United States is a major destination and transit point for trafficked wildlife articles, primarily exotic pets, and, to that extent, we are part of the problem. However, we are determined to be part of the solution. The United States coordinates wildlife conservation and enforcement efforts with other governments, international organizations and conventions, NGOs and the private sector using a four-pillar "Conservation Matters" strategy: 1) Catalysing political will and diplomatic outreach; 2) engaging in public diplomacy and outreach; 3) identifying training and technology needs; and 4) building on existing partnerships and initiating new cooperation to improve enforcement capacity and reduce consumer demand. The US and India have been cooperating on wildlife conservation issues for many years. We pride ourselves in working together with organizations like WWF and TRAFFIC to achieve our common goals of conserving wildlife globally.

4. Will the United States be willing to extend much needed resources and support to TRAFFIC and other major agencies in India that are involved in combating illegal wildlife trade and crimes? The United States supports innovative transnational approaches to address wildlife trafficking. We also provide financial and technical support to wildlife protection programs in several countries. We, along with our partners around the world, are committed to taking meaningful steps to strengthen global efforts to combat illegal trade in wildlife by promoting public education, capacity building, global cooperation, and increased enforcement. We have supported the formation of the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN), of which India is an active member. At the Second Asian Ministerial Meeting on Tiger Conservation, the US Ambassador to India and Bhutan announced USAID's funding for INTERPOL's Project PREDATOR to support the SAWEN in protecting wild tigers. We will encourage our embassies around the globe to include wildlife trafficking and conservation issues in official bilateral or regional policy dialogues.

Continued to page 6

Continued from page 5

5. How will information be shared by the US Department of State among international agencies connected with wildlife law enforcement and intelligence collection, and how much of the information will be made available in the public domain? We are willing to share information and best practices on wildlife enforcement as broadly as possible with law enforcement agencies and organizations. Open, honest communication between US law enforcement agencies and their Indian counterparts is essential for



© Samir Sinha

understanding the unique nature of wildlife crime in India and developing the most effective tools to combat it. For example, wildlife forensics is an excellent tool that was used to apprehend Asiatic lion poachers in India a few years ago. Additionally, some high profile species and illicit networks involved in the illegal trade are well known, but there may be many other species and networks that do not get the attention they deserve, or go unreported. While transparency is a vital characteristic of governance, by its nature, law enforcement efforts require some information to be kept confidential. Remember that information in the public domain is available to criminals as well.

6. Irrespective of the fact that each nation has a sovereign right and duty to control its wildlife crimes and eliminate illegal wildlife trade, what suggestions does the US have for the countries in South Asia for dealing with wildlife crimes and regulating illegal wildlife trade more effectively and more globally? Booming economies and growing disposable

incomes in parts of Asia have caused an increase in demand and a spike in prices for many wildlife products. This puts additional pressure on source countries such as India. I believe empowering local communities and making them partners in enforcement can help local enforcement officers gather intelligence. Also, greater economic opportunities for people living around India's vast treasure of wildlife will protect India's cultural heritage by lessening the temptation to make money through poaching. Promoting awareness activities, particularly among youth, will help create a mass support system that speaks for and protects India's biodiversity. Most importantly, empowering our park rangers and foresters, our warriors that protect biodiversity, is crucial for successful conservation efforts. Providing rangers and foresters with the tools and skills they need, incentivizing results, and rewarding their successes will go a long way.

Prior to this important meeting, an awareness initiative through social media was conducted on 4 December 2012 by TRAFFIC in cooperation with the American Center, Embassy of the United States. The initiative was in the form of a Facebook Chat at the American Library to raise awareness about wildlife conservation among Indian youth.



© Divakar Chapagain

US Embassy Environment Officer, John Dunham and TRAFFIC's MKS Pasha fielded questions on wildlife conservation submitted by Facebook fans, and also took questions from a live audience of about 50 American Library patrons. During the chat, a photo album was posted on the page so that the virtual audience could view the event taking place.

- A total of 4722 people viewed the album.
- 48 people asked questions through comments.
- More than 78,000 American Center Facebook fans and more than 120,000 embassy fans benefited from our expertise on wildlife conservation.
- The chat was promoted by the American Center through engaging posts on wildlife conservation for a week prior to the event. Based on the feedback from the live audience, this event helped raise awareness about the harmful effects of illicit wildlife trade.

Border security forces take stock of wildlife crime in the region



The Indo-Nepal border is porous, allowing illegal wildlife traders the opportunity to smuggle wildlife products across the land borders. Security forces operating at checkpoints along the border therefore have a vital role at these first entry and last exit points to control smuggling activities.

TRAFFIC in association with SSB, Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB; India's Central Armed Police Forces) held a two-day training workshop on "Strengthening Wildlife Law Enforcement and Conservation along the Indo-Nepal Border" at Bagaha, Bihar, from 16-17 January 2012.

Over 40 SSB officers along with officials from various forest divisions of Madanpur, Valmikinagar, Gonali and Chiutaha were present at the workshop. During the two days, participants were given an overview of domestic and international trends in illegal wildlife trade, laws pertaining to this trade, the role of CITES in regulating wildlife trade, the latest tools and techniques available to fight wildlife crime, the significance of intelligence sharing, and an overview of global organized wildlife crime.

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The workshop was inaugurated by Mr H. Jiten Singh, 2nd in Command, 21st Battalion SSB Bagaha. Also present were Mr Nand Kishore, IFS, DFO-Valmiki Tiger Reserve, Mr Saurabh Sharma, Advocate, Delhi High Court, Mr Roy Choudhury, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) and Dr Rashid H. Raza from TRAFFIC in India.

Mr H. Jiten Singh said the training would help SSB personnel and other participants understand the problems and enhance their knowledge and skills in dealing with wildlife crime. Such meetings provide a common platform for bringing together enforcement officials from various agencies to share their experiences and knowledge, he said, and he congratulated the efforts of TRAFFIC for supporting this process.

Dr Raza gave an overview of wildlife crime and trade. He noted that Tiger, Leopard and otter skins, Rhino horn, Red Sanders, live elephants and ivory, bear bile, live birds were among the wildlife products being smuggled to Nepal and beyond.

Mr Sharma discussed India's Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and other ancillary laws related to wildlife crime. He also provided an insight into the investigation of wildlife cases and the significance of rigorous evidence collection for effective legal action.

Mr Roy Choudhury gave an overview of the various modus operandi used by wildlife criminals. He emphasized the role WCCB can play in assisting various enforcement agencies in combating illicit wildlife trade.

This workshop was the seventh in a series organized jointly by Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and TRAFFIC.

TRAFFIC provides training inputs at INTERPOL's Intelligence Management Course on Environment Enforcement



Twenty eight law-enforcement officers from 11 Asian countries gathered in Kathmandu, Nepal, to attend an Information and Intelligence Management Course on Environmental Enforcement initiated by INTERPOL from 17-21 December 2012.

The course was organized by INTERPOL's Environmental Crime Programme and Nepal's INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB) within the framework of Project PREDATOR, and as collaboration with the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN). The SAWEN Secretariat is hosted by the Government of Nepal.

The objective of the training event was to increase the effectiveness of trans-boundary law enforcement actions and enhance information sharing among government agencies on environmental crime. TRAFFIC was invited to attend the workshop as trainers and provided expertise on illegal wildlife trade to participants during the working group sessions. MKS Pasha from TRAFFIC's team in India, delivered a module on recording information.

The meeting brought together senior investigators and intelligence analysts from various law-enforcement agencies from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Indonesia, India, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

In various sessions, TRAFFIC stressed that inter-agency information exchange is crucial, both at national and international levels, especially with regard to combating wildlife crime involving Asian big cats and other endangered species.

The training sessions were particularly important to enhance law enforcement efforts dealing with organized transnational criminal activity and illegal wildlife trade. Richard Charrette, Lead Facilitator for INTERPOL, noted that it was not just a learning exercise, but a collective opportunity to crack down on environmental crime.



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Countries meet to upscale Snow Leopard Conservation initiatives



Bishkek, the scenic capital of Kyrgyzstan was host to two important meetings dedicated to conservation of Snow Leopards in the wild. The first meeting (1-3 December 2012), an international forum of Snow Leopard range countries (SLRC) was hosted by the Government of Kyrgyz Republic along with World Bank and other partners. It was attended by representatives of Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. In addition, Snow Leopard conservation experts from several global organizations including ISLT, SLC, NABU, WWF, WCS, TRAFFIC, CITES were present for the deliberations.

Country representatives and experts presented and refined Snow Leopard conservation plans. The efforts were focused on the conservation of the whole high altitude ecosystem inhabited by the Snow Leopard. The forum endeavoured to develop "Snow Leopard ecosystem conservation plan to consolidate a program of global action to recover and sustain the vanishing species and its high-mountain landscapes" (World Bank <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2012/12/01/world-bank-to-support-kyrgyz-republic-in-leading-global-efforts-to-protect-snow-leopards>).

Illegal trade of Snow Leopard fur and bones was highlighted during the meeting and recognized as a major threat to the species. The killing of Snow Leopards for illegal trade was unambiguously distinguished from retaliatory killing of Snow Leopards due to depredation on livestock (a problem which requires very different solutions compared to combating illegal trade).

The CITES representative also highlighted the commitment under CITES for all member countries to report all illegal trade-related statistics to relevant CITES authorities.

Workshop recommendations: The broad recommendation of the workshop was that all "SLRCs consider adopting the collective goal of stabilizing or increasing Snow Leopard populations and maintaining and restoring habitat in large landscapes."

A specific recommendation to combat illegal trade was also adopted by the forum. "Combat poaching and illegal trade and reduce demand by strengthening national systems of law enforcement and collaborating among countries, and improving reporting snow leopard crimes to CITES."

Following the meeting of the International Forum of Snow Leopard range countries, an initiation workshop for the USAID funded WWF-US project on conservation of Snow Leopard and its ecosystem was held (4-7 December 2012). The project is titled "Conservation and Adaptation in Asia's High Mountain Landscapes and Communities" and is to be implemented in the Kyrgyz Republic, Bhutan, India, Mongolia, Nepal and Pakistan. It also seeks to build alliances for conservation in all SLRCs.

The primary goal of the project is, "to stimulate greater understanding and action on the environment, by helping conserve this iconic and endangered species, as well as by connecting Snow Leopard conservation to a broader set of environmental, economic and social issues with consequences for Asia's future sustainability, including local livelihoods, water and food security, and climate change adaptation."

TRAFFIC is a partner in this project and will study the illegal trade of Snow Leopards, updating its 2003 report, "Fading Footprints", on the same subject. TRAFFIC will also closely collaborate with INTERPOL's "Project PREDATOR" initiative to develop capacity and effective cooperation in SLRCs to combat the threat of illegal trade in Snow Leopards. Thus both these global initiatives have clearly recognized illegal trade in Snow Leopards as a major threat and have begun efforts for global cooperation and effective enforcement action.

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TRAFFIC Alert



Eleven hundred and fifty kilograms of Shahtoosh enroute to India seized in Nepal

In January 2013, Nepal Police seized 46 sacks weighing 1150 kg, filled with the wool of the endangered Tibetan antelope used for making luxury shawls, allegedly being smuggled to India. The sacks were seized from two houses in Thumi village of Gurkha district, 140 km west of Kathmandu. The police confirmed that the wool was being illegally routed to India from Chinese Tibet through Nepal.

TRAFFIC in India adds.....

Shahtoosh, manufactured from the under wool of the endangered Tibetan Antelope, or Chiru, *Pantheolops hodgsonii*, is a prized product in illegal wildlife trade and it is of particular concern that this shipment was reportedly destined for India.

The species is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 of India and also listed in Appendix I of CITES. A single Chiru provides approximately 150 g of wool and 1150 kg of seized shahtoosh clearly implies that at least 7600 Chirus were slaughtered for their underwool.

Shahtoosh shawl-making requires special looms and skills, which traditionally for centuries have only been available in Kashmir. However, intelligence reports suggests that weaving might have been shifted to the Punjab, implying that traffickers are devising new strategies to keep this operation alive.

TRAFFIC has previously highlighted the dangers posed by the shahtoosh trade to the survival of the Chiru through reports published in 1999 and 2000. TRAFFIC in India has also collaborated with the Wildlife Institute of India in producing a simple manual for quick identification of shahtoosh hair. A huge seizure of 32 shahtoosh shawls took place at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi in August 2012. *Continued on page 9*

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This meeting was an important milestone towards the Global Snow Leopard Forum of Heads of State meeting to be held in fall 2013, at the initiative of the Kyrgyz Republic government. (<http://blog.usaid.gov/2012/12/no-mountain-too-high-saving-the-snow-leopards-ecosystems-and-communities-of-high-asia/>; (World Bank <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2012/12/01/world-bank-to-support-kyrgyz-republic-in-leading-global-efforts-to-serve-snow-leopards>).

Bear necessities: International conference highlights need to eradicate illegal trade in wild bears



© Akbar Ahmed

More than 300 experts from 37 countries congregated in India at the 21st Conference of the International Bear Association held from 26-30 November 2012, to discuss a wide range of bear conservation, research and management issues. TRAFFIC was represented at the meeting by Dr Chris R Shepherd, TRAFFIC's Deputy Director in South-East Asia and by Shubhobroto Ghosh, Senior Programme Officer from India.

Asia's bears are of special concern as demand for their parts for use in traditional medicines has increasingly become a serious threat to the conservation of these species. The illegal trade in bear bile and other bear products was highlighted by TRAFFIC and others, with the threats to Asia's wild bear species being of extreme concern.

In 2011, TRAFFIC launched *Pills, powders, vials and flakes: The bear trade in Asia*, a report based on an investigation of the trade in bear parts across 13 countries and territories in South-East and East Asia. The report found evidence of widespread illegal sourcing and trade in wild bears and recommended increased efforts to enforce national laws, and better implementation of the CITES in the region.

"Efforts to shut down the illegal trade in bear parts in Asia is essential," Shepherd told conference delegates. "In parallel to increasing enforcement efforts, it is important that steps are taken to reduce demand for bear products, through raising the awareness of laws and conservation issues, and through the promotion of legal herbal and synthetic alternatives to bear bile amongst traditional medicine users."

Shubhobroto Ghosh from TRAFFIC in India articulated challenges still existing in India for saving bears, including human-bear conflict issues, habitat loss and persistent poaching for illegal trade.

The conference provided the venue for the release of the first, "National Bear Conservation and Welfare Action Plan 2012" by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, India, which was officially launched by the Honorable Indian Environment Minister, Mrs Jayanthi Natarajan.

The 21st International Conference on Bear Research and Management was organized jointly by the International Bear Association, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Central Zoo Authority of India, the IUCN SSC Bear Specialist Group, Wildlife Institute of India, Wildlife Trust of India, World Society for the Protection of Animals and the International Fund for Animal Welfare.

TRAFFIC Alert



Continued from page 8

Source: <http://www.nzweek.com/world/nepal-police-seize-1150-kg-fur-of-endangered-tibetan-antelope-41278/> ; http://www.endangeredspecieshandbook.org/trade_tibetan.php; <http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Huge+cache+of+Shahtoosh+seized&NewsID=360846> ; <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/NewDelhi/Shah-toosh-shawls-seized-at-IGI-airport/Article1-907369.aspx>; http://www.cites.org/gallery/species/mammal/tibetan_antelope.html ; www.traffic.org

Thirty Tokay geckos seized in Manipur enroute to India seized in Nepal

In October 2012, Manipur Police seized 30 Tokay Geckos *Gekko gekko*, a rare reptile species, during an operation at Waikhong village in Thoubal district. The reptiles, kept inside a wooden box, were seized from two labourers.

Similarly, joining the multi-pronged drive against the increasing poaching and smuggling of Tokay Geckos in the state, Assam Rifles personnel seized five geckos believed to be en route to China via Myanmar, from two smugglers at the border town of Moreh in November 2012. In August, 2012, four Tokay Geckos were rescued from Imphal in Manipur. Taking serious note of the reported smuggling of Tokay Geckos from Manipur to foreign countries, the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau urged the Union Ministry of Forests and Environment to include the reptile species in the endangered animals' scheduled list under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

TRAFFIC in India adds.....

TRAFFIC notes with concern the rising trade in this species, especially the burgeoning trade in northeast India, a region that has porous borders and is subject to militancy and the illicit narcotics trade. Recently, in southeast Asia, there has been a surge in the trade in Tokay Geckos due to an unfounded claim of a potential cure for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Continued to page 10

OUTPOST:

Rhinos in crisis poaching and illegal trade reach highest levels in over 20 years



Escalating levels of poaching and illegal trade in rhino horns are seriously undermining rhino conservation efforts, putting the survival of these species at risk—according to a report by IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) and TRAFFIC. The report examines the conservation status and trade in African and Asian rhino species.

“The findings of the report are alarming,” says Tom Milliken, a rhino expert from TRAFFIC. “Today, rhino poaching and illegal horn trade are at their highest levels in over 20 years, threatening to reverse years of conservation effort, particularly in Africa. There is no doubt that rhino species are facing a serious crisis.”

According to the report, by the beginning of 2011 there were 20,165 White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* and 4,880 Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* in Africa. However, at least 1,997 rhinos were poached between 2006 and September 2012 and over 4,000 rhino horns have been illegally exported from Africa since 2009, with an estimated 92% of these coming from rhinos specifically killed to obtain their horn.

South Africa, home to 83% of Africa's rhinos and 73% of all wild rhinos worldwide, is the principal source of rhino horns in illegal trade. A record 668 rhinos were poached there in 2012, according to official government figures released in January 2013.

Illegal trade in rhino horns involves highly organized, mobile and well-financed criminal groups, mainly composed of Asian nationals based in Africa. These networks have recruited pseudo-hunters including Vietnamese citizens, Thai prostitutes and proxy hunters from the Czech Republic and Poland to obtain rhino horns in South Africa on the pretence of trophy hunts for illegal commercial trade purposes.

“Rhinos are killed for their horns, which are seen as highly desirable status symbols in parts of Asia, notably Viet Nam, but also increasingly in China,” says Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Chair of IUCN Species Survival Commission's (SSC) Asian Rhino Specialist Group. “Horns are also increasingly used for non-traditional purposes such as hangover cure and body detoxifier, especially in Viet Nam.”

In Asia, although conservation action in Nepal and India has resulted in increased numbers of the Greater One-horned Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis*, the situation in Indonesia and Malaysia remains serious for the world's two rarest rhino species—the Sumatran Rhinoceros *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis* and the Javan Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros sondaicus*.

Thefts of rhino horns from museums and zoos have increased worldwide, creating the need for improved law enforcement, monitoring and enhanced information management with regards to rhino numbers, sales and translocations, the report finds.

The report was compiled by the IUCN SSC African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups and TRAFFIC. It was mandated by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and aimed to inform the rhino horn debate at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, that took place in March 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Read more at <http://www.traffic.org/home/2013/1/15/rhinos-in-crisis-poaching-and-illegal-trade-reach-highest-le.html>

TRAFFIC Alert



Continued from page 9

TRAFFIC highlighted the Tokay Gecko trade in its last issue of TRAFFIC Post (16 November 2012) and stressed that the trade in this species can be dealt with under the provisions of the Biodiversity Act since the animal is not covered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and is not under protection from CITES.

More efforts are needed to counter the purported medicinal claims regarding the animal, along with stricter enforcement and legal protection measures to save this animal. TRAFFIC recommends strict enforcement of the law and plugging the loopholes in the existing legislation. More studies are needed to evaluate the conservation status of this species so it can be accorded proper protection.

Source:

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-10-11/guwahati/34385747_1_tokay-geckos-rare-reptile-manipur-police ;
http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-11-02/guwahati/34876844_1_tokay-geckos-manipur-forest-officials-assam-rifles ;
<http://www.dw.de/indian-geckos-are-in-high-demand-for-hiv-cures/a-16328544> ;
<http://www.traffic.org/home/2011/11/16/tokay-gecko-trade-boom-in-south-east-asia.html> ;
http://www.wfindia.org/about_wwf/enablers/traffic/newsletter/ ;
http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-10-11/guwahati/34385747_1_tokay-geckos-rare-reptile-manipur-police

Snow Leopard skin seized in Dehradun

Police arrested one person with a Snow Leopard pelt in Dehradun while his accomplice managed to escape. This is the third pelt of the highly endangered Snow Leopard seized in Uttarakhand since the creation of the state in 2000.

TRAFFIC in India adds.....

The Snow Leopard *Uncia uncia* is listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and is also categorized as Endangered by IUCN. The animal is listed in CITES Appendix I. The thick fur pelt for making garments or for decoration is the main Snow Leopard product that is traded illegally.

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CITES UPDATE: IUCN/TRAFFIC Analyses of CoP16 Proposals available



The IUCN/TRAFFIC Analyses of the Proposals to Amend the CITES Appendices at the 16th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP16) are available online on the TRAFFIC website at <http://www.traffic.org/cop16-table/>

CITES is the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. At each CoP meeting, which takes place once every two years, Parties can make proposals to change the listing status of the species in CITES Appendices -- the different categories of Appendices provide varying levels of regulation over international trade. About 35,000 species are listed in three CITES Appendices on which the Parties to CITES regulate wildlife trade by following the norms and procedures provided by the Convention.

The proposals are placed on the agenda for voting by the Parties to accept, reject or make amendments to the proposals put forward for consideration.

The upcoming CoP, the 16th such meeting, will be held from 3-14 March 2013, in Bangkok, Thailand.

IUCN and TRAFFIC have undertaken to provide technical reviews of the Proposals to amend the CITES Appendices prior to every CITES CoP. The analyses aim to provide an objective assessment of each amendment Proposal against the requirements of the Convention as laid out in the listing criteria. The analyses are provided in the anticipation they will provide CITES Parties with useful and relevant information to assist them in their assessment of the amendment Proposals.

The generous support of the following governments and organizations is gratefully acknowledged for the production of the IUCN/TRAFFIC Analyses of the Proposals to Amend the CITES Appendices at the 16th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES: the European Commission, Austria, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Sweden, New Zealand, Germany, the United States of America, Finland, Canada (government of Nunavut), the Netherlands and WWF.

TRAFFIC's Recommendations, stating TRAFFIC's policy position on each of the Proposals, have been available since January 2013 and can be viewed at www.traffic.org

TRAFFIC Alert



Continued from page 10

There is also increasing evidence of Snow Leopard parts being traded illegally. Body parts include bones (used especially in traditional east Asian medicines as a substitute for Tiger bone), claws, meat and the sexual organs of male Snow Leopard.

A TRAFFIC representative recently attended a major international Snow Leopard gathering in Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan to learn as well as to provide inputs on the conservation of the species.

TRAFFIC encourages continued vigilance and monitoring for this animal as part of the Asian big cats campaign. TRAFFIC featured the plight of the Snow Leopard in the latest 'Wanted Alive' poster campaign and emphasized the need for more information and studies to be conducted on the status of this endangered animal. TRAFFIC published a report on illegal trade in the Snow Leopard entitled 'Fading Footprints' in 2003.

Source:

<http://www.dailypioneer.com/nation/11366-2-one-held-with-snow-leopard-pelt-in-dehradun.html>;
www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=apr0210/state07;
http://www.cites.org/gallery/species/mammal/snow_leopard.html;
www.traffic.org

Three arrested in Delhi for smuggling Tiger skin

A factory owner, jeweller and share-broker were arrested in Delhi in January 2013 for smuggling a Tiger skin. The police said that the raid was conducted on the basis of a tip-off received from the animal welfare organization 'People For Animals' (PFA). In another incident in mid-January 2013, the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) seized a stuffed skin of a Bengal Tiger from a house in Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh. The WCCB raided the residence in Surya Nagar along with officers of the Uttar Pradesh Police and an NGO.

TRAFFIC in India adds.....

The year 2012 saw India losing at least 88 Tigers mostly due to poaching. It is worrying that such a significant number of Tigers is still dying due to unnatural causes.

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TRAFFIC Alert



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TRAFFIC continues to focus attention on the illicit wildlife trade that is threatening this magnificent species. TRAFFIC participated in an INTERPOL meeting in Kathmandu in Nepal in December 2012 to underscore attention on a coordinated effort needed to tackle transnational organized criminal activity. TRAFFIC also collaborates with WWF's illegal wildlife trade campaign to strengthen protection initiatives for Tigers and other Asian big cats.

TRAFFIC also maintains a robust presence in advancing towards the goals of SAWEN (South Asian Wildlife Enforcement Network) for better protection of Tigers, Rhino and other wildlife species in the south Asia region.

Source:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-2262363/Stuffed-tiger-seized-Ghaziabad.html>;
<http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/12/27/interpol-provides-intelligence-led-enforcement-training-as-c.html>;
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/environment/flora-fauna/India-US-join-hands-to-tackle-illegal-wildlife-trade/articleshow/18242281.cms>; <http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/6/7/sawen-officials-prioritize-efforts-to-combat-illegal-wildlif.html>

IN FOCUS:

'WILDLIFE ON SALE': An insight into the Sonapur Mela, Bihar

Parakeets, munias, mynas, birds-of-prey along with domesticated exotic species such as budgerigars, lovebirds, cockatiels; and Rhesus Macaque and Hanuman Langur were recorded by Abrar Ahmed, a Consultant to TRAFFIC, at the Sonapur Mela held in 2012 in Bihar. The author visited the fair from 1-3 December 2012.



Sonapur *mela* (fair), also known as the *Harihar Kshetra mela* is held each year in the district of Saran, Sonapur in Bihar. The Sonapur *mela*, Asia's biggest animal fair, is also considered one of the world's largest. The month-long *mela* begins from *Kartik Purnima* (a full moon day in the month of October/November) and is held near the confluence of the river Gandak and the Ganges. Last year, it was inaugurated on 27 November. People from across Bihar and other Indian states, plus many foreigners, visit this fair, which has an estimated turnout of 3-5 million people.

Apart from religious tourism, the major attractions at the *mela* are the various animal bazaars.



© Abrar Ahmed

The Elephant bazaar: This has its origins in ancient times and it is believed that Emperor Chandragupta Maurya used to buy Elephants at this *mela* therefore it is also popularly referred as the Elephant fair. The survey suggested that a few of the Elephants are brought in by some traditional Elephant owners mainly to display their animals at the sacred site, more so as a status symbol, and to meet other Elephant owners with a common interest. A total of 28 Asian Elephants were brought for display at the *mela* in 2012. Only four were tuskers, two with full tusks and other two with half removed tusks.

Sonapur *mela* was formerly very important for domestic trade in Elephants, but now as per the present Government of India rules, no Elephants can be traded by anyone. On speaking to a few Elephant owners, it was found out that Elephants can be 'donated', provided the donor has the proven capability of taking care of the Elephant in terms of feeding and space resource. But reports suggest that this is possibly used as a cover for trade in the species at the *mela*.

On general inquiry, none of the owners openly admitted that the Elephants displayed are for sale and most evaded such questions. However, the author was later told that the cost of Elephants ranges between INR 30, 00,000 and 40, 00,000. Little was discovered about the origin of the Elephants, especially the calves. This needs further investigation and law enforcement.

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The bird bazaar: A very significant portion of this otherwise open fair has a closed section called the *Chriya Bazaar* which sells a large number of wild and exotic birds and primates along with domesticated species such as dogs, rabbits and Guinea Pigs. The sale of exotic species is legal, while the sale of wild birds is against Indian national legislation.



© Abrar Ahmed

This bird market has a single entrance manned by local people who charge a fee of 10-15% on every purchase made by a visitor. The bazaar does not restrict entry, but there is a board at the gate stating that for photography/videography one needs permission from the organizer. However, if such permission is granted, shopkeepers immediately hide their display of rare wild birds. All native Indian birds seen during the survey were believed to originate from the wild.

At least 20 stalls were present inside the bird bazaar, of which two exclusively sold dogs. The rest sold a mixture of wild birds, mainly parakeets, munias, mynas, birds-of-prey, and domesticated exotic species such as Budgerigars, Lovebirds, Cockatiels and Zebra Finches. A total of 26 wild Indian bird species and 9 domesticated bird species along with two primate species were recorded at this *mela* during the visit (Table 1). A few shops displayed young, around one month old, Rhesus Macaques *Macaca mulatta* and Hanuman Langurs *Semnopithecus entellus*, for sale, either kept inside cages or tied by the neck. The animals were sold as pets and were also bought by truck drivers who raise them as guards for their vehicle. Some orchard owners buy Hanuman Langurs, especially males, to train them to chase away Rhesus Macaques.

Most of the traders, mainly Mirshikar traders from Patna, plus some from Siwan and Varanasi, refused to answer questions regarding the wild bird trade.

In addition to these birds, 11 juvenile Hanuman Langurs and approximately 40 juvenile Rhesus Monkeys were recorded. Over an 8 hour period on 2 December (the first Sunday of the *mela*), at least 300 parakeets belonging to three species, more than 400 munias of four species, 30-40 mynas of three species plus at least 10 juvenile primates were sold in addition to sales of exotic birds.

The Hill Myna and Red-breasted Parakeet belong to Schedules I and IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 respectively. These two species were most likely brought from Nepal or Bhutan. Other wild birds were either locally caught or brought from Varanasi and Allahabad as reported by the bird sellers during the survey. Most exotic birds had been brought from West Bengal, mainly from Burdwan and Kolkata.

LEGAL IMPLICATION AND CONSERVATION ISSUES

The open sale of protected wildlife at the Sonapur *mela* is in gross violation of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The matter needs to be taken up with the state and central governments along with Wildlife Crime Control Bureau. Media pressure and mass awareness can help curtail the trade in wild birds and primates.

Table 1: Native bird species recorded in the bird bazaar

Common Name	Scientific Name	Approximate Numbers
Ring-necked Parakeet or Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	3000
Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>P. cyanocephala</i>	1200
Alexandrine Parakeets	<i>P. eupatria</i>	300-350
Red-breasted Parakeets	<i>P. alexandri</i>	80-100
Tricoloured Munia	<i>Lonchura malacca</i>	2000
Spotted Munia	<i>L. punctulata</i>	2000
White-throated Munia or Indian Silverbill	<i>Euodice malabarica</i>	400
Red Avadavat	<i>Amandava amandava</i>	500-600
Weaver birds	Baya <i>Ploceus philippinus</i> and Blackthroated <i>P. benghalensis</i>	10-12
Bank Myna	<i>Acridotheres ginginianus</i>	400-500
Common Myna	<i>A. tristis</i>	100
Common Hill Myna	<i>Gracula religiosa</i>	80-100
Brahminy Starling	<i>Temenuchus pagodarum</i>	10-15
Himalyan Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus leucogenys</i>	4
White-rumped Shama	<i>Copsynchus malabaricus</i>	1
Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	3
Common Kestrel	<i>F. tinnunculus</i>	2
Shikra/Sparrow Hawk	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	12
Redheaded Bunting/ Blackheaded Bunting	<i>Emberiza bruniceps / melanocephala</i>	7
Yellow-footed Green Pigeon	<i>Treron phoenicopterus</i>	40-50
Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	10-12
Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	2
Grey Francolin	<i>Francolinus pondicerianus</i>	1
Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamys scolopaceus</i>	2

WILD CRY

(Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.)

Trade, trapping and utilization of the “Common” Hill Myna *Gracula religiosa* and “Lesser” Hill Myna *Gracula (religiosa) indica* in India

by

Abrar Ahmed (abrar_bird@hotmail.com), Dr Shekhar Niraj (sniraj@wwfindia.net) and Dr Asad R. Rahmani (rahmani.asad@gmail.com)

Of the 18 species of mynas and starlings (Sturnidae) recorded in India, nine have been recorded in the Indian bird trade. They are caught for pets, food and merit release (Ahmed 1997, Ahmed 2004).

The “Common” Hill Myna *Gracula religiosa* is one of the most traded species, owing to it being an accomplished mimic (Menon 1993; Ahmed 2002). Ali & Ripley (1983) noted: “In captivity this bird is renowned as a first-rate mimic, learning to reproduce many everyday sounds and particularly the human voice, even whistled tunes, with astonishing accuracy and clarity”.

The Hill Myna is predominately glossy black with bright orange-yellow patches of naked skin and fleshy wattles on either side of the head and nape.

Hill Mynas inhabits evergreen, tropical deciduous and semi-evergreen forests (Ali & Ripley 1983). The “Common” Hill Myna is a resident of central and eastern Himalayas, southern Assam hills, eastern peninsula in Orissa, Bastar (Chhattisgarh), Andaman and Nicobar, while the Lesser Hill Myna *G. r. indica* is found in the Western Ghats.

Status:

Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I

IUCN Status: Least concern

CITES: Appendix II

Threats:

Despite a complete ban on trade in the Hill Myna since 1972, the species continues to be traded in large volumes in India.

According to TRAFFIC's studies on the Indian bird trade, at least 3180 Hill Mynas were recorded in 83 bird trade surveys in 56 places between 1994-2001 across India (Ahmed 2002).

Traders claimed that up to 60-70% are smuggled to the Middle East via Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal each year (Ahmed 2002).

Around 50-60% of the Hill Mynas in trade are chicks, all are collected from the wild and none originated from captivity. Birds from Assam are the most sought after because they are considered better mimics, are larger in size (25-29 cm) and glossier than birds from elsewhere in the country (Ali 1963).



© Abrar Ahmed

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Capture area, seasonality of collection, trade routes and transportation:

Previously the main collection areas were Assam and Meghalaya, especially in Goalpara, Dhubri, the Garo Hills, Haflong, Silchar, Hamren, North Cachar and Karbi Anglong. Today, Hill Mynas are mainly collected from areas around Siliguri as well as a few areas on the Indo–Nepal and Indo-Bhutan borders. Some chicks are collected from Mayurbhanj and Baripada districts in Orissa and reach Kolkata by bus via Kheojhar, Dhekikhot and Jassipur. Hill Mynas are also collected from Ganjam, Koraput, Kalahandhi, Dashpalla and neighbouring areas. Birds from the Western Ghats are sent to Aluva and Kozhikode in Kerala and then onwards to Mumbai and eastern India.



The collection of chicks starts in April and lasts till July when second broods are harvested. Adults are trapped during November and December. They are caught using hanging nets at roost sites, or using a bird call lure and a bamboo net. In Kerala, bird-lime is sometimes used to trap adult Hill Mynas.

Birds from the northeast first reach sub-dealers in Silguri or Malda and then proceed towards Patna or Khatiyar in Bihar or Burdwan in West Bengal. The majority of the trade in Hill Mynas is handled by the Mirshikar traders from Patna and Kolkata. Domestic prices of Hill Myna range between INR 500 and INR 2000 for an individual, though the prices are generally higher for chicks.

During transportation, the chicks are fed well so they do not beg for food, enabling their detection. Furthermore, the cages are covered with a dark cloth to keep the birds quiet.

Conservation issues: Excessive trapping of Hill Mynas has had a serious impact on the species throughout its range. In India, the locally known “Bastar” Hill Myna, once common in Chhattisgarh, is now almost extinct due to commercial exploitation (Bharos *et al.* 2000). A minimum of 765 Hill Mynas were seized in 22 raids between 1989 and 2001 across India (Ahmed 2002). Smuggling of Hill Mynas out of India to international markets, especially to the Middle East via Pakistan and Bangladesh has been regularly recorded. For instance, in March 2000 about 500 Hill Mynas were seized at Mumbai airport destined for Sharjah (Ahmed 2002).

In 2010, 400 Hill Mynas were seized from a Pakistani national at Dhaka Airport, Bangladesh. As the Hill Myna is virtually extinct in Bangladesh due to habitat destruction and over-exploitation for the pet-trade, these birds were believed to have been smuggled out of India. A suspicion backed up by the presence of Green Avadavats *Amandava formosa* in the consignment, a species endemic to India (Ahmed 2012). A more thorough study will reveal more on the impact of the bird trade on the wild Hill Myna population in India. In the meantime, enforcement efforts should be enhanced to curb the illegal trade of this species.

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SIGNPOST:

Other Significant news stories to read



With tribal poachers on prowl, Panna goes on high alert

MOUSHUMI BASU ■ NEW DELHI

Two poachers from the traditional hunting community of Babelia Panna Tiger Reserve (PTR) on Monday were arrested in Panna Tiger Reserve (PTR) on Monday with country-made ammunition. Animal parts including boab meat, skins and hair have been seized from their possession. This is the third incident of arrest of Panna tribals during the last two months, taking the tally of total arrests to seven. The park has been kept on high alert since December last.



also introduced new protection mechanism. The park for the first time has introduced river patrolling. River runs through the reserve making it particularly vulnerable on the western side. Three teams are deployed with 13...

tricity wires used for poaching and trapping wild animals. Mirthy added. During the past two-three months more than 300 crude bombs have been recovered in various raids on them. The seizures and arrests have largely come in the wake of strengthened intelligence network and rapid response units. "There are at least two poaching centres in the area."

2012 Was Worst Year for Tigers, 88 Killed

by Pratik Sharma

New Delhi: The new strategy of tackling poaching in tiger reserves was implemented by 2012 being one of the worst years for tigers. The tiger population in India has declined by 43 per cent in the last 12 years. The tiger population in India has declined by 43 per cent in the last 12 years. The tiger population in India has declined by 43 per cent in the last 12 years.

Another critical intervention by the government is to prevent poaching. This has been done through a tiger killing award scheme. The tiger killing award scheme is a tiger killing award scheme. The tiger killing award scheme is a tiger killing award scheme.

Another critical intervention by the government is to prevent poaching. This has been done through a tiger killing award scheme. The tiger killing award scheme is a tiger killing award scheme.

Bear killing triggers debate on Wildlife Protection Act's ambit

PHS ■ DELHI

Three days ago, at Gurgaon, a bear died because of a poacher's bullet. The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, has a specific provision for the protection of bears. The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, has a specific provision for the protection of bears.

had come to the village Lohariya area and from there, it started running on its life and hurt three coming on its way. Singh of Gurgaon block performed the post-mortem. The cause of death was a bullet wound in the chest. The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, has a specific provision for the protection of bears.

if the bear died of shock then its death comes under the ambit of self defence, as mentioned in the Wildlife Protection Act. The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, has a specific provision for the protection of bears.

Poaching takes toll on Rhinoland

TRAGIC | People in

In Kaziranga alone, 7 killed in first 7 weeks of year. Militants involved, govt seeks permission to use AKs



2013 SO FAR: In Kaziranga, the rhinoceros population has declined by 10 per cent in the first seven weeks of the year. Militants are involved in the poaching. The government has sought permission to use assault rifles to combat the poachers.

of an elephant that died after battling for life in a Paha in Goalpara, Assam, on Monday, lying in the puddle of mud after tusks, trunk by poachers. The elephant was found dead in a puddle of mud. The tusks and trunk were found nearby.

migratory birds Chilika Lake

FILE PHOTO: ASHOK CHAKRABARTY



whistling teals, the shovellers and two pintails, which were killed through illegal trapping said Yash Wildlife Range Chief S.C. Bohra. The birds were found dead in a trap. The poachers used illegal traps to catch the birds.

However, wildlife officials said they have initiated several anti-poaching measures in the lake. The Chilika Lake is a Ramsar site and is home to many migratory birds. The poaching of birds is a serious threat to the ecosystem.

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the wildlife trade monitoring network

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POST

TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



**Monitoring the
illegal trade in
the threatened
King of Lizards:
Wild Cry
feature.....**



TRAFFIC Post



TRAFFIC Post is TRAFFIC's newsletter on wildlife trade in India. It was started in September 2007 with a primary aim to create awareness on rampant poaching and illegal wildlife trade in India and how it affects the endangered flora and fauna. Since then it has covered not only issues related to illegal wildlife trade but also highlighted policies and trends related to legitimate wildlife trade especially in timber and medicinal plants.

The newsletter began as a quarterly e-newsletter available only for online distribution. However after a few issues it was converted into a printed edition with three issues coming out every year. The response to the newsletter over the years has been overwhelming and the subscribers continue to increase with every issue.

Besides carrying updates on TRAFFIC's work in India in a given period, the newsletter focuses on the plight of various species in illegal wildlife trade. It also provides early warning through its various sections on illegal wildlife trade trends. The CITES section and the OUTPOST section especially is meant to keep its readers updated on global news related to wildlife trade.

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Front cover: Monitor lizard by
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TRAFFIC POST

the wildlife trade monitoring network



TRAFFIC INDIA UPDATE

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- **SAWEN gathers support** at CITES CoP16 Pg 4
- **GIZ initiative for marine conservation** considers the plight of sharks in India



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- **Six more sniffer dogs** join the ranks in India Pg 6
- **Stakeholders deliberate on measures** to regulate medicinal plant trade in India and enhance livelihoods Pg 6
- **Royal family shows support** to tackle illegal wildlife trade Pg 8
- **Tokay Geckos mainly traded** for traditional medicine, finds new study Pg 9



OUTPOST



CITES UPDATE

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TRAFFIC ALERT

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

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IN FOCUS

WILD CRY

Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.

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Monitoring the illegal trade in the threatened King of Lizards

Panna Forest Department brushes up on new techniques to fight wildlife crime



The Forest Department of Panna Tiger Reserve (PTR) in Madhya Pradesh, India, received two-days of intensive training to upgrade their skills and learn about modern techniques for improving law enforcement to combat wildlife crimes. The training workshop at the Reserve was organized jointly by TRAFFIC in India and PTR on 23-24 April 2013.

The workshop covered various aspects of anti-poaching initiatives, detecting illegal wildlife trade chains and implications for addressing trans-border trafficking, legal issues and ways to improve convictions and how to reduce poaching and illegal trade in specific groups of species including birds and turtles. Scientific tools and techniques available to fight wildlife crime across the region were also shared with officials attending.

The programme was inaugurated by Mr R Sreenivasa Murthy, IFS, CCF and Field Director of PTR, who emphasized the importance of conducting the workshop and how it would help enforcement officials sharpen their anti-poaching skills and thus strengthen conservation efforts in the region.

Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC in India noted how the workshop modules had been designed to help officials understand various aspects of illegal wildlife trade, the modus operandi of the poachers and traders, gather intelligence and deal with other legal aspects that would enable successful convictions for wildlife trafficking offences. Over 60 officials from various wildlife and forest divisions in Madhya Pradesh and the police attended. They included Mr V S Parihar IFS Deputy Field Director, Panna Tiger Reserve and Mr Tamrakar, Assistant Conservator of Forest, Panna Tiger Reserve.

SAWEN gathers support at CITES CoP16



The Secretariat of the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) organized a side event during the CITES-Conference of Parties meeting (CoP16) in Bangkok, Thailand on 8 March 2013 to share regional experiences of SAWEN and its activities that are aimed at combating wildlife crime in the region; to enhance co-operation and collaboration among various enforcement and other related agencies; and to discuss with member countries the way forward for strengthening SAWEN.

SAWEN is a regional network of eight countries of South Asia, namely, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, with a mission to strengthen, promote and co-ordinate regional co-operation for curbing illegal wildlife trade that threatens the wild flora and fauna of South Asia.

TRAFFIC and WWF-Nepal helped the SAWEN Secretariat in organizing the event that brought together wildlife enforcement network representatives from Central Africa, Central America, North America, the European Union, South-East Asia, and South Asia. TRAFFIC was invited to share its experiences as an international NGO working to support several regional wildlife law enforcement initiatives.

More than 80 officials representing SAWEN member countries, governments, donor agencies, and NGOs from across the world participated.

Addressing delegates, Mr Bishwa Nath Oli, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, Government of Nepal said, "Nepal has been playing a constructive role in combating wildlife crime in the region. It is encouraging to see how SAWEN has evolved as an important platform for the countries in the region to act against wildlife crime."



© SAWEN Secretariat

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Mr Wan Ziming, Director of the CITES Management Authority of China said that China would be happy to be involved in SAWEN activities . “At this moment we need to have better co-operation and collaboration to combat wildlife crime in the region,” said Ziming.

Mr Keshav Varma from the World Bank noted that resources will be made available for SAWEN's future activities. He praised the work of SAWEN and expressed his full support for the future.

Mr James Compton from TRAFFIC congratulated the SAWEN Secretariat for its progress since its establishment two years ago. He said that TRAFFIC has provided support and played a pivotal role along with other partner agencies in institutionalizing SAWEN and will continue to support SAWEN to achieve its objectives.

The event was chaired by Mr Megh Bahadur Pandey, Director General of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) and Chief Enforcement Coordinator of SAWEN. He said “We are growing and our activities are expanding. We would like to thank the member countries, international community and various conservation partners for their support to date and we hope to receive continuous support in the future to curb wildlife crime in the region.”

Dr Maheswar Dhakal from SAWEN, Mr Diwakar Chapagain from WWF Nepal and Mr MKS Pasha from TRAFFIC made presentations on SAWEN's activities and on its development.

GIZ initiative for marine conservation considers the plight of sharks in India



GIZ (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH*), the German agency for international development, organized a two-day workshop in New Delhi, in collaboration with the Indian Ministry of Environment and Forests on 13-14 May 2013 on 'Sustainable Management of Coastal and Marine Protected Areas in India'.

TRAFFIC was represented by Shubhobroto Ghosh, Senior Programme Officer and WWF-India represented by Vinod Malayilethu, Senior Coordinator of the Marine Conservation programme participated at this important meeting, which attempted to set priorities for marine and coastal conservation in India's coastal States in accordance with the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

“India and Germany have joined hands, because conserving biological diversity is a global task and an objective we can better achieve together to ensure the livelihoods of future generations,” said Mr Hem Pandey, Joint Secretary to the Indian Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF)”.

TRAFFIC and WWF-India emphasized the importance of regulating and monitoring shark catches in India. The country has been ranked second in the list of top-20 shark catchers worldwide.



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Six more sniffer dogs join the ranks in India



© Dhruva Dutta/TRAFFIC

The anti-poaching squads of Bihar, Maharashtra and Uttarakhand received a boost with the addition of six new sniffer dogs trained for curbing illegal wildlife trade.

Poaching for illegal wildlife trade is one of the major threats to our precious flora and fauna, especially to the Asian big cat species. Issues such as lack of infrastructure, paucity of field staff, absence of adequate and actionable intelligence information, and poor co-ordination with other law enforcement agencies are the primary constraints towards effective wildlife law enforcement.

In 2008, TRAFFIC launched a sniffer dog training programme with support from forest departments and sniffer dog training centres. Seven dogs and their handlers were trained and later deployed by the Forest Departments of Haryana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand. Now, an additional six dogs have been added to the growing team, the third batch to be trained under this programme.

TRAFFIC partnered with the Dog Training Centre of the 23rd Battalion Special Armed Force, Madhya Pradesh Police Department based in Bhopal, for the training of the latest recruits. The six German Shepherds and their handlers received extensive training that began in June 2012. The passing out ceremony took place on 15 March 2013 at the Dog Training Centre in Bhopal when the dogs were handed over to their respective state forest departments.

Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj said, "TRAFFIC wishes good fortune to the new dogs and their trainers. Those dogs already deployed in the field have done the programme proud by regularly locating illegal wildlife products and we trust the new recruits will prove to be equally successful in their work. TRAFFIC's aim is to support more States in getting sniffer dogs though this programme, to add teeth to their anti-poaching and anti-wildlife crimes mechanisms".

To find out more about the programme, please visit http://www.wwfindia.org/about_wwf/enablers/traffic/what_we_do/capacity_building/

Stakeholders deliberate on measures to regulate medicinal plant trade in India and enhance livelihoods



Many wild medicinal plant species are under severe pressure due to over-harvesting leading to ecological imbalance and livelihood loss. The over-harvesting is partly a result of increasing domestic demand and liberalization of international trade regimes, with the subsequent inadequately regulated commercialization of the medicinal plants trade.

In order to maximize the benefits from commercialization of wild medicinal plant species, sustainable utilization of the resource through good collection practices in an important pre-requisite.

The Umbrella Programme on Natural Resource Management (UPNRM) of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) supported by GIZ and KFW, a German government-owned development bank, is dedicated towards promoting and funding sustainable natural resource management-based (NRM) livelihood projects which are community-oriented. UPNRM has been planned as a vehicle to design innovative and client driven loan and Public Private Partnership-based (PPP) NRM products. Therefore, under the aegis of UPNRM, NABARD in association with GIZ organized a national-level stakeholder consultation workshop on the theme of 'Improving quality, traceability and institutional arrangement for better livelihoods from wild medicinal plants based enterprises'.

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The workshop was conducted at Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh on 18-19 April 2013, and was attended by key players in the medicinal plant industry in India, cultivators, local traders, community representative and other stakeholders. The two-day workshop began with a visit to Chintapaka Village near Vishakhapatnam followed by a day-long conference to discuss some of the observations, challenges, and some possible solutions.

TRAFFIC's MKS Pasha shared his experiences of working with the medicinal plant sector for the last few years and provided an outline of the minimum standards, legal compliance, concept of 'mobile mandis' and the common minimum infrastructure required to ensure sustainable wild collection and utilization. He also spoke about the various roles that each of the stakeholders from harvester/collector, to trader, industry and government institutions had to play regarding quality, traceability along with their responsibilities along the chain of custody.

TRAFFIC recommended the development of a national-level consortium on medicinal plants with representatives from industry, traders, NGOs and banks responsible for enforcing a minimum standard for sustainable harvest of medicinal plants sourced from the wild. This recommendation was adopted by the workshop participants.

Dr A.K. Pandey of the Tropical Forest Research Institute and Mr Aravind of Himalaya Drug spoke about 'Quality issues in the medicinal plants sector' and highlighted issues surrounding quality requirements in the entire value chain of medicinal plants and provided some recommendations for action.

Dr Inkarsal of Assistant General Manager-NABARD gave an overview of the UPNRM programme, its organizational structure, guiding principles by which projects are ranked and selected, major areas of intervention and core/supplementary sectors of the projects.

Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC in India commented, "Interventions in practices employed by enterprises utilizing wild medicinal plants requires the implementation of best practice guidelines such as the FairWild Standard, balancing conservation and development needs and also understanding the market demand for high quality raw materials. Hence, engagement and synergy among the producers, buyers, regulatory bodies, and financial institutions is required for development and creating an environment of credible supply chains".

National consultation meeting on the legal framework for medicinal plants and associated traditional knowledge in India:

The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) organized a national consultation on the Legal Framework for Medicinal Plants and Associated Traditional Knowledge in India on 9-10 May 2013 in Delhi. MKS Pasha from TRAFFIC in India spoke on Conservation and Management of Medicinal Plants: Challenges in Implementing Policies and Laws. The subsequent consultation with various stakeholders will help frame a national policy for the medicinal plant trade and conservation issues.

TRAFFIC Alert



Three arrested for transporting bullfrogs in Goa

In the early morning of 9 June 2013, range forest officers in Goa intercepted a car and arrested three people on suspicion of illegally transporting Indian Bullfrogs after 158 live and 51 dead Indian Bullfrogs were discovered in three sacks. All of the accused have been taken into custody and further investigations are in progress.

TRAFFIC in India adds.....

It is not the first time that Indian Bullfrogs have been seized in Goa. They are among the many frog species illegally collected from the wild and exploited for food. Frogs' legs are a well known delicacy of French and Cantonese cuisine; they are also eaten in many other parts of the world.

Of the 216 species of frogs and toads representing six families presently known in India, the Indian Bullfrog *Hoplobatrachus tigerinus* is undoubtedly the most commonly known frog. In 1985, as a consequence of unsustainable exploitation for export, the Indian Bullfrog was listed in Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). In India, all freshwater frogs, including the Indian Bullfrog, are listed in Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. This provides it complete protection against poaching and trade in the country.

TRAFFIC has previously highlighted the plight of the Indian Bullfrog in illegal wildlife trade in India in the November 2011 of its newsletter, TRAFFIC Post, available at http://assets.wfindia.org/wwf-web-1.bluegecko.net/downloads/traffic_post_nov_2011.pdf

OUTPOST:
Royal family shows support to tackle illegal wildlife trade



© WWF-UK / James Morgan

His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales and the UK Government hosted a conference on 21 May 2013, calling for action at the highest level to end the illegal trade in wildlife—a trade that presents a grave threat not only to the world of nature, but also to national and regional security.

The Prince of Wales is President of WWF-UK and shares many of the same conservation interests including the desire to see an end to illegal wildlife trade.

The initiative aimed to highlight the issue at the international level. High-level representatives from some of the countries impacted by international wildlife crime activities attended the event, including Australia, Austria, Belgium, Botswana, Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, France, Gabon, Germany, Indonesia, Kenya, Nepal, Netherlands, Malaysia, Mozambique, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Uganda, USA and Viet Nam.

“The illegal wildlife trade threatens to overturn decades of conservation efforts, putting some iconic and ecologically important species at risk of extinction,” said David Nussbaum, Chief Executive of WWF-UK.

“This multi-billion Pound trade also fuels other types of crime and has a devastating impact on some of the poorest people on the planet.”

“With poaching and wildlife trafficking at record levels, we hope that this meeting will be the start of a ground-breaking initiative in the fight against this deadly and destructive trade.”

In South Africa a record 668 rhinos were killed by poachers last year, and close to 550 have died so far in 2013. Earlier this year, at least 26 elephants were massacred in a World Heritage Site in the Central African Republic after 17 individuals armed with Kalashnikov rifles entered the unique elephant habitat at Dzanga Bai, known locally as the “village of elephants”.

This meeting laid the groundwork for a meeting of the Heads of State to be held later in 2013, also to be hosted by the UK Government, where it is hoped that the governments will commit to actions that will reduce demand for endangered wildlife and related products in markets around the world; improve global enforcement and criminal justice against the organized syndicates engaged in this activity; and assist rural communities to find long-term, viable alternatives to the trade.

In summer 2012, WWF and TRAFFIC launched a global campaign to highlight illegal wildlife trade as a serious crime and to spur governments and international institutions to tackle it as such.

For more information, please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2013/5/21/royal-event-to-tackle-illegal-wildlife-trade.html>

TRAFFIC Alert



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Source:

TRAFFIC Post Issue 13, November 2011
 Rajalakshmi (2011) Increased Frog Leg demand Threatening Amphibians to Extinction, August 5, 2011. <http://indiasendangered.com/increased-frog-leg-demand-threatening-amphibians-to-extinction/>. Viewed 29/9/2011
http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-06-10/goa/39872096_1_bullfrogs-south-go-a-cotigao

Poachers train sights on smaller animals

Deep inside Indian forests small and big creatures are under threat from poachers as never before. Their vulnerability to wildlife syndicates is on the rise with government data showing an increasing threat not only to Tigers and rhinos but also to other animals such as pangolins, butterflies and crocodiles.

TRAFFIC in India adds.....

Far from the public glare reserved for charismatic species, many lesser known animals are falling victim to illegal wildlife trade. Such animals include hares, monitor lizards, scorpions, slow lorises and birds that are neglected because of the attention given to larger animals. Recent reports indicate there are high levels of trade in slow lorises and monitor lizards in South-East Asia. The scale of trade in these species in India is unrecorded and warrants further attention.

Pangolins, butterflies and many other species are accorded protection in India under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Moths and butterflies of eight families are included in Schedule II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and are also accorded protection under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002. The Act was enforced in 2008 during the case of two Czech nationals who were arrested in West Bengal for catching and smuggling butterflies and beetles without permission. They were found in possession of dozens of species of beetles, butterflies and other rare insects.

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OUTPOST:
Tokay Geckos mainly traded for traditional medicine, finds new study



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A new TRAFFIC report finds that millions of Tokay Geckos are being harvested from the wild to supply the traditional medicine (TM) trade in East Asia. At the same time, the trade in Tokay Geckos for Novel Medicinal Claims (NMCs), including as a supposed cure for AIDS, has declined markedly.

The attractively patterned Tokay Gecko *Gekko gekko* is an adaptable lizard species found across much of Asia. In India, it is found in the states of Bihar, West Bengal, Assam and Tripura and is in high demand for use in traditional medicines to treat a range of ailments including

asthma, diabetes and skin disorders as well as for the international pet trade.

Since 2009, demand for Tokay Geckos in South-East Asia was reported to have sky-rocketed following rumours that extracts from the lizard could cure HIV/AIDS, a claim refuted by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Following such reports, TRAFFIC examined the Tokay Gecko trade in the region, including a case study in Peninsular Malaysia, the purported centre of demand in the NMC trade, but found that while such trade had been substantial, it has declined substantially. In contrast, the trade in Tokay Geckos for traditional medicines was found to be booming according to the new study jointly funded by WWF-Malaysia and Wildlife Reserves Singapore: “*The Trade in Tokay Geckos in South-East Asia: With a case study on Novel Medicinal Claims in Peninsular Malaysia.*”

Tokay Geckos are widely consumed in traditional medicine in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Viet Nam. In mainland China and Viet Nam, Tokay Geckos are reportedly bred in captivity, however; the supply does not meet demand and the industry relies predominantly on those caught from the wild. This has led to reported population declines in parts of the species’s range, notably in Thailand and Java, the primary source locations for Tokay Geckos in trade.

“More research is crucial to understanding the implications of the trade in Tokay Geckos on wild populations,” said Dr Chris R. Shepherd, Acting Director of TRAFFIC in South-East Asia.



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TRAFFIC Alert



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Pangolins are listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, of 1972 and Appendix II of CITES. Of late, there have been several important seizures of pangolins in India and also a recent case in Nepal where at least 45 pangolins were found dead.

TRAFFIC urges greater alacrity and research into addressing the illegal trade of some of these neglected species.

Source:

- <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/NewDelhi/poachers-train-sights-on-smaller-animals/Article1-1034936.aspx#sthash.KLj9vdS4.dpuf>
- <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/over-21-persons-arrested-for-poaching-blacknaped-hares/article2424443.ece>
- http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7609224.stm
- <http://www.darjeelintimes.com/opinions/general/1677-illegal-trade-of-butterflies.html>
- <http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Police+seize+pangolin+scales&NewsID=379739>
- <http://www.livescience.com/37146-monitor-lizards-threatened-asia.html>
- <http://primatesnotpets.tumblr.com/post/30181705941/slow-loris-pet-trade-horror-story>
- <http://savepangolins.org/conservation/>
- www.iucn.org/365_docs/attachments/protarea/17_C-f8ad64af.pdf
- http://www.wfindia.org/about_wwf/priority_species/gharial/

Man held with snakes on a plane in Chennai

On 18 April 2013, Customs officials at Chennai airport got a huge shock when they discovered a passenger arriving from Bangkok was carrying six live snakes with him. They included two endangered Reticulated Pythons, two Green Pythons and two Coral Snakes as well as six Sugar Gliders.

The man, who was arrested, afterwards told officers that pythons are reared as pets in Thailand and often sold as *Vasthu* animals to bring good luck. He was detained on suspicion after claiming the basket he was carrying contained rare herbal plants from Thailand. As there were no international quarantine certificates or clearance documents from the Union forest ministry, he was arrested and handed over to the wildlife wing, sources added. *Continued on page 10*

CITES UPDATE:

New initiative to curb Tiger trade rolls out at the CITES meeting



© TRAFFIC

A new international law enforcement initiative to stop poaching and illegal trade of Tigers and other Asian big cats was agreed by the member countries of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) at the 16th Conference of the Parties (CoP16) held in Bangkok, Thailand, in March 2013.

An agreement was reached to gather information on incidents of poaching and illegal trade in all Asian big cats since the

beginning of 2010 and to analyse the information for circulation to relevant enforcement agencies and range States.

The CITES members also agreed to monitor efforts to close down the illegal Tiger trade. Though some countries had asked for a situation appraisal to be carried out before the next full CITES meeting due in around three years time, it was agreed to accelerate the process and ensure the information was available by 2014. For more information, please visit

<http://www.traffic.org/home/2013/3/14/cites-turns-up-the-heat-on-tiger-smugglers.html>

CITES UPDATE:

CITES extends protection to several shark species at CoP16



During the 16th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES CoP16) recently held in Bangkok, Thailand, proposals to include shark species threatened by overharvesting for their fins and meat within CITES were accepted during the final plenary wrap up session of the conference. Likewise, the Manta Rays were also formally adopted into the CITES Appendices.

Global catches of sharks are in excess of 800,000 tonnes per year, and the fin trade alone is worth more than USD 480 million per year. These fishes are largely killed to feed the vast appetite for shark-fin soup in Asia. The populations of some of the shark species have declined by in excess of 90 per cent because of the excessive demand by the trade. The Oceanic Whitetip *Carcharhinus longimanus*, Scalloped Hammerhead Shark *Sphyrna lewini*, Great Hammerhead Shark *Sphyrna mokarran*, Smooth Hammerhead Shark *Sphyrna zigaena* and the Porbeagle Shark *Lamna nasusare* are now protected under CITES.

“This is a historic day for marine conservation,” said Glenn Sant, TRAFFIC’s Marine Programme Leader. “Shark populations in freefall have been thrown a lifeline today—CITES has finally listened to the scientists.”

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TRAFFIC Alert



TRAFFIC in India adds.....

The penchant for keeping exotic pets appears to be growing in India. Two of the three species of snakes confiscated would certainly be destined to fulfill such a role. The Green Tree Python *Morelia viridis* is found in New Guinea, Indonesia and Australia. This species is listed in Appendix II of CITES. The coral snakes confiscated were Eastern Coral Snakes *Micrurus fulvius*, a species found in the United States and northeastern Mexico. The species is not listed in CITES.

The other snakes confiscated were Reticulated Pythons, *Python reticulatus*, a species found in India in the North East and in the Andaman and Nicobar islands. This snake is listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and is in Appendix II of CITES.

Sugar Gliders *Petaurus breviceps* are largely found in Australia; Indonesia and Papua New Guinea and are not listed in CITES.

Trade in protected Indian species is prohibited under India’s Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, while international trade is regulated under CITES. However, many species from other countries are being smuggled into India without adhering to CITES provisions, while their import may also need clearance under India’s EXIM policy.

Apparently, there is a lack of awareness regarding trade in exotic species among both enforcement officials and consumers. Reports have also indicated that many Indian species are falsely sold under the pretext of being exotic by unscrupulous traders, while greater attention and awareness is needed among Customs authorities to check the import and export of CITES listed animals to and from India.

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Following the failure by Japan to reopen the debate on Oceanic Whitetip, a similar attempt was made to reopen the debates for the hammerhead shark species, but this also failed. There was no attempt to reopen the debate on the Porbeagle Shark.



India noted its concern that the large coastal communities already facing the brunt of a drastic decline in fishery catches in Indian seas would be hard hit by the additional legal requirements following the listing of these shark species in CITES. China also expressed its concern over the difficulty in implementing trade regulations through CITES, citing concerns over identification of the shark species concerned, and called for assistance from other countries to help ensure enforcement of the new measures. China also asked for exporting countries to ensure that illegal products are not allowed to enter the market place.

For more information, please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2013/3/14/white-smoke-for-whitetip-and-other-sharks-at-cites.html>

TRAFFIC Alert



Continued from page 10

Source:

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/130418/news-crime/article/man-held-snakes-plane-chennai>;
http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/accounts/Python_reticulatus/xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/20809606/25224243/name/science-1.pdf;
<http://www.cites.org/eng/resources/species.html>
<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/64025/0>

Two thousand softshell turtles rescued, released in Kolleru Lake in Andhra Pradesh

On 17 June 2013, in Andhra Pradesh, Range Officers rescued

about 2000 Indian Softshell Turtles packed into 75 gunny bags from wildlife traffickers who fled the scene and escaped. The turtles, which varied in size from 200 g to 2 kg, were later released.

TRAFFIC in India adds.....

The Indian or Ganges Softshell Turtle *Nilssonina gangetica* is a species of softshell turtle found in India, Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Of the 33 turtle species found in India, 24 are freshwater, five marine and four land-dwelling. Unsustainable hunting of turtles for consumption is impacting turtle populations in India, as well as the growing demand for turtle plastrons in China where they are used for making gelatin. The high income to be made from turtle plastrons has attracted many non-traditional hunters to the trade.

Illegal hunting takes place in almost all water bodies, ranging from irrigation canals to rivers and ponds. There is evidence that communities engaged in turtle hunting are having to travel large distances to capture turtles because of diminishing populations. The Indian Softshell Turtle is one of the three most preferred species in trade, the others being the Indian Flapshell Turtle *Lissemys punctata* and the Peacock Softshell Turtle *Nilssonina hurum*. All three are listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 that affords them complete protection against poaching and trade.

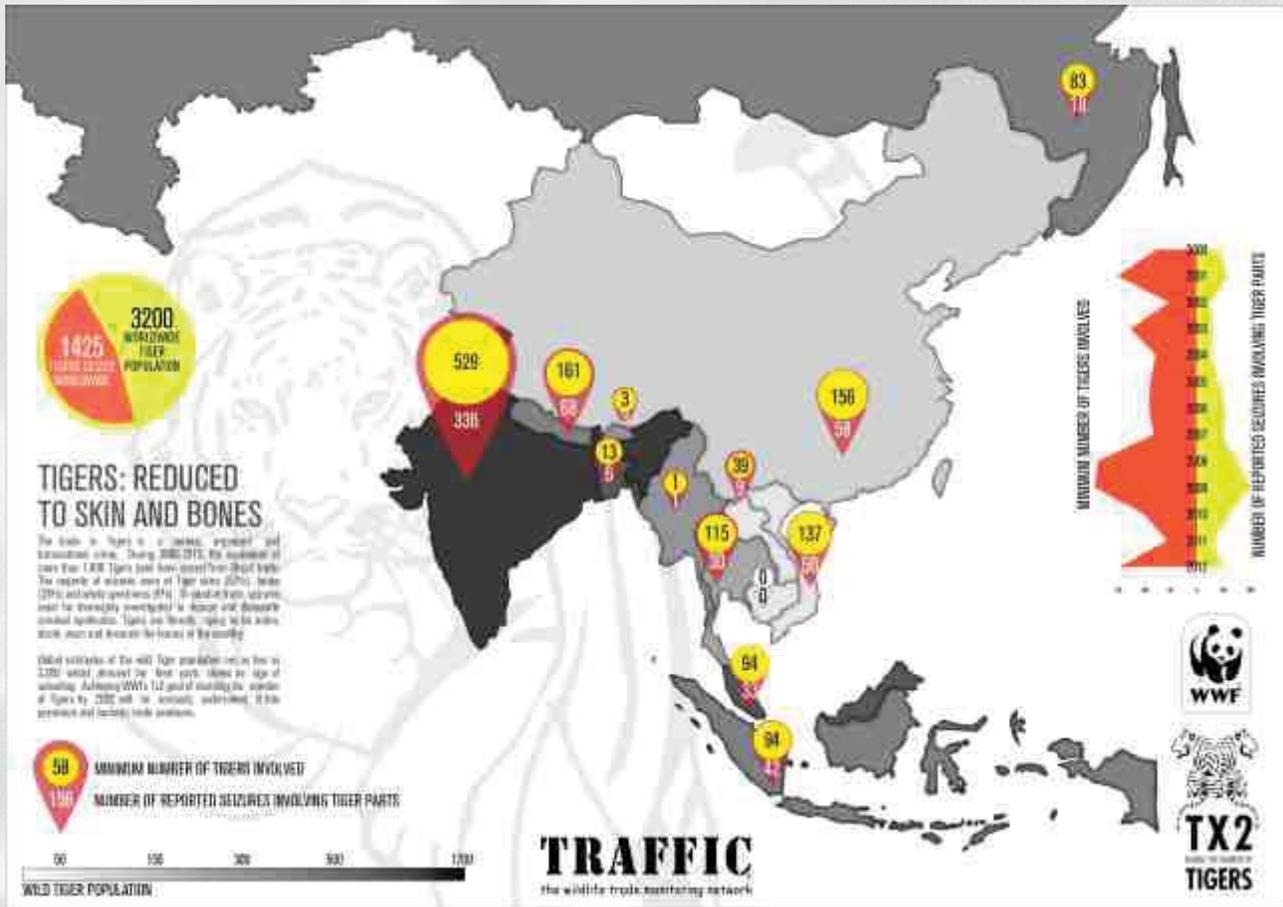
In the south-eastern coastal villages and towns of Tamil Nadu; and in central and northern West Bengal, turtles are heavily exploited for food and their blood is used as a health supplement. Such beliefs are governed by myths that have never been scientifically proven.

Source:

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/2000-turtles-rescued-released-in-kolleru-lake/article4826293.ece>

Citation for individual papers: MKS Pasha, Rahul Dutta and Samir Sinha 2009. Illegal Trade of Freshwater Horne Turtles & Tortoises in India. pp.115-119. In: Vasudevan, K (Ed.). Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises of India. ENVIS Bulletin: Wildlife and Protected Areas, Vol. 12(1). Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, India.

IN FOCUS:
 Persistent Tiger trade; a growing menace endangering the future of the species



Tiger trade is thriving and has taken the form of an organized criminal operation threatening the very existence of the species in the wild. This is clearly evident from TRAFFIC's latest report that unveils the magnitude of this trade.

Reduced to Skin and Bones Revisited finds that parts of at least 1425 Tigers were seized across all but one of the 13 Tiger range countries (TRC) between 2000 and 2012. Only Cambodia recorded no seizures during the period.

The report, a joint effort by TRAFFIC and the WWF Tigers Alive Initiative, was released during the 16th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) held in Bangkok, Thailand in March 2013.

The report analyses seizure information collated directly from a number of TRC government agencies, non-governmental organizations and from publicly reported information.

Since 2000, there have been 654 seizures of Tiger parts and derivatives across the 12 TRCs accounting for at least 1425 Tigers seized during this period, averaging around two per week. It is anticipated only a fraction of illegal Tiger transactions are intercepted by law enforcement, so the scale of this criminal activity is likely to be much larger and doubtless poses a serious threat to the survival of Tigers in the wild.

Of the 13 TRCs—Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Thailand, and Viet Nam—only India has kept sufficiently detailed seizure records to allow meaningful analysis to identify the 'hotspots' where Tiger trade is taking place.

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Based on the information from India, five Tiger trade 'hotspot' locations were identified in the country. They included Delhi, while the other four hotspots were close to protected areas in different parts of the country (Uttar Pradesh, Central India, West Bengal (Sundarbans) and the southern India landscape of the Western Ghats).

Looking at recent seizures (2010-2012), the number of seizures in India as a proportion of total seizures across all countries shows a downward trend; 29% of total seizures compared to 58% for 2000-2009. Conversely, the proportion of seizures has increased for other TRC such as China, Malaysia, Nepal and Russia but is most notable for Viet Nam, rising from six percent to 14%. Indonesia, with a relatively small wild Tiger population and few known captive animals, disproportionately seized almost 20% (50) of all seizures across TRCs in the past three years (300), despite the actual number of seizures being relatively low, representing a serious and ongoing threat.

Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC in India said, "As a significant Tiger bearing country, this latest analysis of Tigers in trade should be ringing alarm bells in India, who should consider reviewing its Tiger security management plans."

Emerging Trend

Since 2000, live Tigers consistently accounted for around two per cent of all seizures, however during 2009-2012 this increased to seven per cent. Since 2010, there have been 619 live Tigers seized and almost three quarters (74% / 45) of these were seized within the following three TRCs: Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam. Prior to this in 2008, Viet Nam made the largest ever single seizure of live Tigers, when 42 animals were found in the southern Vietnamese province of Binh Duong. The paucity of wild Tigers living in Thailand, Lao PDR and Viet Nam combined with the presence of Tiger breeding facilities within these three countries inevitably causes questions to be raised with respect to the source of Tigers in trade.

Serious and Organized Crime

In October 2012, the United Nations Convention against Transboundary Organized Crime (UNTOC) recognized environmental crime, including illicit trafficking in wildlife, as a new form of transboundary organized crime in need of a greater response. Tiger seizure cases often conform to the UNTOC definition of organized crime, with an average of two suspects arrested per seizure (and one-tenth of cases involving three or more suspects) and sentences averaging 4.3 years handed down in prosecutions. There are some specific elements of serious and organized criminality identified in the seizure dataset, particularly within Russia and Nepal. Overwhelmingly, lack of information impedes a comprehensive assessment on the scale of organized crime driving the illegal tiger trade.

The report finds that 89% of seizures occur outside protected areas. "This clearly emphasizes the importance of anti-trafficking actions to disrupt trade chains and prevent incursions into Tiger habitat," said Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC in India.

"The benefits of such analysis to enhance law enforcement efforts to protect Tigers are obvious".

"Renewed impetus is needed to combat regional level illicit wildlife trade by enhancing collaboration between TRCs. To some extent this is already happening, with the establishment of transboundary wildlife enforcement networks such as ASEAN-WEN and SAWEN, including engagement by these regional bodies with China. These platforms have also encouraged the endorsement of bilateral Memoranda of Understanding that still need to be further contextualized into trans-border governmental action plans. However, more co-ordination and support is needed to enhance those networks which are already in place."

Sarah Stoner, TRAFFIC's Tiger Trade Data Specialist and author of the report said, "Looking ahead to 2022, one major goal of the 12-year Global Tiger Recovery Program (GTRP) adopted in 2010 by the TRCs is effectively to eliminate Tiger poaching and trade. The GTRP anticipates that Tiger seizures may increase initially as law enforcement effort is improved and scaled up, but by 2015 they should start to decline to the level that Tigers and Tiger products (parts and derivatives) are no longer evident in illegal trade. This report has found that seizures are generally on the increase in most TRCs, and only in India is there any indication, although still tentative, that extensive national crime-fighting and Tiger protection efforts may be starting to pay off through a reduction in illegal trade".



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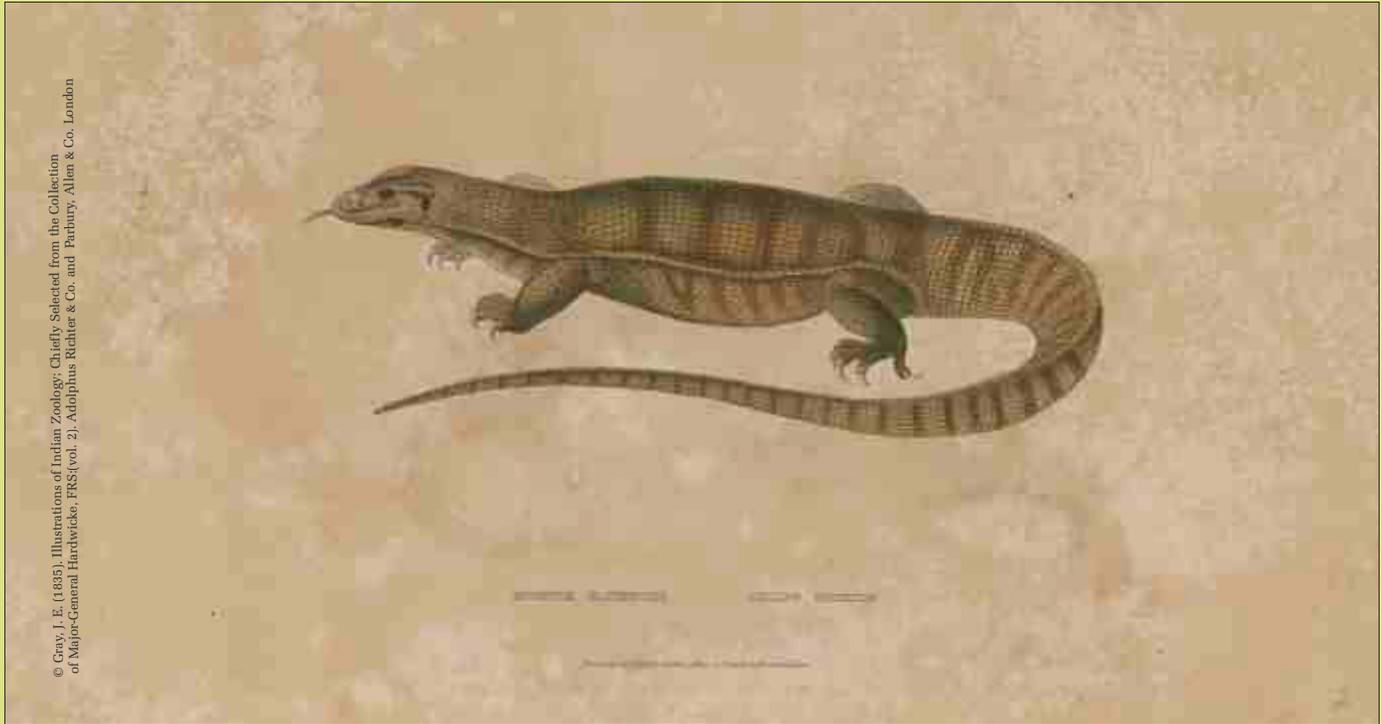


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WILD CRY

(Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.)

Monitoring the illegal trade in the threatened King of Lizards



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Monitor lizards belong to the genus *Varanus*. The common name 'Monitor' comes from Latin noun '*Monitio*' or a '*warner*' (Pianka *et al* 2004), the Scientific generic name *Varanus* derives from an Arabic word *Waran*, which means 'to monitor' (Pianka *et al* 2004). The name is inspired by the behaviour of several monitor species to stand on their hind legs to survey the surroundings.

Distribution:

India is home to four species of monitor lizards—the Bengal Monitor *V. bengalensis*, Desert Monitor *V. griseus*, Yellow Monitor *V. flavescens*, and Water Monitor *V. salvator*.

The Bengal Monitor is the mostly widely distributed and well-known of the monitors in India, Auffenberg (1994) lists more than 20 local names for the species. In the north of the country, monitors are generally known as *Goh* or variations on this. Perhaps the most famous among the monitor lizards in India is the legendary pet Bengal Monitor of Shivaji's associate Tanaji Malusare. The legend is that Tanaji climbed the walls of the fort of Sinhgarh with the help of a rope tied to his pet monitor. The lizard crawled up the walls and held fast with its strong grip as Tanaji scaled behind it.

The Desert and Water Monitors live in the western and eastern part of the country respectively. Among the most elusive and threatened of the Indian monitors is the Yellow Monitor which inhabits the marshy areas of the Indus & Ganges floodplains.

Status:

All the four Indian species of monitor lizards are listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The law bans poaching and trade in the species. International trade is further regulated under CITES with three species—Bengal Monitor, Desert Monitor and the Yellow Monitor—listed in Appendix I of the Convention, which prohibits their international commercial trade, and the Water Monitor listed in Appendix II, where trade is permitted with permits.

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Threats:

Monitor lizards, especially the Bengal Monitor, were once commonly seen across the country but have been a target of unabated poaching and illegal trade. Poaching is driven by both domestic and international demand. In India, monitor lizards are caught and killed for their skins that are used in making drums. There is also demand for the meat of these lizards, as it is considered a delicacy and prepared in many homes and restaurants. The meat and the fat are also used in country medicine to treat a variety of diseases and they are also considered to have aphrodisiac properties.

Reports indicate that each year more than one thousand *ghumats* (a *ghumat* is a percussion instrument incorporating a monitor lizard membrane) are sold in parts of Goa (http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-09-03/goa/33562712_1_lizard-ghumat-skin).

There have been many seizures of monitor lizards in trade. In 2004, the Thiruvananthapuram Forest Department seized 1600 musical instruments made using monitor lizard skins. The forest department also confiscated 669 lizard skins. In 2008, at least 80 monitor lizards were seized from a restaurant in Bangalore. In 2009, 11 monitor lizards were seized from a hotel near Dharmapuri in Tamil Nadu. In 2010, 40 monitor lizards were seized in New Delhi from someone intending to sell them for their meat. In May 2013, five adult monitor lizards were seized from a youth's house in Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu. Again, the lizards had been poached for their meat.

Internationally, there have been many significant seizures of monitor lizards, which are indicative of the global extent of this illegal trade. In 2011, Thailand Customs officers seized 1800 monitor lizard destined to be sold as food close to the country's border with Malaysia. According to a recent study, over 4 25 000 Water Monitors are killed annually for their skins in Indonesia alone (Koch et al 2013). This is based on Indonesia's export quotas from 2005-2011. However there are some gaps between the existing quotas and the volumes exported every year. The study thus finds the export allowances that are not based on sound information from population studies, meaning that current harvest levels may be unsustainable and could threaten the viability of the Indonesian species.

Monitor lizards are among the most sought-after reptile groups in the global pet trade ((Koch et al 2013). This is because of their large size, exquisite appearance and intelligence. The luxury goods market in the West is also driving the trade in the skins of monitor lizards. These are used to make products such as handbags, wallets, straps for watches, belts and so on.

There is a risk that rising demand for monitor lizards will lead to population declines in South-East Asia and animals will be increasingly sourced from the Indian subcontinent, in a situation analogous to that of pangolins.

Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC India said, "Seizure records indicate that most of the poaching of monitor lizards in India is undertaken to supply the domestic market with skin and meat. However, rising international demand for these animals means it may not be too long before organized poaching could begin from India to other countries. Awareness coupled with stronger enforcement actions are necessary to nip this problem in the bud."



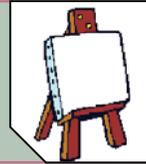
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TRAFFIC India acknowledges Dr Rashid Raza, Head- Conservation Science and Research, WWF-India for providing guidance and inputs for the above article.

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SIGNPOST: Other Significant news stories to read



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TRAFFIC

the wildlife trade monitoring network

ISSUE 19
NOVEMBER, 2013

POST

TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



**Bears-
threatened by
bile trade:
Wild Cry
feature.....**



TRAFFIC Post



TRAFFIC Post is TRAFFIC's newsletter on wildlife trade in India. It was started in September 2007 with a primary aim to create awareness on rampant poaching and illegal wildlife trade in India and how it affects the endangered flora and fauna. Since then it has covered not only issues related to illegal wildlife trade but also highlighted policies and trends related to legitimate wildlife trade especially in timber and medicinal plants.

The newsletter began as a quarterly e-newsletter available only for online distribution. However after a few issues it was converted into a printed edition with three issues coming out every year. The response to the newsletter over the years has been overwhelming and the subscribers continue to increase with every issue.

Besides carrying updates on TRAFFIC's work in India in a given period, the newsletter focuses on the plight of various species in illegal wildlife trade. It also provides early warning through its various sections on illegal wildlife trade trends. The CITES section and the OUTPOST section especially is meant to keep its readers updated on global news related to wildlife trade.

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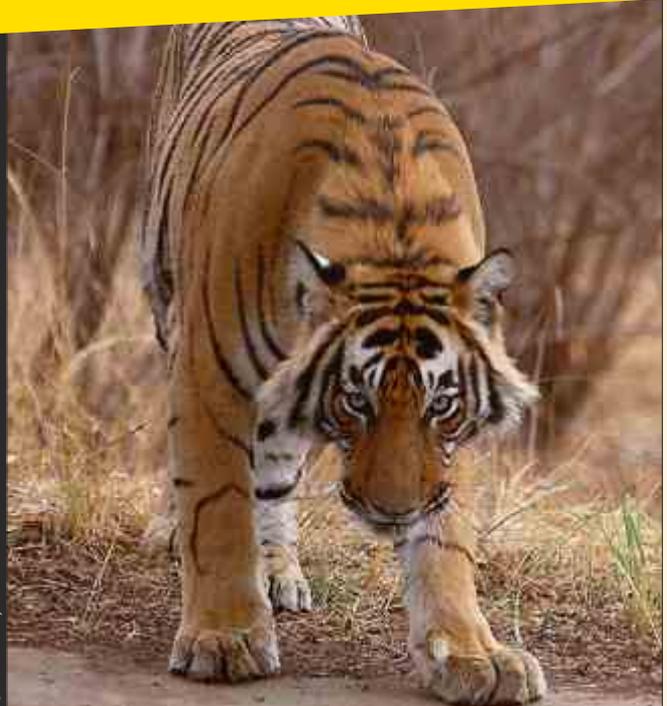
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TRAFFIC POST

the wildlife trade monitoring network



TRAFFIC INDIA UPDATE

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- **MP Police and Forest Department train to combat wildlife crime** Pg 5
- **Transitions at TRAFFIC in India** Pg 6
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OUTPOST



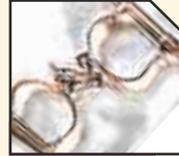
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- **Consortium assists Sri Lanka in investigating latest ivory seizure** Pg 10



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TRAFFIC ALERT

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

- **One hundred and fifteen turtles seized near Indo-Bangladesh border** Pg 7
- **One hundred and eighty rare birds rescued; four people held in Kolkata** Pg 8
- **Big cat poaching gang busted after 20 years** Pg 10
- **Forest Department seizes 55 snakes in Andhra Pradesh** Pg 11
- **Seventy kg of pangolin scales seized in Bengal** Pg 11
- **On a wing and a prayer: Amur Falcon in India** Pg 12



IN FOCUS

© Gould, John (18858-1880) - Birds of Asia (Vol II). Printed by Taylor and Francis, pub. by the author. London.



WILD CRY

Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.

Bears-threatened by bile trade

South Asia clamps down on wildlife crime and illicit Tiger trade



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From left to right: *Ranjit Sinha, Director- CBI; Ms Jayanthi Natarajan, Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Environment and Forests; Anil Kumar Sinha, Special Director- CBI; Rupak Kumar Dutta, Additional Director-CBI*

The Integrated Investigative Capacity Development and Operational Planning Meeting for scaling up collaborative law enforcement action to curb illegal wildlife trade in the South Asia region was held from 1-5 July 2013 in New Delhi. Jointly organized by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in India, TRAFFIC, INTERPOL, the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN), the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) and the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) of India, the meeting was attended by senior delegates from various enforcement and intelligence agencies of eight South Asian countries.

Illegal wildlife trade, a major transnational organized crime, is often high-profit and low-risk. TRAFFIC's 2012 report on Leopard poaching and illegal trade in India stated that at least four Leopards were poached every week for illegal wildlife trade between 2000 and 2010. The persistent poaching and trafficking of wildlife is further illustrated by the more than 40 Tigers reported dead in India in the first half of 2013.

Given the nature of illegal wildlife trade, regional collaboration between the SAWEN member countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal,

Pakistan, Sri Lanka) along with international support and cooperation is needed to address wildlife crime more effectively.

The meeting in Delhi focused on specialized capacity development and operation planning including intelligence-led approaches such as controlled deliveries, interrogation techniques, risk management and ethics and professionalism in building wildlife cases.

Ms Jayanthi Natarajan, Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Environment and Forests the Chief Guest at the meeting said: "Illegal wildlife trade is one of the most urgent threats to wildlife. It undermines the country's efforts to protect and conserve nature. To combat this, we need to have stricter enforcement of CITES [The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora]. India's Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 is not enough. There is a need for specific legislations to fight wildlife crime."

"The contribution of various agencies and the support of TRAFFIC/WWF-India in strengthening law enforcement measures in India is laudable. This collaborative effort will surely help to bring regional cooperation that is much needed for eradicating this menace," added Ms Natarajan.

Mr Ranjeet Sinha, Director, CBI stressed the importance of intelligence collection and collation among the wildlife enforcement agencies in the SAWEN countries for controlling wildlife crime. He advocated for critical policy changes in order to empower premier investigating agencies in order to curb the trade. This sentiment was echoed by Dr Maheshwar Dhakal of the SAWEN Secretariat.

INTERPOL's Environmental Crime Programme focuses on enhancing enforcement effectiveness for the conservation of wild Tigers and other Asian big cats under Project Predator (see <http://www.interpol.int/Crime-areas/Environmental-crime/Projects/Project-Predator>). The development of common operational planning frameworks allowed participants to work together on building effective investigative capabilities in source, transit and end-use market locations.

This meeting also helped strengthen SAWEN as an institution by seeking to connect national focal points and the SAWEN Secretariat with other government agency representatives. Officials present represented a multiplicity of enforcement agencies, including national police agencies housing INTERPOL National Central Bureaus, Customs, wildlife departments, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, environmental agencies and India's Wildlife Crime Control Bureau helped to bring agencies together with a common mandate.

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Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC in India said: “TRAFFIC is delighted to see that our long-term efforts to support SAWEN are bearing fruit. India was instrumental in bringing all the eight nations together on issues of critical importance for combating illegal wildlife trade and poaching as well as having boosted SAWEN's potential as a best-practice law enforcement network.”

Generous financial support from both the US Department of State, through a grant implemented by TRAFFIC, and USAID's support to INTERPOL's Project Predator, helped bring about the landmark training event.

“Strengthening SAWEN is an objective of INTERPOL's Project Predator, but support from partners such as TRAFFIC is essential for enhancing cohesion between countries in the region to improve wildlife law enforcement,” said Ioana Botezatu, representing INTERPOL's Environmental Crime Programme.



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MP Police and Forest Department train to combat wildlife crime



TRAFFIC in India organized a specialized capacity-building and sensitization programme for the senior Police and forest officials of Madhya Pradesh (MP) on wildlife crime investigation, prosecution and law enforcement.

Madhya Pradesh has the largest population of wild Tigers in India and is rich in biodiversity. There is a constant threat to the wildlife in the State because of the regular reports of poaching incidents. It is, therefore, important to strengthen enforcement intervention so as to nip the wildlife trade nexus in the bud. Poachers are persistent in honing their poaching skills while smugglers find ingenious ways to avoid detection and the authorities. This makes it imperative for enforcement agencies to keep reviewing and upgrading their investigative skills using state-of-the art technologies so as not to be blindsided.



© TRAFFIC

The training workshop was attended by more than 60 senior and middle level officials and held at Indore on 30-31 July 2013. The participants were given an overview of the illegal wildlife trade scenario both in India and globally. There were sessions on wildlife intelligence collection, identification of specimens, wildlife crime mapping and the use of GIS systems for tracking such crimes, the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, legal provisions with a focus on management of wildlife cases, the emerging need for strengthening wildlife forensics, DNA-based techniques for wildlife crime investigations, sample collection and use of forensic kits with an emphasis on Tigers and ivory identification; Tiger protection management in a Protected Area, Tiger conservation in India, monitoring of Tiger Reserves using satellite-based systems, case investigations, interrogation of the accused, importance of intelligence networking, bird trade hotspots in Madhya Pradesh, species in trade and identification skills.

The programme was inaugurated by Mr K C Verma, IPS, Additional Director General of Police, Narcotics, Madhya Pradesh and attended by Mr Sudhir Sahi, IPS, Additional Director General of Police, Special Task Force, Madhya Pradesh; Mr Varun Kapoor, IPS, Inspector General of Police, Police Radio Training School, Indore and Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, IFS, Head of TRAFFIC in India, along with other senior officials from the Police and Forest Department.

Mr K C Verma expressed his willingness to work with the Forest Department for combating wildlife crime in the region. He especially emphasized the need to create awareness among the general public on wildlife conservation and illegal trade.

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Mr Varun Kapoor said “This type of joint workshop has been conducted for the first time and will immensely help participating officials to understand the legal implications of this trade”.

At the valedictory, Mr R S Negi, IFS, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Forest), MP, said that this type of training programme will help in bringing together various agencies because without multi-agency cooperation it is impossible to fight wildlife crime. He thanked TRAFFIC/WWF-India for organizing the workshop and asked for continued support in organizing these trainings in the State.

Transitions at TRAFFIC in India



Dr **MKS Pasha**, Associate Director at TRAFFIC in India has now joined the WWF Tigers Alive Initiative of WWF. He will be based in Malaysia and look after the CATS programme in 12 Tiger range countries. Dr Pasha joined in 2006 and has worked with great acumen on a wide variety of issues for TRAFFIC, including Asian Big Cats, medicinal plants, law enforcement assistance and regional work supporting the development of the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN). TRAFFIC in India wishes him good luck and a bright future. He can be contacted at khalid.pasha@gmail.com

There are two new personnel on board the TRAFFIC team in India – Aishwarya Maheshwari and Amit Kotiya.

Mr Aishwarya Maheshwari joined TRAFFIC to focus on the Snow Leopard trade, as part of the project with WWF-US funded by USAID. Aishwarya completed his Masters in 2006 in the Wildlife Sciences with specialization on Leopards in the Gir Lion Sanctuary and worked with the Wildlife Institute of India from 2006 to 2008. He is fascinated by mountains and always wanted to explore the Snow Leopard habitats across Central and South Asia. Aishwarya led the Snow Leopard conservation programme at WWF-India in 2008 with support from Rufford Small Grants till 2013 and has recently joined the TRAFFIC team in India. He can be contacted at amaheshwari@wwfindia.net.



Dr Amit Kotiya has joined TRAFFIC as a consultant for the project “Biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods: medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs) of India.” This project mainly supports implementation of the FairWild Standards, sustainable harvesting and trade of medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs) in India's North-Western Ghats region. The project will increase the capacity of local communities to engage in biodiversity conservation through the improved management of MAP resources and the adoption of ecologically sound livelihoods.

Dr Kotiya completed his M.Sc. and PhD from the University of Rajasthan on plant taxonomy and ecology. He has been engaged in research on ecological monitoring of flora and fauna since 1999. He has been associated with various organizations including the Wildlife Institute of India (Dehradun), WWF-India, TRAFFIC, Care Earth Trust (Chennai), ERDS-Rajasthan (Jodhpur), University of Rajasthan (Jaipur) and Miranda House, University of Delhi (Delhi). He can be contacted at akotiya@wwfindia.net.



OUTPOST:
Chinese medicine Congress
highlights sustainable use of
wild medicinal plants



More than 1000 scholars, experts and practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) met in October 2013 in Santa Clara, California, USA at the 10th World Congress of Chinese Medicine (WCCM) for the celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies (WFCMS).

Themed “Co-operation between Eastern and Western Medicine, better health services for people around the world”, WCCM 2013 celebrated the global growth and development of TCM. Participants exchanged experiences in medicine development, including the latest updates in relevant legislation, education, clinical practice and research.

Introducing a discussion on the sustainable sourcing of TCM ingredients, Mr Huang Jianyin, Vice Secretary-General of WFCMS noted: “This topic is of the highest importance to the WFCMS and its constituency, with the production and quality of TCM products reliant on both ecologically and socially acceptable production of medicinal plant ingredients.”

Sustainability in the sourcing of wild medicinal plants was also highlighted at the 5th Forum of the Trade Union of Genuine Regional Materia Medica (TUGRMM), which took place concurrently. TRAFFIC is a founder organization of TUGRMM, established under an EU-funded project in 2010.

Speaking at the opening event as a representative of the China Medical Pharmaceutical Material Association (CMPMA), Mr Liu Zhongliang, President of Wecome Pharmaceutical Ltd., noted that it was the responsibility of CMPMA's 3,800-member companies to ensure their medicines were prepared in a safe, efficient and controlled manner.

He also spoke about the European Union (EU)-funded Environmental Governance Programme (EGP) project to develop sustainable supply chains for medicinal products and emphasized the responsibility to protect the environment that lies with TCM companies.

Ms Chenyang Li, a Medicinal Plant Project Manager with TRAFFIC's China Programme, spoke about TRAFFIC's experiences in promoting the sustainable use of wild medicinal plants through implementation of the FairWild Standard.

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TRAFFIC Alert



One hundred and fifteen turtles seized near Indo-Bangladesh border

On 19 September 2013, the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) seized 115 turtles which were being smuggled into Bangladesh near the Tentulberia Border Outpost in North 24 Parganas in West Bengal. On a Thursday evening, the BSF spotted a man with a haversack moving towards the unfenced international border. On being challenged, he dropped the haversack and fled through jute fields across the international border. On opening the sack, the officials found 72 Spotted Pond Turtles and 43 Narrow-headed Softshell Turtles.

TRAFFIC in India adds.....

The above seizure, like many previous ones, highlights the threat faced by various turtle species in the wild. On 1 September 2013, the BSF seized 952 Star Tortoises while they were being smuggled into Bangladesh. A patrolling party seized the reptiles from near Tentulberia Border Outpost in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas after intercepting two smugglers who were walking towards the Bangladesh border with the consignment packed in gunny bags.

TRAFFIC in India has repeatedly reported on the threat to chelonians, specifically softshell turtles over the years. It has also produced an identification guide to Indian turtles and has been working with enforcement agencies to raise awareness on the nature of trade in turtles.

There are currently 28 species of tortoises and freshwater turtles in India, protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, of India under which trade and exploitation is prohibited. Despite this, many species are traded across borders where they are sold as pets or for meat. They are also used as an ingredient in traditional Chinese medicines.

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“Securing the livelihoods of collectors and promoting sustainable wild harvesting and trade in wild medicinal and aromatic plants are central to TRAFFIC’s mission, and it is difficult to underestimate the importance of this work to the TCM industry,” said Ms Li.

Since 2013, TRAFFIC, together with its partners, WWF, WFCMS and Wecome Pharmaceutical Ltd, the major sponsor and CMPMA member, have been working with TCM industry representatives in Zhejiang and Hunan provinces to create and manage sustainable supply chains as part of an EGP project on “Engaging the Private Sector in sustainable management of medicinal plants – the multiplier effect”.

Read more at <http://www.traffic.org/home/2013/10/21/sustainable-use-of-wild-medicinal-plants-highlighted-at-trad.html>

OUTPOST: New study seeks to implement regulations on shark trade



© Dinesh Babu

A new TRAFFIC study examines how implementation of trade controls through CITES regulations can ensure that seven species of sharks and manta rays are only sourced sustainably and legally. The study includes the Oceanic Whitetip shark, Porbeagle shark, three species of hammerhead shark (Scalloped, Great and Smooth) and manta rays, all of which are subject to continued over-exploitation. The species are all slow growing, late to mature and produce few young, making them highly susceptible to extinction.

The top 20 shark-fishing nations/territories in descending order are Indonesia, India, Spain, Taiwan, Argentina, Mexico, United States of America, Malaysia, Pakistan, Brazil, Japan, France, New Zealand, Thailand, Portugal, Nigeria, Islamic Republic of Iran, Sri Lanka, Republic of Korea and Yemen, who between them account for nearly 80% of the total shark catch reported globally.

Indonesia and India were alone responsible for over 20% of global catches between 2002 and 2011. Three EU Member States – Spain, France and Portugal are among the top 20 shark catching nations, responsible for 12% of global catches and, collectively, the 28 EU Member States are the largest shark-catching conglomeration.

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TRAFFIC Alert



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In recent years, many of the species have appeared in urban markets in China. Reports suggested that turtles are easily captured by collectors who use nets, fences, sometimes spears, or even catch them by hand (Rashid and Swingland 1997). Since China is believed to have depleted its native turtle species populations, the reptiles are now sourced from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal. Most of the trade occurs through porous international borders.

In India itself, reports have indicated that there is a domestic demand in various turtle species for their meat. The Spotted Pond Turtle is listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and the Narrow-headed Softshell Turtle *Chitra indica*, is listed in Schedule II of the Act. TRAFFIC is concerned about the ongoing trade in softshell turtles and encourages the introduction of effective measures to reduce the demand and smuggling of turtles within the country, including the monitoring and control of cross-border transactions.

Source:

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-09-21/kolkata/42272090_1_turtles-border-security-force-indo-bangla;www.traffic.org/species-reports/traffic_species_reptiles14.pdf;www.traffic.org/species-reports/traffic_species_reptiles14.pdf;http://www.turtlesurvival.org/component/taxonomy/term/summary/19/4?start=10#.ULOnblMoi_0;http://www.indianexpress.com/news/952-endangered-star-tortoises-seized-at-indobangla-border/1163750/;http://www.iucn-tftsg.org/wp-content/uploads/file/Accounts/crm_5_043_hamiltonii_v1_2010.pdf

One hundred and eighty rare birds rescued; four people held in Kolkata

At least 180 species of rare birds were recovered on 15 September 2013 in Kolkata during a joint operation by the Police and Forest Department personnel. Four people were arrested in connection with the raid. 151 munia birds and 30 birds of rare species were recovered. The four people arrested were attempting to traffic the birds from West Bengal to neighbouring States.

Continued from page 8

The study, **Into the deep: Implementing CITES measures for commercially-valuable sharks and manta rays**, was commissioned by the European Commission and written in the wake of the shark and manta ray species being listed within the Appendices of CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) at a meeting held in Bangkok, Thailand, in March this year.

The study aimed to identify those countries among the 178 CITES Parties that will mainly be affected by the listings; the relevant existing international, regional and domestic regulations; the main challenges facing implementation of the measures; and any additional capacity building that would be needed to ensure those Parties catching and trading in the products of these species could validate their sustainability and legality before issuing permits.

The study revealed a lack of basic information regarding levels of catch and population status of the newly listed marine species, with an urgent need to improve the identification of the species in trade, reporting of trade; and for further research, assessment and monitoring to determine the impacts of trade on populations. The study also highlighted the need to ensure domestic regulatory frameworks and administrative structures to support the implementation of CITES trade controls.

The study also examined the different dynamics influencing the trade in the species concerned—manta rays are chiefly traded for their gill rakers, used in traditional Asian medicines, while the Porbeagle is mainly caught for its meat. Hammerhead sharks are caught both for consumption of their meat and international trade of their fins. The larger Oceanic Whitetip is caught for its highly-valued fins, destined for markets in East Asia, particularly Hong Kong.

Some of the species examined are specifically targeted by fishing operations, while other species such as the tuna are a secondary, but valuable catch. The study aims to break down the complex trade nexus involved in this operation.

“There was great elation when these sharks and manta rays were listed in CITES this March. But the CITES listing does not take away the need for comprehensive fisheries management. They represent one critical part of that management through trade controls and prevent international trade in products of these species sourced from unsustainable or illegal fisheries,” said Glenn Sant, TRAFFIC's Marine Programme Leader.

The new listings will come into effect only on 14 September 2014, to give CITES Parties adequate time to prepare for their implementation, including guiding range States on how to determine what levels of trade are sustainable for the species concerned—a requirement under CITES for trade to be permitted.

The European Union has already banned the practice of shark fishing by EU vessels entirely in response to the devastating impact over-fishing is having on some shark species. Brunei recently announced a ban on catching and landing of all shark species and several airlines, including Air New Zealand, Cathay Pacific, Korean Air, Qantas and the Seoul-based Asian Airlines, have recently announced bans on the carriage of shark fin.

Download the report at <http://www.traffic.org/home/2013/7/30/new-study-gets-its-teeth-into-shark-trade-regulations.html>

TRAFFIC Alert



TRAFFIC in India adds.....

There are seven species of munias found in India and, according to TRAFFIC's country-wide study on the illegal bird trade, munias or avadavats comprise nearly 40% of the total bird numbers traded in India (Ahmed 1997, 2002). Munias are small, beautifully adorned, have melodious calls, and are low-cost to maintain with a simple diet, making them easy to care for in captivity. They are commercially exploited throughout their range.

Despite being listed in Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and one species, the Green Avadavat, listed in Appendix II of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), under which both domestic and international trade in the species is restricted, munias continue to be traded in the clandestine market.

TRAFFIC has been highlighting the danger posed to Indian birds for almost two decades. Beginning with surveys of birds in northern India, TRAFFIC has published literature on threats to Indian birds including “Imperilled Custodians of the Night: A Study on the illegal trapping and trade in owls of India”, and prepared posters raising awareness of the illegal trade in munias and parrots, and regularly emphasized that trade in all Indian birds is illegal under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

India banned the export of indigenous birds in 1991. Currently non-native ('exotic') birds are legally sold in the market and some traders use this lacuna in the law to deal in indigenous birds.

Source:

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OUTPOST:
Consortium assists Sri Lanka in investigating latest ivory seizure



© Martin Harvey / WWF-Canon

The International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC), at the request of Sri Lanka, deployed its first Wildlife Incident Support Team (WIST) to help enforcement officials investigate a major ivory seizure.

The WIST, led by INTERPOL on behalf of ICWC, collected DNA samples from 359 elephant tusks that were seized by Sri Lanka Customs authorities in the port of Colombo. The action was in response to a Resolution adopted by the Conference of the Parties to CITES at its 16th meeting (CoP16), held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 3 to 14 March 2013 that called for the forensic examination of all large-scale (>500 kg) ivory

seizures. WISTs, consisting of enforcement staff or relevant experts, can be dispatched at the request of a country that has been either affected by significant poaching of CITES specimens, or that has made a large-scale seizure of such specimens. The role of the WISTs is to assist, guide and facilitate appropriate follow-up actions in the immediate aftermath of such an incident.

The DNA samples will help relevant national authorities to determine the origin of the seized ivory through the use of forensic technology. Identifying where large-scale ivory seizures originate is vital for the design of efficient law enforcement responses and interventions. This will ensure that resources are directed to those areas where the most significant poaching activities occur. Determining the origin of seized ivory will also make a significant contribution towards ensuring that the entire crime chain, from countries of origin and transit to the countries of destination, is brought into focus.

The samples have been sent for DNA analysis to the Center for Conservation Biology at the University of Washington in the United States to identify the origin of the ivory and also to the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation for chemical isotope analysis, to determine the age of the ivory. John E. Scanlon, Secretary-General of CITES, stressed that the successful deployment of the WIST team in Sri Lanka demonstrated the hands-on support now being delivered to CITES Parties through ICWC.

ICWC is a collaborative effort by the CITES Secretariat, INTERPOL, the UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Bank, and the World Customs Organization (WCO) to bring coordinated support to the national wildlife law enforcement agencies and to the sub-regional and regional networks that, on a daily basis, act in defence of natural resources. The deployment of the WIST was generously funded by the European Commission.

TRAFFIC Alert



Big cat poaching gang busted after 20 years

Following a major operation against Tiger and Leopard skin and body parts traders, Delhi Police on 8 September 2013, claimed to have rounded-up the “biggest gang of poachers and smugglers” who had evaded arrest for more than 20 years. Over 18 kg of Tiger skulls, bones, nails and teeth were recovered from three people arrested.

TRAFFIC in India adds.....

TRAFFIC congratulates the efforts of the enforcement agencies involved in this operation and continues to call for stronger measures to pursue others in this clandestine business. TRAFFIC has always stressed the need for stronger prosecutions. To this end, TRAFFIC regularly conducts workshops across India and collaborates with government agencies of neighbouring countries to improve action on the ground for better investigation, apprehension and conviction of wildlife criminals, especially those dealing with big cats protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. In October 2013 the Seema Suraksha Bal (SSB) seized Tiger bones in Valmiki Tiger Reserve shortly after TRAFFIC had conducted a training workshop for SSB officials there. The case of Sansar Chand and the possibility of him getting away free due to inadequate evidence presented against him in court, points to the fact that better prosecution cases and evidence are need to convict wildlife criminals.

Source:

- <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/356173/poaching-gang-busted-20-years.html>;
- http://www.telegraphindia.com/1131010/jsp/bihar/story_17441918.jsp;
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TRAFFIC Alert



Forest Department seizes 55 snakes in Andhra Pradesh

Authorities seized 55 live snakes, including Russell vipers, cobras and pythons, from snake charmers at Kachiguda, Uppal, Medipally, Chappal Bazaar and Dhoolpet in the first week of August 2013. These snakes were handed over to Nehru Zoological Park for veterinary care and were later released into the wild by the Forest Department.

TRAFFIC in India adds.....

Snake charmers have been using a variety of species of snakes, trade of which is illegal under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Generally, snakes do not command the level of interest that Tigers and elephants do, but are nonetheless important to ecosystems. Although many people fear snakes, they are also revered and used as animals for worship during occasions like "Nagpanchami". TRAFFIC has already highlighted the trade of Red Sand Boas in India.

Source:

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-08-12/hyderabad/41331929_1_snakes-forest-department-rescues-wildlife-crime-control-bureau;
http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-07-24/indore/32827194_1_snake-charmers-nagpanchami-forest-department;
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Seventy kg of pangolin scales seized in Bengal

On 31 July 2013, Forest Department officials, acting on intelligence inputs, arrested seven people with 70 kg of pangolin scales from Debidanga, Siliguri, West Bengal. This suggests the Siliguri corridor may continue to be a preferred route for animal smugglers. At least 280 pangolins could have been killed to obtain that weight of scales. Those arrested came from different parts of the country and Nepal. Investigations revealed that the scales, brought from Haryana, were to be smuggled out to Nepal from where they would be transported to China, where pangolin scales are in high demand for use in aphrodisiacs and other medicines.

TRAFFIC in India adds.....

India has two species of pangolins, the Indian Pangolin *Manis crassicaudata* and the Chinese Pangolin *Manis pentadactyla*, both protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Both species are listed in Appendix II of CITES, with a zero quota for international trade.

Although pangolins are traded locally throughout India, the main threat to their survival is due to the high demand from international markets in China and South-East Asia, both for their meat, considered a delicacy and also as a "tonic food" because of its alleged medicinal properties and for their scales.

Until recently, it appears that most illegal pangolin trade was focused in South-East Asia, but now there seems to be a growing international trade from India, with traders targeting areas as far as the interior peninsular region. Netting, trapping, snaring and shooting are common methods of poaching. Pangolins are also smoked out from their nests by people who capture them for their meat. The odd appearance of pangolins makes people rather indifferent towards their fate.

Source:

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-08-06/flora-fauna/41131043_1_scales-pangolin-siliguri;
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IN FOCUS:
On a wing and a prayer: Amur Falcon in India



© Ramki Sreenivasan / Conservation India

After the mayhem reported last year, Amur Falcons have been safe in India so far this year, thanks to the determined efforts by the Government of Nagaland and the conservation fraternity.

In 2012, the killing of around 120,000 Amur Falcons over a one week period in the State of Nagaland raised alarm across India. The bird stops over in Nagaland for a brief refueling halt during its long migration flight. However, the catastrophe may not be repeating itself this year largely due to the efforts of the Forest Department, NGOs and local communities.

The Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis* is a small raptor in the falcon family that is an exceptional long distance flyer. It breeds in north-east Asia (China, North Korea and Russia) and in winter migrates to south-east Africa, undertaking one of the longest over-sea flights known for a bird of prey (of over 4000 km). The total distance covered during migration is 22,000 km, among the longest migrations recorded.

Amur Falcons on migration stop over for a few weeks in north-eastern India, concentrating in the Wokha district of Nagaland, resting and feeding on insects to prepare for the next leg of their long journey. At such times the State may host a very large percentage of the global population for a few days during this time. This gathering of falcons is a significant and spectacular natural phenomenon, much like the arribada of the nesting Olive Ridley Sea-turtles in Orissa.

Conservation India and Nagaland Wildlife & Biodiversity Conservation Trust (NWBCT), the NGOs who discovered and documented the Amur Falcon massacre in October 2012 have been working closely with the Nagaland Government, local communities and other NGOs to stop the killings this year. They reported, "The migrating falcons spend the day on the transmission wires (almost entirely inaccessible to hunters) and descend to forested patches along the banks of the Doyang reservoir to roost. The hunters ruthlessly exploit this particular roosting behaviour and set-up huge fishing nets (30-40m long, 10-12m tall) all over the roosting sites".

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Mr Ravi Singh, Secretary General & CEO of WWF-India adds, “The Amur Falcon migrates through Nagaland or aggregates in such huge numbers only during its winter migration. It uses a different route during the spring migration. Thus a short period of two weeks or so, in October-November, spent in Nagaland has become the greatest threat to the species. It is true that the species still exists in large numbers and is not considered threatened, but recurring large-scale removal of individuals can diminish the largest of populations. The fate of the Passenger pigeon of the U.S.A (extinct in 1896) is a grim reminder that the largest of bird populations cannot sustain mass-scale hunting”.

“India being a signatory to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, has a moral responsibility to protect the Amur Falcon from the large-scale destruction threatening to endanger the species” he further added.

Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC in India further commented, “Amur Falcons have arrived in India again this October and so far no birds are reported to have been killed in Nagaland. TRAFFIC is elated to see the efforts undertaken by the Forest Department and the support it has received from NGOs and local communities to stop the annual hunting becoming a conservation crisis. It is a great example of what determined government action can achieve for conservation”.

Mr Vikhweno Meratsu, Under Secretary to the Government of Nagaland said, “The forest officials along with other enforcement agencies like the Police and District Administration have set up committees in all the districts where the Amur Falcon passes through and is working round the clock to prevent any untoward activity that may disturb and threaten these beautiful birds. Awareness campaigns are being undertaken to make the communities understand the role of these birds in agriculture and the environment. The village authorities have also been encouraged to pass resolutions for the conservation of the Amur Falcon with a view to let common people participate in the safe stay and passage of these birds”.



WILD CRY

(Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.)

Bears- threatened by bile trade

© Martin Harvey / WWF-Canon

Asiatic Black Bear

Baloo, Rudyard Kipling's bear, has been a target for illegal wildlife traders and it is little surprise that the illegal bear bile trade is threatening the future of bears in the wild.

Not so long ago, dancing bears were a common sight on the streets in India, despite the animals being protected under Indian law. Thankfully this threat has abated due to sustained public campaigns and government action. However, illegal trade in bears for their bile has taken its place.

There are four species of bears found in India – Himalayan Brown Bear *Ursus arctos isabellinus*, Asiatic Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus*, Sun Bear *Helarctos malayanus* and Sloth Bear *Melursus ursinus*.

Distribution:

Himalayan Brown Bear – Found in the Himalayas, Jammu and Kashmir and Sikkim.

Asiatic Black Bear – Found in the Himalayas from Jammu and Kashmir to Arunachal Pradesh and in the hills of north-east India.

Sun Bear – Found in the States of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Manipur

Sloth Bear – Found throughout India except in Jammu and Kashmir, high Himalayas and arid/desert areas of Gujarat and Rajasthan.

Status: All the above species are protected in India under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The Himalayan Brown Bear, Sun Bear and Sloth Bear are listed under Schedule I of the Act while the Asiatic Black Bear is listed in Schedule II. This prohibits hunting, trade or any other form of exploitation of the species. International trade is further restricted under CITES wherein all the species are placed in Appendix I.

Threats: Poaching and illegal trade of bears is driven largely by the demand for their bile that is used in traditional medicine and folk remedies across Asia. Bear bile is a digestive juice produced by the liver of the bear and stored in its gall bladder. Poachers kill the bears to obtain the gall bladder. The bile is traded either as complete gall bladders or as crystallized bile extract. In 2011, TRAFFIC conducted a study on bear bile trade and found that there is a large demand for bear bile products that are sold in traditional medicine outlets in mainland China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Myanmar and Viet Nam. The most frequently encountered products were whole bear gall bladders and pills—found in half the outlets surveyed.

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TRAFFIC's research suggested a complex and robust trade in bear products. Several of the countries/territories are either producers or consumers of bear bile products, while in some cases they acted as both. Mainland China was the most commonly reported place of origin for these products across the region.

Gall bladders and bile extracts are often smuggled under the guise of frozen food. Bear gall bladders cannot easily be distinguished from those of cows, sheep or pigs thus making detection extremely difficult. Bear paws, meat, and fat are also traded alongside the bile, though the biggest threat to bears comes from the trade in bear bile.

Nandini Velho who studies bushmeat hunting in Andhra Pradesh said in her Pioneer article in 2012 that, "Time will tell whether the demand for the gall bladder of the Asiatic Black bear outdoes its supply. Rinchin (a local hunter) says that if hunters are skilled enough, they can hunt up to 10 bears a year. Another hunter said that in his village of 100 houses alone killed 35 bears last year. For every one bear killed almost, six are injured and can't be found".

It was further reported by Nandini that hunters use their keen natural history skills to track bears in the forest. Bears are hunted between October and December. Around the same time, people from Bhutan and Tibet come down to buy gall bladders, a sign that market links are well established.

"While internationally this illegal trade in bear bile and other bear products has been highlighted in the past there is limited information regarding its status in India. Although seizure data clearly indicate demand for bear bile from India, there is a need for more field-based research to understand the hunting practices and trends. Enforcement agencies must stay alert as currently much of this trade appears to be undetected", adds Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC in India.

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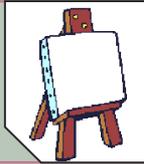
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http://www.daijiworld.com/news/news_disp.asp?n_id=117571



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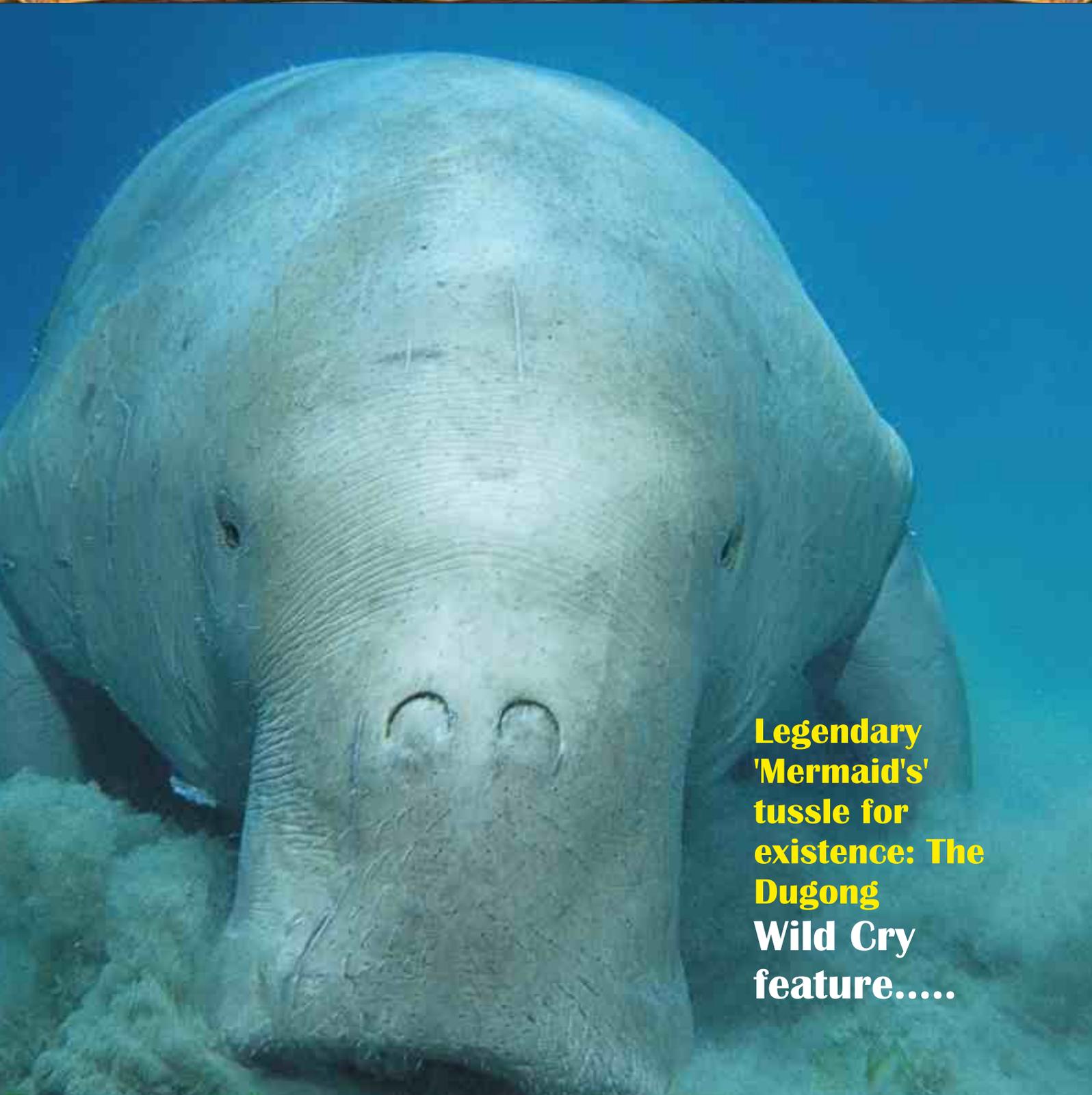
TRAFFIC

the wildlife trade monitoring network

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POST

TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



**Legendary
'Mermaid's'
tussle for
existence: The
Dugong
Wild Cry
feature.....**



TRAFFIC Post



TRAFFIC Post is TRAFFIC's newsletter on wildlife trade in India. It was started in September 2007 with a primary aim to create awareness on rampant poaching and illegal wildlife trade in India and how it affects the endangered flora and fauna. Since then it has covered not only issues related to illegal wildlife trade but also highlighted policies and trends related to legitimate wildlife trade especially in timber and medicinal plants.

The newsletter began as a quarterly e-newsletter available only for online distribution. However after a few issues it was converted into a printed edition with three issues coming out every year. The response to the newsletter over the years has been overwhelming and the subscribers continue to increase with every issue.

Besides carrying updates on TRAFFIC's work in India in a given period, the newsletter focuses on the plight of various species in illegal wildlife trade. It also provides early warning through its various sections on illegal wildlife trade trends. The CITES section and the OUTPOST section especially is meant to keep its readers updated on global news related to wildlife trade.

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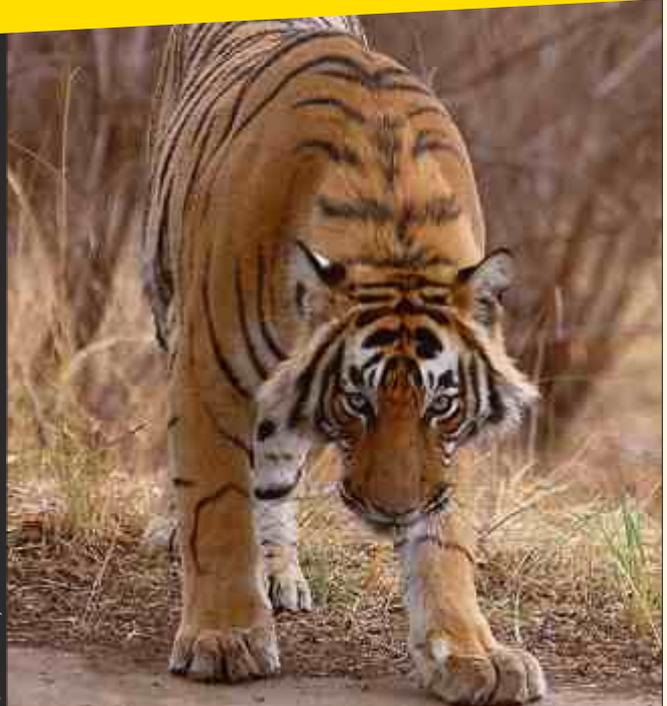
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POST



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- **Orissa Police and Forest Department collaborate to rein in poaching and illegal wildlife trade** Pg 6
- **Western Ghats to implement international standards for sustainable collection and trade in medicinal plants** Pg 7
- **Governments commit to decisive and urgent action to tackle global wildlife poaching crisis** Pg 7



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- **Red alert on Red Sanders: Sri Lanka apprehends large consignment from India** Pg 8



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CITES UPDATE

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TRAFFIC ALERT

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- **Wildlife poachers in India hire women** Pg 9
- **Illegal wildlife trade racket busted: 250 exotic birds, monkeys recovered** Pg 10



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- **An investigative report on Sonepur Animal Fair 2013** Pg 12

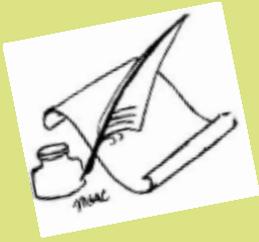


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WILD CRY

Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.

Legendary 'Mermaid's' tussle for existence: The Dugong



**FROM THE DESK:
Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj,
Head of TRAFFIC in India**



The past few months have given policy makers, law enforcement officials, conservation scientists, and conservation NGOs many sleepless nights. Despite a lot of hue and cry, and national and international level talks and deliberations, 2013 saw an unprecedented rise in the number of poaching incidents of the Indian Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* in the last two decades. Africa too reported its highest number of poaching incidents in the last 20 years. More than 1000 African rhinos were poached in South Africa alone in 2013 despite focused attention and stringent protection measures extended to the Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* and the White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum*. This level of poaching will prove detrimental to rhino populations and could even lead to the decimation of rhino species.

Rhino poaching in India peaked in the early 1990s. The subsequent years saw a decline in poaching which was attributed to the Assam government's enforcement techniques and increased resource allocation for prioritizing rhino protection.

Rhino poaching incidents in India—unlike those of the Tiger, Elephant and Leopard—were sporadic and displayed a clear downward trend until 2007. It picked up markedly during 2012. During the late 1990s there was an economic recession in most of Asia and in many western economies. There was a recurrence of the recession phenomenon during 2007-2011, after which economies started bouncing back again. This could indicate there is an intrinsic relationship between economic trends and poaching of some high demand species, like rhinos. If there is a correlation, much greater insights will be required to understand such linkages and identify appropriate follow up action that could include a slew of measures to counter increased threats in some regions in Asia. Poaching of seven rhinos since the beginning of 2014 in Assam may be a testimony to the growing demand for horn, fuelled by a growing economy in the region.

The international community, led by some developed countries, has taken serious notice of the emerging critical situation affecting iconic wildlife species. The United Kingdom organized the London Conference on 12-13 February 2014 in order to mobilize international support and collective resources for fighting wildlife crimes. Forty one countries and 10 NGOs endorsed the London Declaration that pledges to take the fight against poaching and illegal trade in rhinos, elephants, and tigers to a whole new level.

Unfortunately, India, home to three representative species of this international focus—Great Indian Rhinoceros, Asian Elephants, and Tigers—and a country that grapples with the problems of serious and organized poaching, did not participate in the Conference. India did, however, participate in four global teleconferences that were integral to the background preparations for the Conference and, perhaps as a result, the threat from poaching and illegal wildlife trade to other species found in India and South Asia, such as pangolins, was also highlighted at the event.

At the same time, the United States of America made public its comprehensive policy to aid the global fight against poaching and illegal wildlife trade. The document, known as the U.S. National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking, was announced on 11 February 2014 by President Barack Obama. The Strategy establishes guiding principles for the USA's efforts to stem illegal trade in wildlife, and includes a decision to ban all commercial trade in elephant ivory, including pre-CITES specimens. Furthermore, India and the South Asia region have a serious stake in the above initiatives, and therefore action to protect our fading wildlife icons must be set in motion.

Saving the top predator of the sea: TRAFFIC to launch initiatives to curb illegal trade in sharks



The decision taken by Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Secretariat in March 2013 to accord greater protection to five species of sharks - Oceanic Whitetip *Carcharhinus longimanus*, Scalloped Hammerhead *Sphyrna lewini*, Great Hammerhead Shark *Sphyrna mokarran*, Smooth Hammerhead Shark *Sphyrna zigaena* and the Porbeagle Shark *Lamna*

nasusa and two species of Manta Rays. *Manta spp* has been hailed as a historic win for marine conservation.

Traditionally, sharks are traded for their fins and meat while the manta ray and devil ray species are traded largely for their gill plates. India, reportedly, is the world's second biggest shark catching nation with 70 000 tonnes of sharks caught annually. Therefore, conservationists are keen to use the CITES decision to improve the conservation standards for sharks, rays and skates found in Indian coastal waters.

While the vote to list these shark species in Appendix II of CITES does not prohibit consumption or commercial trade in these sharks, it regulates it. Both exporting and importing countries must issue permits. This listing will document the volume of trade that will take place legally between nations and, therefore, can help gauge the number of sharks caught wild. Of the above five listed species of sharks, four are found in Indian coastal waters, with the exception of the Porbeagle Shark. There is an 18-month grace period before these new listings come into effect on 14 September 2014, while 30 August 2014 is the cutoff date by which the respective national governments will have to make their final submissions on implementation of the CITES provisions related to the sharks.

Shark conservation faces many difficulties in India. The country's fisheries have recorded a sharp decline in catches resulting in damage to the livelihoods of coastal communities, some of the most marginalized communities in India. There have been no particular steps taken to conserve sharks in Indian waters other than listing some elasmobranchs, including eight species of sharks and whale sharks, the largest fish in the world, under the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972. Unfortunately, although the listing took place in 2001, it has not been reviewed or amended, nor have there been any subsequent efforts made at mapping or documenting the use of sharks either for consumption as food or in trade.

TRAFFIC has attempted to address such gaps from a global perspective and has published several scientific reports on shark conservation, notable among these, and with some relevance to the Indian context, are 'The Future of Sharks: A review of sharks' published in January 2011 by TRAFFIC in collaboration with the PEW Environment Group and 'Into the deep: Implementing CITES measures for commercially-valuable sharks and manta rays' published in July 2013. These studies (both available online on www.traffic.org) examine the exploitation of different shark and ray species, assess their conservation status and make recommendations for improved measures to safeguard these species in the wild. The Indian government recognizes the need to conserve sharks and to implement measures to ascertain the sustainability of shark catches in India for future CITES discussions. Over 60 species of sharks are found in Indian waters and 18 of these are fished intensively. The current Head of TRAFFIC in India, Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, was previously the Director of the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere reserve and was instrumental in upgrading the protection of sharks in India through their inclusion in the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Shark finning to extract their fins, used for making soup, widely popular in East Asian countries has drawn a lot of attention internationally and in India on conservation and empathy (animal welfare) grounds. Finning involves removing the fins of a captured shark and throwing the body back into the sea. Shark fin is a connoisseur's delicacy but recent campaigns have led to several countries banning shark fin products and several commercial airlines refusing to carry shark fin cargo. In India, the Ministry of Environment and Forests has issued a directive stating that if sharks are not landed with 'fins naturally attached', fishermen could be charged with a 'hunting' offence under India's wildlife laws. TRAFFIC recommends collaboration with fishing communities combined with a robust educational campaign on shark conservation and continued investigation of the sustainability of shark fishing practices in India as being necessary to safeguard the future of India's sharks. These are all proposed as part of a new project that will involve TRAFFIC in India.

Orissa Police and Forest Department collaborate to rein in poaching and illegal wildlife trade



Poaching of wildlife in the dense forests of Simlipal Tiger Reserve has emerged as one of the most significant threats to various wildlife species in the reserve. Located near Baripada in Odisha in eastern India, Simlipal is abundant with natural resources, wild flora and fauna. It is home to Tigers, Elephants, Leopards, various deer species, Gaur, Giant Squirrel, and various bird species like the Red Junglefowl, Hill Mynah, Peacock, Alexandrine Parakeet, Crested Serpent Eagle, and reptile species like the King Cobra, among other wildlife.

Illegal wildlife trade has now evolved into an organized criminal activity that extends beyond borders. Like many other reserves in the country, it has cast its shadow on Simlipal Tiger Reserve. It is therefore imperative to enforce laws stringently and take tactical actions to combat poaching.

TRAFFIC, in collaboration with the Odisha Forest Department organized a specialized capacity-building training programme for the enforcement officials of Simlipal Tiger Reserve and the police forces. The training programme is aimed at strengthening the skills of enforcement officials, enhancing tactical collaboration and understanding of wildlife crimes and illegal trade to help curb these growing threats.

The workshop, held on 22-23 January 2014, was attended by about 90 officials of the Odisha Forest Department, the police and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

Mr Anup Kumar Naik, IFS, Regional Chief Conservator of Forests cum Field Director of Simlipal Tiger Reserve, Baripada, Odisha, while inaugurating the workshop said that this type of training helps to inculcate knowledge among the ground staff on present scenarios of wildlife crimes. It provides deep insight into the current trade dynamics and new methods adopted by illegal trade operators that result in poaching and illegal killing of targeted species in protected areas.

Mr Nikhil Kumar Khanoriya, IPS, SSP, Baripada, Odisha who attended the inaugural sessions and deputed a large number of police officials for the training said it is necessary for the police and forest officials to co-operate in curbing wildlife crime. The support provided by the police further augments the initiatives undertaken by the forest department and enables enforcement agencies to work together.

Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC in India who led the training programme with his colleague Mr Dhruba Jyoti Dutta informed the participants that TRAFFIC has recognized the need for training enforcement officials and prioritized this workshop for Simlipal in Odisha due to the reserve's strategic location and specific vulnerability. The participants were provided with an overview of the illegal wildlife trade, current trade dynamics and international illegal wildlife trade trends. They were also introduced to various latest tools and techniques available to enforcement agencies in fighting such crime. An integral part of the training was focused on understanding the use of forensics in successful wildlife crime investigation. The participants were also taken through various domestic and international laws and conventions that have implications for regulating illegal wildlife trade. Resource material related to this was also distributed among the participants.

Dr Niraj, further added, "Capacity-building training programmes have been conducted in the past and have had a significant impact on the enforcement initiatives of various agencies. It is important to bring various agencies together to share experience and knowledge. We appreciate the support provided by the police and forest department for this training programme."

TRAFFIC deployed a team of eight highly experienced and accomplished resource persons for various sessions at the workshop. Mr Varun Kapoor, Inspector General of Police, conducted an exclusive session on police techniques in combating wildlife crimes, tools and techniques of intelligence collection, collation for improving preventive and investigative techniques for combating wildlife crimes.

The event was covered in national newspapers and electronic media. Afterwards, the Odisha Forest Department headquarters lost no time in sending a request for TRAFFIC to conduct a similar training programme for multiple enforcement agencies in the state. The Odisha Forest Department has offered to fund the programme through a World Bank project which TRAFFIC will conduct in April 2014.



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Western Ghats to implement international standards for sustainable collection and trade in medicinal plants



Approximately 25 per cent of drugs acquired from plants and many other drugs are made from synthetic analogues built on prototype compounds isolated from plant species in the modern pharmacopoeia. India has a rich medicinal plant biodiversity with 7500 species of medicinal plants found in the country. This accounts for 44 per cent of the total floral diversity that occurs in India. A large number of local communities are dependent on these resources for medicinal plant species or for food, fodder, timber and other ethnobotanical purposes (Kala *et al*, 2006).



Terminalia bellirica



Terminalia chebula

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India's Western Ghats and the North-east are very rich in biodiversity and with the distribution of some endemic species in this zone, it is recognized as a global biodiversity hotspot. The medicinal plants from this region play a critical role in supplying raw material to the traditional Ayurvedic medicine industry as well as the global pharmaceutical industry.

Of late, and due to the recent global changes in consumption, there has been an increase in demand for specific plant species. Excessive demand for a particular species many a times has adverse effects on the biodiversity of the region. The changing consumption patterns also raise issues regarding benefit-sharing of the biological resources. To address these issues of ecological, social and economical sustainability, FairWild Standards are being implemented in the region.

The FairWild Standard assesses the harvest and trade of wild plants against various ecological, social and economic requirements. The use of the FairWild Standard helps support efforts to ensure plants are managed, harvested and traded in a way that maintains populations in the wild and benefits rural producers.

In India, TRAFFIC is leading on popularizing implementation protocols of the FairWild principles with support from various other government and non-government agencies. Lately, the FairWild implementation project in the Western Ghats got a boost with financial support extended by the Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund (KNCF) and the UK's Darwin Initiative. The initiative targets sustainable collection of fruits of two tree species used in Ayurvedic medicine - *Terminalia bellirica* and *Terminalia chebula*. The project is being implemented by the Applied Environmental Research Foundation (AERF) with UK manufacturer Pukka Herbs supporting and planning to purchase sustainably harvested ingredients from the site. FairWild certification is a goal for the future. Beyond the field-based activities, the FairWild Standard will be promoted more broadly to industry in India in 2014.

The project will increase the capacity of local communities to engage in biodiversity conservation through improved management of MAP (Medicinal and Aromatic Plant) resources and the adoption of ecologically sound livelihoods. The project will further promote the uptake of FairWild Standard principles of sustainable and fair trade by the MAPs industry in order to create an enabling trade environment for sustainable MAP products.

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Kala, C. P., Dhyani, P.P., and Sajwan, B.S. (2006). Developing the medicinal plants sector in northern India: challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine*.

Governments commit to decisive and urgent action to tackle global wildlife poaching crisis



Heads of State, ministers and high level representatives from 46 countries, including those regions most heavily impacted by poaching and illegal trade of wildlife, have committed to taking "decisive and urgent action" to tackle the global illegal wildlife trade.

The strongly-worded declaration was issued following two days of closed-door negotiations hosted in London by the UK government from 12-13 February 2014. Three UK Royals, Princes Charles, William and Harry also participated in the event.

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Measures agreed upon by countries adopting the declaration include action to eradicate the market for illegal wildlife products; agreements to strengthen law enforcement efforts and ensure that effective legal frameworks and deterrents are in place; and moves to promote sustainable livelihoods through positive engagement with local communities.

WWF and TRAFFIC welcome the post-conference “London Declaration” for recognizing the significant scale and detrimental economic, social and environmental consequences of illegal wildlife trade, including how poaching and trafficking are increasingly controlled by organized criminal networks that undermine the rule of law and good governance and encourage corruption.

“Although the London Conference has mainly highlighted the plight of Rhinos, Tigers and Elephants, there are many other species that are threatened by the destructive and pervasive illegal wildlife trade,” said Dr Shekhar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC in India. “Action to stem trafficking of iconic species should benefit some of the lesser known wildlife, such as pangolins.”

Countries present at the meeting included several whose elephant populations are under severe pressure with regard to poaching, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Kenya and Tanzania. Other countries that represent major transit points for ivory shipped from Africa to Asia were also in attendance, including Togo, the Philippines and Malaysia, and significantly, China, the major market for illegal ivory.

Also joining the meeting were representatives from a number of intergovernmental organizations with a significant role to play in addressing the crisis, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization, various United Nations agencies, the African Development Bank, the Global Environment Facility and the World Bank. Several of these organizations have the potential to make resources available to implement the declaration's commitments.

“The London Declaration was a clear call to arms for countries to play their part in bringing down the organized criminal networks that are destroying the world's iconic wildlife and destabilizing national and international security,” said Steven Broad, Executive Director of TRAFFIC.

OUTPOST:

Red alert on Red Sanders: Sri Lanka apprehends large consignment from India



A large consignment of Red Sanders *Pterocarpus santalinus* that was being smuggled from Chennai (India) to Jabel Ali (Dubai) via Colombo (Sri Lanka) was seized by Sri Lankan Customs authorities on 11 November 2013. The consignment consisted of superior quality Red Sanders weighing 4.5 metric tonnes. The goods declared as sanitary-ware were detected following information received while the consignment was in transit at the Jaya Container Terminal at the port of Colombo.

Red Sanders, also known as Red Sandalwood, Red Saunders, and Ruby Wood, is endemic to only four districts of the States of Andhra Pradesh, in the southern part of the Eastern Ghats, and a single district of Tamil Nadu. For centuries, traditional Japanese wedding dowries consisted of objects and musical instruments carved out of this prized wood. Today, the wood is used in medicines, for food colouring and colouring beer, besides making furniture and carvings. In India, it is also used to make dyes.

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TRAFFIC Alert



Monitor Lizards and Civets seized in Nagaland

In December 2013, two live monitor lizards and two civets on sale were seized by officers of Kohima Forest Division from Razhu point area and supermarket area in Kohima, respectively. A press release issued by Zuthunglo Patton, IFS, ACF Kohima lamented that despite various efforts made by the officers and staff of the Kohima Forest Division to curb the hunting and sale of wildlife by means of regular patrolling and raids in the markets, wild animals and birds are still being sold in the markets. Meanwhile, in another instance, one patrolling team seized three junglefowls and two civets from the Medziphema area. The civets and many other smaller cats are poached extensively for meat.

TRAFFIC in India adds.....

Many reports have corroborated that hunting and illegal trade in various wildlife species is on the rise in Nagaland. Hence the above seizure is no surprise. Last year, researchers from the Sálím Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History and the Near Chang Baptist group entered the Tuensang market in Nagaland and carried out intensive surveys and interviews of vendors selling wild birds or mammals. Eight different species of mammals, 35 species of birds, two species of amphibians and two species of mollusks were recorded after 52 surveys by this team. They estimated that more than 16,000 birds and mammals are sold each year in the Tuensang market alone. The most common bird sold was the Great Barbet *Megalaima virens* and the most common mammal was the Himalayan Striped Squirrel *Tamiops maclellandii*.

TRAFFIC expresses concern about the apparent level of hunting that continues unabated in Nagaland. The sheer diversity of species killed in the State is of immediate concern and needs urgent action.

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© Samantha Gunasekera, Sri Lanka Customs

Red Sanders has historically been valued in China for making classical furniture, and is referred to in Chinese as *Zitan*. Traditionally the Chinese have expressed an extreme liking for the red coloured wood for making furniture. It is highly valued because it is rare and endemic to India. Reports have indicated that the huge demand from China has fueled the illegal Red Sanders trade.

Preliminary research by TRAFFIC also suggests that while the use of the rare timber for furniture may be the most significant driver of the recent Red Sanders smuggling. Off-cuts from the furniture industry are also traded for traditional medicine.

The Red Sanders smuggling racket has uncovered concealment or misdeclaration of the timber. Shipments are passed off as jute bags, zinc oxide, mustard oil cake, salt and more recently as sanitary-ware.

Mr Samantha Gunasekera, Deputy Director of Customs, Biodiversity, Cultural & National Heritage Protection Division, Sri Lanka Customs who played a significant role in busting this case said, "This is not the first time we have apprehended Red Sanders coming from India. The consignments are always concealed and often misdeclared as other items to dupe the enforcement agencies. In the past 10 years, we have seized Red Sanders coming from India that was declared as empty glass bottles or as barbed wires or as cotton bales".

James Compton, TRAFFIC's Senior Programme Director for Asia, said, "This seizure clearly points to the need for inter-country co-operation to stop illicit trade in protected species. Against this background, TRAFFIC had helped in the establishment of the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) that comprises the eight countries of South Asia; Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in order to strengthen, promote and co-ordinate regional co-operation for curbing illegal wildlife trade that threatens the wild flora and fauna of the region."

"TRAFFIC congratulates the efforts of the Customs agency in Sri Lanka and other supporting enforcement agencies for their prompt action in this case" added Compton.

Mr Gunasekera added: "South Asia, being rich in biodiversity, has become a significant target for illegal wildlife trade. Many South Asian countries are increasingly becoming the source countries for wildlife smuggling while some countries play the role of transit countries or some play both. Therefore, the crucial role of SAWEN is to identify these gaps and help bring countries together for tackling this trade. We are happy to be an active part of SAWEN and have played host to SAWEN meetings in the past."

Dr Shekhar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC in India further said, "Many times, Red Sander logs have been intercepted en route by road from India to China via Nepal. However this seizure clearly indicates new trade routes. The wood was being taken from India to Dubai via Sri Lanka which was in contrast to all the previously recorded information on its smuggling routes. Reports of seizures have also been received from North America, indicating the pan global smuggling of this endemic species which has been considerably depleted in the wild.

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 the Andhra Pradesh Forest Act, 1967 in India 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).

TRAFFIC Alert



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Hunting, as a traditional activity, has been ongoing in Nagaland for centuries. In Arunachal Pradesh, known for rampant poaching of many varieties of species, hunting for bushmeat and for local trade has reached alarming proportions. TRAFFIC calls for more research on hunting activities to stop all illegal killing of wild animals and to bolster monitoring and the promotion of sustainable alternatives to local people to protect the wildlife of the region. Biologically, over-hunting has serious impact on the breeding of wildlife populations (Bennet, L. E., and Robinson G. J., 2000).

Source:

<http://www.morungexpress.com/local/108311.html> ;
<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/34X8t639wdF1PPhOUhBlJ/The-flight-of-the-Amur-Falcon.html> ;
<http://www.conservationindia.org/campaigns/amur-massacre> ;
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<http://www.theshillongtimes.com/2013/12/28/alarming-rise-in-wildlife-trade-in-nagaland/#ZZ1ZQHsQ0qPd2O0C.99>;
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Wildlife poachers in India hire women

Reports are emerging of wildlife poachers recruiting women as hunters and carriers of wildlife contraband. The Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP), Uttar Pradesh arrested seven women on the Delhi-Howrah Express for smuggling about 400 turtles in December 2013. Four of the arrested women were natives of Kolkata while three belonged to various localities in Kanpur. All seven women were traveling to West Bengal to deliver the consignment.

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OUTPOST:
CITES Secretariat welcomes
Operation Cobra II results



© Emma Duncan / WWF/Canon

The CITES Secretary-General, Mr John E. Scanlon, welcomed the excellent results achieved by law enforcement officers from 28 countries during Operation COBRA II, a month-long global operation to combat illegal wildlife trade, which ended on 27 January 2014.

Police, Customs and wildlife officers from Botswana, Brunei-Darussalam, Burundi, Cambodia, China including Hong Kong SAR, Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, Malawi, Malaysia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of

America, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe participated in the operation.

Cobra II resulted in over 400 arrests and more than 350 major wildlife seizures. The co-operative effort also saw the first ever joint China- Africa undercover sting operation that identified and arrested members of a major ivory trafficking syndicate.

Thirty-six rhino horns, over 3 tonnes of elephant ivory, more than 10 000 turtles, over 1000 skins of protected species, over 10 000 European Eels and more than 200 tonnes of rosewood logs were seized during the operation. More than 400 criminals were arrested in Asia and Africa. Several of those arrested included trafficking kingpins. In addition, new intelligence on poaching and trafficking syndicates was obtained, arming governments to continue investigations with increasingly clearer targets. Operation co-ordinators also evaluated Cobra II and made joint plans for continuing and improving their cross-border operations in the future.

Operation COBRA II was organized by the Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF), China, the United States of America, South Africa, the Association of South East Asia Nations Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) and the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN), and was co-ordinated by International Co-ordination Teams located in Nairobi and Bangkok. The operation focused on key species that are subject to illegal trade, and resulted in a large number of arrests and the seizure of specimens from Cheetah, elephant, rhinoceros, pangolin, leopard, rosewood, snake, tiger and turtle, among others.

“This second Operation COBRA initiative shows what can be achieved when law enforcement authorities across range, transit and destination States work together in a co-ordinated manner. It also serves to highlight that intelligence-led operations are essential in the fight against transnational organized wildlife crime,” said Scanlon.

Read more at http://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/news/sundry/2014/operation_cobra_ii_pr.pdf

TRAFFIC Alert



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Earlier, the GPR arrested two women and recovered 138 rare turtles from their possession at Etawah railway station in 2010. The women, residents of West Bengal, were hired by wildlife poachers to catch turtles and smuggle them. Similarly, a large number of rabbit carcasses were seized following the arrest of a woman, a native of Rajasthan, and her four male counterparts from Shahganj area of Agra on 23 September 2013. Around 50 skulls and other body parts of rabbits were recovered from her house. Reports have revealed that women belonging to a particular Rajasthani tribe are hired by local farmers for killing Blue Bulls in the region.

TRAFFIC in India adds.....

Using women to smuggle illegal wildlife items is becoming a widespread phenomenon. In 2007, 15 women were arrested for their role in a Gir Lion poaching racket. Women tend to deflect the attention of enforcement authorities because they are seldom viewed with suspicion and can often pass unchecked through security channels due to the lack of women enforcement officers on duty at the time. Poachers and traders exploit this to their advantage by using women operatives for their nefarious activities. TRAFFIC considers enforcement agencies should train and deploy more women staff so that such incidents can be more readily detected.

Source:

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-12-15/kanpur/45215300_1_women-constables-government-railway-police-blue-bull
http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2007-04-07/ahmedabad/27877514_1_gir-lions-gang-members
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Illegal wildlife trade racket
busted: 250 exotic birds,
monkeys recovered

In February 2014, a Customs department team in Kolkata rescued hundreds of endangered and/or rare and exotic birds and animals from a house that looked like a 'private zoo'.

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TRAFFIC Alert



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According to sources in the Customs department, around 250 exotic birds were seized. The team also rescued three chimpanzees, four marmoset monkeys and a capuchin monkey. Sources said that a father and son duo ran the wildlife trade in exotic species from the house and that the animals were of African origin while the birds were from South America.

TRAFFIC in India adds.....

There are four subspecies of Chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes* spp found across Equatorial Africa. They have already disappeared from four African countries, and are nearing extinction in many others. Chimpanzees are listed in Appendix I of CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) and as Class A under the African Convention. Chimpanzees are protected by law in most countries.

In India, Chimpanzees are not native and hence are not listed under the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 of India, however any import of the animal is restricted by the provisions laid down in the Customs Act 1962. The CITES Management Authority in the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) in India must issue a permit for import of a CITES listed species to the country. If this does not happen and such animals are brought into the country, they can be seized and the person involved can be booked under the provisions of the Customs Act 1962, which, together with the EXIM policies of the Government of India, supports CITES implementation in India. The accused in the above case was booked under Section 135 of the Customs Act. Investigation needs to be supported for the source and trading routes of the animals that allegedly came in via Nigeria, Dubai, Singapore and Bangladesh before arriving in Kolkata, possibly through the land routes.

The Common Marmoset *Callithrix jacchus* is also not covered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, but is a popular species in the pet trade and is also used in medical research. This species is listed in Appendix II of CITES. TRAFFIC's preliminary investigations have indicated evidence of breeding of this species in India for the burgeoning pet trade. There are around 10 species of capuchin monkeys, all found in the New World. They are popular as pets. The Crested Capuchin Monkey is listed in Appendix II of CITES.

The burgeoning pet trade in India in non-native ('exotic') species appears to be a direct consequence of India's burgeoning economy. There are no established figures available on the extent of the exotic pet trade in India because it is unregulated and there can be no clearer indication of the proper need for monitoring and regulating the trade. Inclusion of CITES provisions in an amended, expanded version of the Wildlife (Protection) Act of India could be a major step in controlling the unregulated trade in exotic animals such as Chimpanzees, marmosets and various birds. It is pertinent to mention that a delay in this respect may bring about irreparable damage to global conservation.

Source: <http://pin.primate.wisc.edu/factsheets/links/cebus>; <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/15933/0>; <http://www.unep.org/newscentre/default.aspx?DocumentID=2704&ArticleID=9435&I=en>; <http://pin.primate.wisc.edu/factsheets/links/cebus> Creature Companion, monthly magazine of India International Pet Trade Fair; <http://www.livemint.com/Consumer/fQ7lv1wAemiudmfb9ppil/Going-cuckoo-over-cockatoos.html>; <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/environment/flora-fauna/Bengal-a-transit-route-for-wildlife-trafficking/articleshow/27099250.cms>; http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2014-01-23/kolkata/46512832_1_marmosets-chimps-alipore-zoo-authorities; <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/environment/flora-fauna/Several-wildlife-smuggling-rackets-may-be-operational/articleshow/29268968.cms>; <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/Kolkata-becoming-a-major-hub-for-wildlife-trading/articleshow/29827200.cms>; http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2014-01-29/kolkata/46781723_1_gombe-stream-national-park-wild-chimpanzees-customs-officials

Ten Tiger poachers caught in Madhya Pradesh

A well-coordinated operation, involving central and State units of the police force and forest department officials led to the arrest of 10 persons from Madhya Pradesh with wildlife contraband on 28 December 2013. All of them were tribals from Mandsaur district in Madhya Pradesh. The group had landed in Kollegal two days prior to poach Tigers. When the arrests were made, they were carrying 15 Tiger claws, two Tiger canines and some cash—allegedly the advance amount paid by the prospective buyers of the Tiger skin.

TRAFFIC in India adds.....

The recent seizures in Madhya Pradesh point out the importance of continuing enforcement efforts across agencies for tackling illegal trade. Additionally, given the numerous cases of Tiger poaching that are pending in courts in Madhya Pradesh, it becomes clear that the endeavour to check wildlife crime, especially that against Tigers and other Asian big cats, will require a well co-ordinated approach over a long period of time and effective involvement of the judiciary. Since 2007, TRAFFIC has trained more than 2500 people in India belonging to several wildlife enforcement agencies to tackle poaching of Tigers and other species. TRAFFIC also works closely with the judiciary in India and collaborates with lawyers for effective legal prosecution and conviction of wildlife crime cases. Wildlife forensics is another area of work that TRAFFIC strongly promotes among enforcement agencies and organizes training workshops along with the Wildlife Institute of India.

Source: <http://www.deccanchronicle.com/131230/news-current-affairs/article/10-poachers-madhya-pradesh-nabbed>
 2) <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/environment/flora-fauna/Tiger-leopard-poaching-cases-pending-for-40-years-in-MP-courts/articleshow/28703304.cms>
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IN FOCUS:

An investigative report on Sonepur Animal (Mela) Fair 2013

Shekhar K. Niraj and Shubhobroto Ghosh



Gajendra Moksha, also called *The Liberation of Gajendra*, is a Puranic legend from the 8th Skandha of Bhagavad Purana, one of the most sacred books in Hinduism. It is one of the famous exploits of Lord Vishnu wherein Lord Vishnu came down to earth to protect Gajendra, the Elephant, from the clutches of Makara, the Crocodile, and awarded him moksha or salvation. This is the ancient legend that lies behind the world famous Sonepur Animal Fair held at Harihar Kshetra on the occasion of Kartik Purnima in Bihar every year (Jain, 2014).

TRAFFIC conducted a survey of the Fair in November-December 2013 and found startling information about the illegal animal trade. The market was also surveyed earlier and the findings publicized in November 2012.

Sonepur Animal Fair is an organized gathering where trading in various species has traditionally taken place. The tradition has been so deep-rooted that there are examples where even after a species has been prohibited for commercial trade under the Wildlife (Protection) Act (WPA), 1972, trading goes on brazenly in denial of legal and prohibitory provisions.



Map not to scale

The capture and transportation of elephants to Sonepur appears to be a regular occurrence, with Asian Elephants *Elephas maximus* transported from Assam. As a Schedule I animal, under Section 40 (2) of the WPA, 1972, it is prohibited to possess, acquire, dispose of and transport a captive elephant without written permission of the Chief Wildlife Warden or the Authorized officer under the WPA, 1972. Section 43 of the WPA, 1972, restricts the sale, purchase or transfers of captive elephants from one person to another for monetary considerations or any other profitable gain (MoEF, 2010; Bist et al., 2001). **Nevertheless, TRAFFIC observed 37 elephants at the fair in 2013, including six tuskers and six calves.** (TRAFFIC 2013, Tripathi; The Telegraph, 2013) Reportedly some of these animals were transported from Assam to Bihar for sale at the Fair. Any such sale would be in contravention of the WPA, 1972, as the WPA 1972 does not permit any commercial transaction of elephant which is a schedule 1 listed animal. Transportation may be permitted, however, with a proper authorization from a legal authority. We did not find any such permit with any of the elephant traders. In fact most traders or the elephant handlers refused even to discuss the matter, bringing non-transparency into the transaction process. We found evidence of trade deals being finalized before the Fair began or, as per the information collected, the deals might have been done after the conclusion of the Fair. Furthermore, information from reliable sources suggests that more elephants are traded privately and are not displayed in Sonepur.



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Further information obtained indicates there is a demand for live elephants in Kerala and that full grown tuskers are bought from the Fair for temples and elephants are also bought locally by rich landlords who keep them as status symbols. While the influx of these animals seems to have slowed from Assam due to the tightening of regulations, an overwhelming majority of the elephants from Assam are reportedly wild caught. Important and central as elephants are to the Sonepur Mela, there is another aspect that has substantive relevance to wildlife protection in India. (Ashraf and Mainkar 2004; Varma and Kumar 2010) The bird market or Chiriya Bazaar has attained a scale where, despite the ban on the trade in birds since 1990-91, the trade in indigenous and non-native (exotic) birds remains brisk and thriving. The native birds found on sale were protected species caught and brought from the wild as TRAFFIC has collected information which confirms that permits have not been granted by the designated legal authorities in India to breed and sell WPA 1972 protected species. However, issues relating to non-native (exotic) species in India remain vague in the absence of clear legislation specifically addressing exotic birds and animals. Using these legal loopholes,

many traders have started trading exotic birds and animals in different places in India.

During our investigations at Sonepur we found a large number of exotic birds placed on sale. Although there are no specific laws to address the trade of exotic birds or animals, any breeding or trading does require a permit from the appropriate commercial licensing authorities. Since this issue was not the focus of current investigations by the authors, this was not investigated further. The birds were sold at prices varying from INR 200-INR 5000 per individual. However, exceptions were Golden-fronted Chloropsis, offered for sale at INR 10000 per bird and Shikras, at around INR 7500. Findings indicate that munias and parakeets are brought in from several areas including Muzaffarpur, Lucknow, Delhi, Patna and Kolkata. Two main sources for indigenous birds for the Sonepur Fair are the Nakhas market in Lucknow and Mir Shikar Toli in Patna. A trader also admitted that trade in non-native (exotic) birds is used a cover for the trade in indigenous birds.

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Bird species observed and approximate number

SPECIES	NUMBER	WPA (SCHEDULE)
Rose Ringed Parakeet <i>Psittacula krameri</i>	3000+	IV
Alexandrine Parakeet <i>Psittacula eupatria</i>	1500+	IV
Plum-headed Parakeet <i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>	300+	IV
Red-breasted Parakeet <i>Psittacula alexandri</i>	50+	IV
Spotted Dove <i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>	12	IV
Hill Mynah <i>Gracula religiosa</i>	30+	I
Gold-fronted Chloropsis <i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>	1	IV
Himalayan Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus leucogenys</i>	5	IV
White-rumped Shama <i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>	8	IV
Red Munia <i>Amandava amandava</i>	1000+	IV
Black-headed Munia <i>Lonchura atricapilla</i>	3000+	IV
White-throated Munia <i>Lonchura malabarica</i>	600+	IV
Spotted Munia <i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	1500+	IV
Red-vented Bulbuls <i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	15	IV
Common Myna <i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	500	IV
Bank Mynah <i>Acridotheres ginginianus</i>	700	IV
Yellow-footed Green-pigeon <i>Treeron phoenicopterus</i>	25	IV
Shikra <i>Accipiter badius</i>	17	I

With a figure touching upon more than 700 000 birds being trapped every year in India (Ahmed, 2004), the scale of bird trade at Sonepur Fair acquires an air of grave concern. BirdLife International [Islam and Rahmani, *et al.* Editors 2004] has identified India as a range State for 61 globally threatened bird species affected by overexploitation—the third highest national total worldwide—including trapping for trade, both as pets and for consumption.

TRAFFIC also observed primates being sold in the Fair—Rhesus Macaques *Macaca mulatta* and Hanuman Langurs *Presbytis entellus*. There were 25 Rhesus Macaques on sale and two Hanuman Langurs. The monkeys were priced at INR 5000 per pair and langurs at INR 7000 per pair. Many of these animals are reportedly bought for medical experiments and obtained from Nepal and Uttar Pradesh as well as Patna's Mir Shikar Toli. Two Black-naped Hares *Lepus nigricollis* were seen in the fair.

TRAFFIC also found out that many birds and animals at the Fair are brought in from West Bengal, especially those who trade in live animals at Galiff Street in Kolkata. Hill Mynas are obtained from Assam and are brought in for sale in Mir Shikar Toli and Sonepur. Many parakeets are also imported from Nepal.

TRAFFIC also observed a young Nilgai *Boselaphus tragocamelus* on display on the premises with onlookers poking and probing the animal.

Welfare concerns are obvious, because scores of birds are crammed in cages thereby exponentially increasing the mortality rates of the captured birds. Many birds would simply die of suffocation and due to duress caused by cramped conditions, lack of adequate food and water and proper veterinary care, not only in transit but also in situ. (Baker *et al.*, 2013). Prices of native birds illegally on sale vary, while Chiriya Bazar has many non-native (exotic) birds also on sale, including Cockatiels *Nymphicus hollandicus*, Budgerigars *Melopsittacus undulatus*, Zebra Finches *Taeniopygia guttata*, Bengalese Finches (a captive-bred variety of White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata*) and geese *Anser* spp.

The entire investigative survey was carried out by TRAFFIC in 10 field visits during two trips by two investigators. The exact numbers were determined for elephants and primates but only an approximate number for birds. First-hand observations of the Fair were noted and past literature on Sonepur was referred to, including published reports on the presence of elephants as well as generic newspaper reports on the gathering.

Despite enforcement agencies having been alerted to evidence of illegal trade taking place at Sonepur, there have been no reported enforcement initiatives there to date. For a detailed report on the Sonepur Mela 2013, please contact TRAFFIC in India at trafficind@wwfindia.net

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WILD CRY

(Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade)

Legendary 'Mermaid's' tussle for existence: The Dugong



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The Dugong *Dugong dugon*, popularly known as the Sea Cow, is the only marine herbivorous mammal. In the past, Dugongs have been the main inspiration for legendary mermaid myths and traditionally hunted for their meat and oil. Today, these gentle and benign marine mammals are threatened by habitat degradation, fishing-related fatalities and hunting for their meat, underbelly fat, skins and bones.

Dugongs have been recorded in lengths ranging from 1-3 metres and weights of approximately 400 kg. Dugongs are generally found in warm waters around the coast with large numbers concentrated in wide and shallow protected bays. Large numbers also exist in wide and shallow mangrove channels and around leeward sides of large inshore islands where seagrass beds are common.

Distribution: Dugongs are found in warm coastal waters from the western Pacific Ocean to the eastern coast of Africa.

Reports have indicated that they disappeared from the waters of Hong Kong, Mauritius, and Taiwan, as well as parts of Cambodia, Japan, the Philippines and Viet Nam.

In India, there is a highly isolated breeding population in the Gulf of Kutch, the only population remaining in western India. A population exists in the Gulf of Mannar and the Palk Strait between India and Sri Lanka, but it is seriously depleted.

A study conducted by the Gujarat Ecological Education and Research (GEER) Foundation in 2008-2010 noted Dugong trails in the Gulf of Kutch, Pirotan Island, and even Dwarka. The study, sponsored by the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, estimated that there are about 250 Dugongs in India, the highest number being in the Gulf of Mannar on the southern coast, followed by the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Palk Bay and the Gulf of Kutch.

Status:

Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I (The Act prohibits hunting, trade and any other form of exploitation of the species in India)

CITES: Appendix I (All international trade in the species and its products is banned)

IUCN Red List: Vulnerable

Threats: Hunting, habitat degradation, chemical pollutants and fishing-related fatalities such as gill netting are the main threats to the species in the wild. Dugongs are reportedly slaughtered for their meat which is considered a delicacy and much revered by various coastal communities. Its consumption in the Gulf of Mannar, Palk Bay and Andaman and Nicobar Islands has been reported (Nair *et al.* 1975; Bensam and Menon 1996; Ilangakoon *et al.* 2004; Das 1996, pers. comm. (K. Sivakumar, WII)). In the Gulf of Mannar and Palk Bay, gill nets, shore seines, trawl nets, drift nets, ray nets and explosives were used to hunt Dugongs, and records show captures of 25 Dugongs per year in 1960-80 and 200 Dugongs per year in 1983-84. This number dropped to nine Dugongs per year in 1986-88, (Bensam and Menon 1996).

Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, currently the Head of TRAFFIC in India and the former Director of the Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve, Government of Tamil Nadu said: "In the 1950s and 1960s the Dugong population was around 50,000-60,000 individuals in India. However, reports have indicated that there are fewer than 200 Dugongs left in the wild in India today. Even though very few poaching cases have been reported, it does not really imply that there is no organized poaching. The sheer decline in their numbers over the years is a clear indication of a grave threat to the species in the wild."

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Although there are media reports of a decline in the number of poaching incidents in recent the years, there are places in Ramanathapuram District, particularly near Keezhakarai in Tamil Nadu that are known for poaching Dugong for its meat. A few reports also indicate that there could be intentional poaching in the region other than accidental trappings of Dugongs caught in fishing gear which are later killed for their meat.

Dugongs mainly swim in family groups usually consisting of a single youngster and its parents. Their attachment with each other usually results in the capture of the entire family if just one of them is netted or harpooned.

With its long lifespan of 70 years or more and slow rate of reproduction, the Dugong is especially vulnerable to extinction. A sharp decline of the population from an estimated 50000-60000 animals a few decades ago to the currently estimated fewer than 200 is a poignant reminder of this.

Dugongs are unintentionally killed through boat strikes and propeller injuries caused when motorized boats traverse their shallow feeding grounds. Fast-moving boats give Dugongs less time to evade a collision (Marsh *et al.* 2002, Hodgson 2004). The animals are particularly vulnerable to boat strikes because they spend 3.5 per cent of the day resting near the surface with routine surfacing at over two-minute intervals (Anderson 1981; Hodgson 2004).

According to a United Nations Environment Protection (UNEP) report (Marsh *et al.* 2002), incidental catch of Dugongs in gill nets is one of the major causes of Dugong mortality. In the waters off the Gulf of Mannar and Palk Bay, extensive use of gill nets was reported to have caused yearly Dugong mortality, with an average of 40 Dugong deaths in a year (Lal Mohan 1976; Nair *et al.* 1975). Recent reports suggest that awareness and protection provided by joint efforts of the Government of India and Tamil Nadu Forest Department have greatly reduced incidental catches of dugong (Illangakoon *et al.* 2008).

Dr Niraj also adds, “ In the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve and the Palk of Bay to its north , there are over 20 000-25 000 fishing boats including trawlers, more than 200 landing sites and about 45 forest department staff. It is very difficult to monitor hunting and illegal trade in the species. A sound intelligence network may help to bridge this gap. Sensitization programmes in collaboration with local NGOs and the coastal community about the critical future of the Dugong is imperative”.

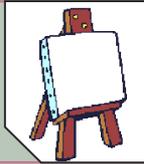
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