

A close-up photograph of a bird of prey, likely a falcon or hawk, with a sharp yellow beak and intense eyes. The bird's feathers are a mix of grey, white, and brown, and the background is a solid dark brown.

TRAFFIC

April 2025

WILDLIFE TRADE NEWSLETTER

FOR CENTRAL ASIA

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TRAFFIC REPORT

ABOUT US

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CONTENTS

page 6

SELECTED NEWS ARTICLE FROM AROUND THE REGION

page 26

RECENT TRAINING AND EVENTS

page 36

SELECTED CITES NEWS OF RELEVANCE FOR THE CENTRAL ASIAN REGION

A snow leopard is the central focus of the image, lying down on a steep, rocky incline. The leopard's fur is a mix of white and grey with dark, irregular spots and stripes. It is looking towards the right side of the frame. The background consists of large, grey, jagged rocks and patches of green moss and small plants. The overall lighting is soft and natural, suggesting a forest or mountain environment.

INTRODUCTION

**THIS NEWSLETTER COVERS THE
PERIOD FROM MAY TO OCTOBER 2024**

This newsletter is produced within the framework of a project funded by the United States Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. The two-year project is entitled “Strengthening Capacity & Fostering the Will to Combat Wildlife Crime in Central Asia” and is led by Fauna & Flora, in collaboration with TRAFFIC, the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK), the Institute of Zoology Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ecological Resource Centre “Ekomaktab”.

snow leopard © vladimircech - Freepik



The aim of the project is to build law enforcement capacity to help combat wildlife trafficking (CWT) across major hotspots and trade routes throughout Central Asia, including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.

The aim of this newsletter is to inform relevant governmental authorities as well as other interested organisations and stakeholders in the Central Asian region about issues related to the illegal hunting/offtake and trade in wild animals and plants in Central Asia, including news articles, selected information on recent developments related to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), interesting tools or upcoming events. It will be published in English and Russian and made available electronically only. It will be published twice a year. This newsletter covers the period from May to October 2024. The news was collected from open-source media and were adapted / translated into English language.

TRAFFIC would like to thank its project partners for their assistance and support in developing this newsletter. Notably, TRAFFIC thanks Fauna & Flora, the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity in Kazakhstan (ACBK), the Institute of Zoology of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ecological Resource Centre "Ekomaktab", the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision of Kyrgyz Republic, the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan.

If you would like to receive the newsletter or would like to contribute to the next issue, please contact Sanjar Kurmanov – Project Support Officer via phone: +996 554 555550 or mail: sanjar.kurmanov@traffic.org.



1. SELECTED NEWS ARTICLES

COVERING THE PERIOD FROM MAY TO
OCTOBER 2024



Falcon © Janmejaysinh Unsplash










THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC TIGHTENS PENALTIES FOR POACHERS

Information were obtained from: <https://shorturl.at/vN3q0>

According to the Department of Bioresources of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic, the penalty charges for damage to wildlife has increased. The following are the new charges as of July 12, 2024:



Penalty charges

SPECIES		NEW CHARGES (JULY 12, 2024 ONWARDS)	PREVIOUS CHARGES
 Snow leopard <i>Panthera uncia</i>		2 million KGS (\$23 400)	1.5 million KGS (\$17 550)
 Brown bear <i>Ursus arctos</i>		1.5 million KGS (\$17 550)	1 million KGS (\$11 700)
 Argali <i>Ovis ammon</i>			
 Red deer <i>Cervus elaphus</i>			
 Gazelle <i>Gazella subgutturosa</i>			
 Ibex <i>Capra ibex</i>		300 thousand KGS (\$3 500)	100 thousand KGS (\$1 200)
 Roe deer <i>capreolus</i>		100 thousand KGS (\$1 200)	50 thousand KGS (\$600)

The main goal of increasing the charges is to create an effective system for protecting species of flora and fauna in the Kyrgyz Republic. The Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology, and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic emphasized the need for improved biodiversity protection and a unified approach to increasing the number of wild animal and plant populations by developing effective deterrent sentencing.

The changes involve increasing the size of sanctions for the above-mentioned animal species, as well as establishing a mechanism for offering financial rewards to citizens and public inspectors for calling attention to illegal activities. The reward would equate to 50 percent of the penalty charges accrued by the perpetrator.



RARE BIRDS SMUGGLED FROM KAZAKHSTAN TO KYRGYZSTAN

THE SUSPECT WAS DETAINED UNDER THE ARTICLE "ECONOMIC SMUGGLING" ON SEPTEMBER 12, 2024.

Source and photo source: <https://eco.akiyress.org/news/2163750/?from=portal&place=last>

On September 9, 2024, a Toyota Camry car arrived from Kazakhstan at the Ak-Zhol-Avtodorozhny checkpoint to enter Kyrgyzstan. Border guards of Kyrgyz Republic and police officers revealed that the driver, had illegally brought Saker Falcons *Falco cherrug*, which are listed in the Red Book of Kyrgyzstan and globally endangered under IUCN red list.

He hid the birds in the trunk under the upholstery of his car and did not have any accompanying documents. According to the press service of the Main Directorate of Internal Affairs of the Chui region, the suspect was detained under the article "economic smuggling" on September 12, 2024.

The incident was registered under Article 231 («Economic Smuggling») of the Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic. The driver was detained and taken to the Alamedin district Department of Internal Affairs of Kyrgyz Republic, and the birds were transferred to the Zoo-Bishkek wild animal rehabilitation center for their maintenance until the court decision has been made. As part of the investigation, investigators are establishing whether any accomplices were involved.



Seized Falcon © <https://eco.akiyress.org/news/2163750/?from=portal&place=last>



PHOTO: Seized Red-Listed Golden Eagles © Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic



FIFTEEN RED-LISTED GOLDEN EAGLES AND OVER 50 BIRDS OF PREY SEIZED

A FINE OF 100,000 KGS WAS ISSUED ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 262 OF THE CODE OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFENSES OF KYRGYZ REPUBLIC.

News was obtained from: https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=474951895157945&id=100079294163306&mibextid=WC7FNe&rdid=MLKD5ZbBtOuQwABY

The seizure was reported by the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision of Kyrgyz Republic. On July 14, 2024, inspectors from the Department of Bioresource Control of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision of Kyrgyz Republic conducted raids and detected 50 illegally caught birds of prey that were used during the tourist season in Issyk-Kul region of Kyrgyz Republic.

In total, 15 red-book golden eagles, 6 buzzards, and 25 kestrels were confiscated. Although specific details regarding the remaining birds are currently unavailable, officials have suggested that the group may consist of a variety of other raptor species. A fine of 100,000 KGS was issued according to Article 262 of

the Code of Administrative Offenses of Kyrgyz Republic. Fifteen golden eagles and 4 kestrels were transferred to the «Bugu Ene» rehabilitation fund in Karakol. The raid was carried out jointly with environmental police, inspectors of social protection of juvenile delinquency police, and regional inspectors of the environmental technical supervision service.

Raids focused on uncovering potential illegal activity will be held regularly. Representatives from the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology, and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic urge citizens to report any instances of illegal trapping of birds of prey or their exploitation by calling the hotline at 108, so that appropriate legal action can be taken.



FERULA WILL BE GROWN IN KYRGYZSTAN FOR AGRICULTURAL PURPOSES.

THE PROJECT WAS DEVELOPED IN ORDER TO PRESERVE AND ENSURE THE RESTORATION OF NATURAL FERULA RESERVES IN THE COUNTRY

News was obtained from: https://24.kg/obschestvo/297956_vkyrgyzstane_ferulu_budut_vyirashivat_dlya_selskohozyaystvennyih_tseley/

The Ministry of Water Resources, Agriculture and Processing Industry of Kyrgyz Republic has developed a program for growing ferula in the Kyrgyz Republic between 2024–2028. The department submitted a draft order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Kyrgyz Republic for its approval for public discussion.

As noted in the justification memorandum, the project was developed in order to preserve and ensure the restoration of natural ferula reserves in the country, create its plantations through cultivation, stimulate the processing of raw materials obtained from ferula and export finished products.

The strategic objective of the program is to grow ferula with further development of value chains and ensuring competitiveness in foreign markets.

Currently, there are no seed farms in Kyrgyz Republic that grow ferula, but 107 economic entities (farmers) propagate it in 12 villages. The program outlines the goals, key priority areas, tasks, and essential measures for implementing state policy to promote ferula cultivation in Kyrgyzstan. It provides for measures to create seed farms, plans to increase sown areas, increase production of ferula and its raw materials, and sales (export) to foreign markets. It is believed that growing ferula will ensure high profitability, focus on export markets, and the creation of new jobs.

Ferula is a perennial herbaceous plant with umbrella-like inflorescences. Its milky sap is used to treat many diseases, and it yields a spice called asafoetida. *Ferula asafoetida* is widespread in nature, from which gum resin is mainly obtained.





COLLECTORS OF *Arnebia* DETAINED IN NARYN

News was obtained from: <https://eltr.kg/ru/y-naryne-zaderzhali-10-sborshnikov-kornej-redkogo-rasteniya-endik/>

Citizens were detained in Naryn region for illegally collecting the roots of the plant *Arnebia* Forssk. This was reported by the press service of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic.

As part of fieldwork based on citizens' appeals, and also in order to prevent mass extraction of the roots of the herbaceous plant, employees of the Biodiversity Department of Ministry of the Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic together with inspectors from the department of ecological and technical supervision of the Naryn regional administration of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision conducted raids from July 9 to July 12, 2024. The raid was conducted jointly with the staff of the "Ilbirs" Foundation and the personnel of

the Naryn Department of Special Training at the Regional Department of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic. The raids were conducted in the Naryn, Ak-Talaa and At-Bashy districts of the Naryn region.

As a result, 10 citizens were detained in the Arpa jayloo of Ak-Talaa district for illegally digging up the roots of the *arnebia* plant, and each resident was fined 5,500 KGS under Article 264 of the Code of Offenses.

As a result of the raids, approximately 80–90 kg of plant *Arnebia* Forssk roots were seized. Further measures include the adoption of a resolution from the Cabinet of Ministers «On the introduction of a temporary ban (moratorium) on the use of certain types of flora». The purpose of the resolution is to preserve and restore native flora in Kyrgyzstan.

A national moratorium has been imposed on the collection of the following plants:

- roots, tubers, bulbs, etc.) *macrotomy* (*Macrotomia* DC),
- *arnebia* (*Arnebia* Forssk),
- ash (*Dictamnus* L),
- aconite (*Aconitum* L),
- aflatun onion (*Allium aflatunense* B.Fedtsch).



PHOTO: Seizure of the roots of the *Arnebia* © <https://eltr.kg/>



Ring-tailed lemur © wwarby - [Unspalsh](#)



RESIDENT OF RUSSIAN FEDERATION ATTEMPTS TO SMUGGLE A LEMUR INTO KAZAKHSTAN

RINGTAILED LEMUR IS LISTED UNDER CITES APPENDIX I

News was obtained from: https://en.tengrinews.kz/world_news/russian-woman-tried-to-smuggle-a-lemur-into-kazakhstan-264063/

Samara Customs officers, in cooperation with border guards from the Orenburg region, stopped a woman at a vehicle checkpoint who was transporting a ringtailed lemur in her car. The Russian woman was heading to Kazakhstan, according to the Federal Customs Service of Russian Federation (FCS).

The woman claimed to the border guards that she was transporting the lemur to Kazakhstan to increase the population of the species. However, she did not have the necessary

permits and documents for the animal.

It was reported that the ringtailed lemur is listed under CITES Appendix I (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) as an endangered species, and special authorization is required for its export. An administrative offense case has been initiated against the Russian woman. Authorities are currently deciding whether to place the lemur in a specialized facility for temporary care.



Saiga © depositphotos.com



THE NUMBER OF SAIGAS IN KAZAKHSTAN APPROACHED THREE MILLION INDIVIDUALS.

News was obtained from: https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/kazakhstane-kolichestvo-saygakov-priblizilos-trem-millionam-537079/

As of April 2024, according to the results of the state aerial census the population of saigas in Kazakhstan reached 2,833,600 individuals. Compared to last year, there was a 48% increase in the number of animals, Tengrinews.kz reports with reference to the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK)

The agency noted that the census was conducted according to an approved methodology refined over many years and takes into account modern technologies. "The censuses were carried out in West Kazakhstan, Mangystau, Akmola, Aktobe, Kostanay, Karaganda, Ulytau, Pavlodar and Abai regions, taking into account the presence of three populations — Ural, Ustyurt and Betpakdala. In the latter, in turn, there are three distinct groups with an increased population of animals — the main Irgiz-Turgay, Tengiz and Eastern ones."

Two field teams worked to conduct the surveys. One team in the Betpakdala population and the other in the Ustyurt and Ural populations. Across 215 flight hours (15 hours more than last year), the census covered an area of 151,226 square kilometers. The eastern group at the junction of Pavlodar, Karaganda and Abai regions was included in the aerial census for the first time — before that there were only estimates of the number from ground observations," the ACBK explained.

After processing the materials with adjustment of initial data according to photographs, the following figures of adult saigas were obtained: Ustyurt population — 63,600 (annual increase of 60.2 percent), Ural — 1,620,000 (43.4 percent), Betpakdala — 1,150,000 (54.3 percent).



Tigers © Xinhua/ Kazinform



TWO TIGERS FROM THE NETHERLANDS WILL BE BROUGHT TO KAZAKHSTAN

News was obtained from: https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/dvuh-tigrov-iz-niderlandov-privezut-v-kazahstan-548366/

The Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan Erlan Nysanbayev spoke about plans for tiger reintroduction in Kazakhstan, Tengrinews.kz reports. According to Nysanbayev, “The funding is fully covered by World Wildlife Fund, and this year we are already ready to accept the first tigers. Historically, there have always been tigers here. The last tiger was killed in 1948. They lived in the mouth of the Ili (Syr Darya) River, it was a very good place for them to live and spread. Today we have prepared conditions for receiving these tigers. The Turan tiger is a close relative of the Amur tiger. These are two species that tolerate very low temperatures. Therefore, today we plan to

bring two Amur tigers from the Netherlands.”

The Ministry confirmed that these tigers will be kept in zoos. “They will not be released. But the offspring obtained will adapt to conditions already in nature. In addition, next year we expect to receive 3–4 tigers from Russia,” the minister added.

In 2018, the Ile-Balkhash Reserve was created in Kazakhstan with an area of more than 415 thousand hectares, where tigers will live. The ecosystem suitable for these predators is being restored on this territory



PRZEWALSKI'S HORSES HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO KAZAKHSTAN

News was obtained from: <https://shorturl.at/6bqaS>, <https://shorturl.at/PfPBp>, <https://kz.kursiv.media/2024-06-12/lfst-ttkn-horse/>, <https://shorturl.at/yG9zQ>

Seven Przewalski's horses *Equus ferus przewalskii* (six mares and one stallion) originating from Prague Zoo in the Czech Republic became the first Przewalski's horses to be reintroduced into the wild in Kazakhstan as part of the international project "Return of the Wild Horses".

On June 4, 2024, a military plane from the Czech Air Forces transported the horses from Prague, with stopovers in Istanbul and Baku, before arriving in Arkalyk, Kostanay region of Kazakhstan. From there, the animals were transported to an acclimatization shelter in the state nature reserve Altyn Dala.

This reserve was carefully chosen as the new home for the horses. Specialists from Prague Zoo conducted extensive research on the lands of Kazakhstan, analyzing conditions in nearly all reserves, and concluded that this location would be the most suitable. To ensure the horses' welfare, two large enclosures spanning 80 hectares were constructed in the state nature reserve Altyn Dala. The animals will remain there until they acclimate and adapt to independent living.

A total of about 40 horses will return to their historical homeland, according to the district Akimat (local administration). The Przewalski's horse was first discovered in 1879 in Dzungaria, a remote region of Mongolia and mainland China, by the explorer Nikolay Mikhaylovich Przhevalsky. It was described in 1881 by zoologist Ivan Polyakov.

After World War II, the population of the Przewalski's Horse declined to a critical level, raising serious concerns among experts. In 1959, a conference was held to develop a program to save this subspecies, and the Prague Zoo was given an international mandate to oversee its breeding. By the late 1960s, Przewalski's horse had completely disappeared from the wild. However, thanks to the efforts of specialists, the number of these animals in captivity began to gradually increase. Today, the descendants of those horses are being reintroduced into the wild. For the past 15 years, the Prague Zoo has been implementing a program to reintroduce the species to Central Asia, including Kazakhstan.



Photo: D Rosengren/Global Rewilding Alliance



Photo: D Rosengren/Global Rewilding Alliance



Saxaul (*Haloxylon ammodendron*) © BáthoryPéter - Wikipedia



RAIDS AGAINST POACHERS OF SAXAUL ARE TAKING PLACE IN UZBEKISTAN

THE SAXAUL (*HALOXYLON AMMODENDRON*) IS LISTED IN THE RED BOOK OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN.

News was obtained from: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/fDHxV9VooPKdPTw5/>

The Bukhara regional ecology department continues to conduct raids to prevent illegal cutting of saxaul. Twenty-five violations were detected in the desert areas of the region during September-October 2024.

Administrative protocols have been drawn up against the offenders in accordance with Uzbek law.

The damage caused by the violations amounted to more than 29 million UZS

(\$2 260), and the total amount of fines for the violators exceeded 222 million UZS (\$17 300). As a result, the total sum to be paid exceeds 252 million UZS (\$19 600).

Together with its regional units, the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan regularly conducts such raids throughout the country to ensure that illegal cutting of saxaul is sanctioned as it is punishable by law.



Photo © Yuri Korsuntsev / «Gazeta.uz»



WILD ANIMALS HELD BY INDIVIDUALS AND CIRCUSES IN UZBEKISTAN TO BE TRANSFERRED TO REHABILITATION CENTERS.

News was obtained from: <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2024/09/19/wild-animals/>

On 19 September, it was announced during an event hosted by the President that in Uzbekistan, wild animals owned by individuals and kept in circuses and tent shows will be transferred to rehabilitation centers. The event noted that the keeping of such animals in households is not legally regulated.

Now wild captive individuals will be transferred to rehabilitation centers at zoos, aquariums, nurseries and research institutions.

In September 2023, amendments to the law «On the Protection and Use of Wildlife» were introduced by presidential decree, prohibiting

citizens from keeping certain species of wild animals in semi-free conditions, in an artificial habitat or in captivity.

The list of animals prohibited for keeping in private facilities, as well as the procedure for their maintenance by legal entities (organizations), is established by the government. It is planned to include more than 66 species of wild animals, including insects, fish, poisonous snakes, all subspecies of the bear family, tigers, crocodiles, birds of prey, wild cats, wolves, jackals, foxes, orangutans, chimpanzees and others.



A RESIDENT ILLEGALLY KEPT A LION AT HOME IN UZBEKISTAN

CURRENTLY, EXPERTS HAVE TEMPORARILY IDENTIFIED THE PREDATOR TO THE NUKUS ZOO IN KARAKALPAKSTAN

Photo source and news was obtained from: <https://nova24.uz/incidents/v-horezme-zhitel-nezakonno-derzhal-u-sebya-doma-iva/>

The press service of the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan reported on August 19, 2024, that a local resident in the Khorezm region illegally kept a lion in a cage.

At the time of detection, the animal was temporarily sent to the Nukus Zoo. Recently, the trend of keeping wild exotic animals as a symbol of status and financial prosperity has been gaining popularity in the country. However, this practice poses significant risks. Firstly, these animals can pose a serious danger to humans, as their behavior is often unpredictable and they may carry diseases. Secondly, it can introduce invasive species that have the potential to outcompete and displace native wildlife. Thirdly, uncontrolled importation damages the biodiversity of ecosystems from which these wildlife species are taken

During an operational raid, employees of the

responsible authorities established the fact of illegal keeping of a young wild lion in the house of a citizen located in the «Ashkhabad» residential area of Urgench city.

In this regard, law enforcement officers drew up an administrative protocol against the resident, according to Article 92 (Violation of the rules for protecting the habitat of animals, the rules for creating zoological and botanical collections and trading them, as well as unauthorized resettlement, acclimatization or crossing of animals), and imposed a fine of 5 Basic Rate for Calculations – 1.7 million UZS (\$135).

Currently, experts have temporarily identified the predator to the Nukus Zoo in Karakalpakstan. They also sent documents to the Department of Internal Affairs of Republic of Uzbekistan to find out the origin of the animal.





Photo © NOVA24



BORDER GUARDS OF UZBEKISTAN SEIZED PARROTS AND OSTRICH CHICKS

THE TOTAL VALUE OF THE BIRDS AMOUNTED TO 774 500 KGS (\$9 060).

News was obtained from: <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2024/09/19/wild-animals/>

Sputnik news agency reports that on July 03, 2024, a citizen of Kyrgyzstan tried to transport 160 budgerigars *Melopsittacus undulatus* and six ostrich chicks *Struthio camelus* from Uzbekistan to Kyrgyzstan in a car by concealing the cages with personal belongings.

It also turned out that the citizen did not have the appropriate documents for the animals. The total value of the birds amounted to 774 500 KGS (\$9 060). Currently, the birds have been handed over to employees of the competent authorities for further investigation.



UZBEKISTAN AUTHORITIES STOP THE ILLEGAL IMPORT OF EXOTIC BIRDS

A PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE OF THE VALUE OF THE BIRDS IS MORE THAN 60 MILLION UZS (\$4700)

News and photo were obtained from: Institute of Zoology of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

On September 23, 2024, Tashkent Airport Customs Officers intercepted an attempt to Smuggle 12 Tropical Birds into Uzbekistan.

The birds were transported in fruit boxes and not declared by the passenger arriving from Cam Ranh, Vietnam. Three birds died during the transportation.

An examination showed that the confiscated birds belong to two species: Chinese bush robin (*Pterorhinus chinensis*) and Ryukyu bush robin (*Ianthocincla konkakinhensis*). Both species mainly inhabit South and East Asia, with the Ryukyu bush robin listed as a vulnerable species in the IUCN Red Lists. A preliminary estimate of the value of the birds is more than 60 million UZS (\$4700). An investigation is currently underway.



Photo © Institute of Zoology of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan



Tortoise © Pixabay



A TAJIKISTAN CITIZEN ATTEMPTED TO SMUGGLE 400 RED-LISTED TORTOISES

News was obtained from: <https://avesta.tj/2024/09/15/na-granitse-s-uzbekistanom-zaderzhan-grazhdanin-tadzhikistana-pytavshijsya-vyvezti-400-krasnokniznyh-cherepah/>

At the Farhod border post in Bekabad, a 35-year-old citizen of Tajikistan was detained while trying to take 400 Central Asian steppe tortoises listed in the Red Book to Uzbekistan. This case occurred on September 15, 2024. According to the law enforcement agency, documents for bringing the violator to justice

have already been sent to court. The turtles were transferred to the Tabiat Bagrida nursery in Zangiata district for temporary keeping, after which they will be released into their natural habitat. The population of steppe tortoises decline across the range states and there is moratorium on trade by all countries.



Photo © avesta



Markhor © Pixabay



THE UN SUPPORTED EMOMALI RAHMON'S INITIATIVE TO CELEBRATE THE DAY OF THE MARKHOR

News was obtained from: https://halva.tj/news/v_oon_podderzhali_initsiativu_emomali_rakhmona_otmechat_den_vintorogogo_kozla/

The UN General Assembly supported the initiative of Emomali Rahmon, the President of Tajikistan, to proclaim May 24 as the International Day of the Markhor *Capra falconeri*. This was reported by the press service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan.

The resolution notes that the animal is a «significant and ecologically important species», and its conservation and protection is essential for maintaining regional ecosystems and developing tourism.

Afghanistan, Hungary, Israel, Kazakhstan, China, Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are also co-authors of the resolution. According to the signed document, now countries and organizations should hold events on May 24 to draw attention to the need to preserve this animal.

It should be noted that the markhor inhabits several countries in Central and South Asia, including Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. At present, this species of mountain goat is endangered and is listed in the Red Book of various countries.



A QUOTA OF 157 INDIVIDUALS ISSUED IN TAJIKISTAN FOR HUNTING RARE ANIMALS

News was obtained from: <https://asiaplus.tj.info/ru/news/tajikistan/economic/20240730/v-tadzhikistane-videleno-157-kvot-na-ohotu-na-redkih-zhivotnih>

In Tajikistan, a quota of 157 individuals have been allocated for the shooting of Markhor as trophies in the period of 2024-2025. This was reported by information agency Asia-Plus, the

head of the department of state control over the use and protection of flora and fauna of the Committee on Environmental Protection of the Republic, Khamrokh Ahrorzoda.

The hunting season will begin on September 1, 2024, and end in March 2025. Out of the total number:

- A quota of 115 has been allocated for Marco Polo sheep *Ovis ammon polii*.
- A quota of 16 has been allocated for markhor *Capra falconeri*.
- A quota of 16 has been allocated for Bukhara sheep *Ovis vignei*.

In addition, a quota of 10 has been allocated for hunting brown bears *Ursus arctos*, but they can only be used in extreme cases.

«Brown bears are listed in the Red Book of Tajikistan. Usually, the use of quotas is only permitted for protection purposes when bear attacks occur on settlements or humans», he said.

Ahrorzoda also spoke about the cost of hunting. Hunting Marco Polo sheep costs 55 thousand TJS (5 200 USD), just like last year.

But hunting markhor has become more expensive by almost 14 500 TJS: from 380 000 TJS (\$ 35 700) last year to 394 485 TJS (\$ 37 050) this year.

This year, you will also have to pay more for hunting Bukhara Mountain sheep than last year – 32 873 TJS (\$3 900) instead of 31 600 TJS (\$3 000).

A quota for a brown bear cost about 12 620 (\$1 200) TJS.

The department also reported that the current populations of these animals are as follows:

- Over 30,000 heads of Marco Polo sheep in the country.
- 3,200 Bukhara Mountain sheep.
- 6,227 heads of markhor.
- 800–900 brown bears.
- 300–350 snow leopards.



Photo © pofoto.club



CONFERENCE IN DUSHANBE DISCUSSES SNOW LEOPARD HABITAT PRESERVATION

News was obtained from: <https://www.asiaplustj.info/ru/news/tajikistan/society/20241016/v-dushanbe-iskali-sposobi-sohraneniya-areala-snezhnogo-barsa?post>

An international conference on the protection of snow leopard ecosystems was held in Dushanbe on October 16, 2024. Its participants discussed ways to preserve this species population. There are currently between an estimated 300 to 500 snow leopards in Tajikistan.

According to the press center of the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, representatives of 12 countries where snow leopards live and international organizations took part in the conference, including Kustubh Sharma, Director of Science at the Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Conservation Program. Presentations and reports from countries on methods of preserving snow leopard ecosystems and its prey were presented at the conference. National action plans and priority areas for regional cooperation were also discussed.

The parties agreed on the need to strengthen cooperation and exchange experience on best practices for preserving high-altitude ecosystems and rare animal species, in particular, snow leopard habitats.

The conference took place on the eve of International Snow Leopard Day, which is celebrated annually on October 23. On the eve of this date, photo exhibitions, seminars, and documentaries dedicated to the life of snow leopards are held. Activists organize campaigns on social media with the goal of increasing Internet users' knowledge about snow leopards and raising awareness about the importance of preserving unique species of animals on the planet.

According to various estimates, in 2024, the total number of snow leopards in the wild was 5–8 thousand individuals. It is difficult to determine the exact number of snow leopards due to the inaccessibility of habitats and their secretive lifestyle.

According to the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan, the population of snow leopard in the republic can reach 500 individuals (according to other sources – 300–400). However, it is difficult to give an exact figure, as the animal lives in mountains with steep slopes at an altitude of 3000 to 4000 meters above sea level.

As of September 2024, there were 450 snow leopards in Kyrgyzstan, 150–180 in Kazakhstan. The number of snow leopards in Uzbekistan ranges from 100 to 120 individuals, and from 100 to 200 in Afghanistan.

A German Shepherd dog is captured in motion, running across a dry, grassy field. The dog's mouth is open, and its tongue is hanging out, suggesting it is happy or excited. The background is a blurred landscape with a red track visible in the distance. The text "2.RECENT TRAINING AND EVENTS" is overlaid on the left side of the image.

2.RECENT TRAINING AND EVENTS





Photo © ACBK - Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan

A GAME-CHANGING NEW TRAINING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCIES WAS CONDUCTED IN ASTANA, KAZAKHSTAN.

Source: https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=890545933112363&id=100064708925106&mibextid=WC7FNe&rdid=oPPZnz9GrHmZ8i2M

Between June 18–28, 2024 the Academy of Law Enforcement Agencies under the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Kazakhstan conducted a 72-hour advanced training course on the topic: «Countering Infringements against Flora and Fauna».

The participants were employees of the environmental police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan,

the Hunting and Animal Breeding State Enterprise Okhotzooptom, the Akmola Territorial Inspectorate of the Forestry and Wildlife Committee of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Fisheries Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as trainers from the Academies; in total – 30 people.

The training was aimed at improving professional knowledge and skills to strengthen counteraction against wildlife trafficking. The course included theoretical and practical classes on the mechanisms of the CITES Convention in Kazakhstan, interaction with various groups of the population, first aid, survival in extreme conditions and orientation on the terrain, handling weapons and special equipment, using modern technologies to prevent and suppress offenses against flora and fauna. It is expected that the training course will not only improve the efficiency of environmental protection

activities but will also be included in mandatory annual training programs for environmental entities in the future.

The course was co-organized by the ACBK in partnership with the Academy of Law Enforcement Agencies under the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the international organization Fauna and Flora (F&F), with financial support of the United States Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL).



Photo © ACBK - Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan

THE ALTYN DALA CONSERVATION INITIATIVE BECAME THE WINNER IN THE PROTECT AND RESTORE NATURE CATEGORY ON THE EARTHSHOT PRIZE AWARDS 2024.

The Earthshot Prize is a global environmental award that is given to five winners each year for their contributions towards the environment. It was first awarded in 2021 and is planned to be awarded annually until 2030.

Each winner receives a grant of £1 million to continue their environmental work. The prize was launched in 2020 by HRH Prince William and the biologist and natural historian David Attenborough. The 2024 awards ceremony took place in Cape Town, South Africa, on 6 November 2024. The Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative was one of the winners in 2024.

SAVING THE SAIGA ANTELOPE:

A GLOBAL CONSERVATION SUCCESS

The Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative has achieved an extraordinary milestone: protecting the critically endangered Saiga Antelope from the brink of extinction. This remarkable effort

has evolved into one of the world's largest conservation projects, aimed at preserving Kazakhstan's Golden Steppe.



Vera Voronova, Executive Director, Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative

THE CHALLENGE

Kazakhstan's Golden Steppe, a vast yet under-protected grassland ecosystem, has faced significant threats from climate change, industrial development, and intensive agriculture. Overgrazing during the Soviet era led to the degradation of nearly 50% of the steppe's 75 million hectares, causing a steep

decline in wildlife populations. The Saiga Antelope, once abundant, was driven to near extinction by poaching and disease. In 2015, a devastating virus outbreak, exacerbated by climate conditions, wiped out 60% of the species, highlighting their fragility and the urgent need for action.

THE SOLUTION AND IMPACT

Since 2015, under the leadership of Vera Voronova, the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative has partnered with the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK), the Kazakh government, and non-governmental organizations like Fauna & Flora and the Frankfurt Zoological Society. Through cutting-edge research and technology, the team tagged 250 Saiga Antelopes with telemetry devices to track their movements, enabling targeted protection of their habitats. These efforts have yielded extraordinary

results: the Saiga population has rebounded from a mere 20,000 in 2003 to 2.86 million today, earning a status improvement from "critically endangered" to "near threatened" on the IUCN Red List.

The initiative's collaboration with local communities has been equally vital. By creating jobs, raising awareness, and engaging schools, Altyn Dala has fostered a sense of shared responsibility for the Golden Steppe's future.

THE FUTURE

Altyn Dala's long-term vision is to restore the Golden Steppe's ecosystem to its full potential. By 2030, the initiative aims to:

- Increase the Saiga population to 4 million.
- Bring 8.5 million hectares under active conservation management.
- Expand its team to 725 full-time staff.

Recent successes include reintroducing Przewalski's Wild Horses, absent from the steppe for 200 years. Education remains a priority, with programs aimed at inspiring future conservationists through internships, research opportunities, and collaborations with schools

and universities. Beyond Kazakhstan, Altyn Dala's methods serve as a model for global grassland restoration. By 2030, they plan to work with countries like Mongolia, the USA, and India to replicate their success and advocate for sustainable grassland management worldwide.



Photo © Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative



Photo © : Natalya Shivaldova, Director of Ecological and Resource Center «Ekomaktab»

THREE GERMAN SHEPHERDS WERE ACQUIRED FOR THE CANINE SERVICE OF THE CUSTOMS COMMITTEE OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN.

Information and photos were provided by: Natalya Shivaldova, Director of Ecological and Resource Center «Ekomaktab»

The Republican Ecological and Resource Center «Ekomaktab», in partnership with Fauna & Flora, is implementing the project «Strengthening Capacity & Fostering the Will to Combat Wildlife Crime in Central Asia» in Uzbekistan.

As part of the project activities, work is underway to strengthen the canine service of the Customs Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The dog handlers have learned to successfully prevent the illegal transportation of narcotic drugs and other prohibited substances, as well as weapons and gunpowder. Uzbek canine handlers have extensive experience in working with service

dogs that successfully identify imported and exported seed and planting material in luggage that does not have phytosanitary certificates and other accompanying documentation.

However, the work of detecting wildlife and their derivatives in luggage is a new area in training service dogs in Uzbekistan. Every day the demand for well-trained dogs is growing, as cases of exporting Red Book representatives of national fauna have become more frequent. Such as turtles, monitor lizards, falcons. Derivatives in the form of horns, skins and other derivatives of Red Book animals of local fauna are often confiscated at customs.

Also, in Uzbekistan, there are many people who like to keep specimens of foreign fauna in their homes, whose homeland is far from Uzbekistan. The demand is growing for baby crocodiles, pythons and boas, predatory fish, leopards, cheetahs, parrots and pupae of rare butterflies. All these objects of wild nature and many others were stopped at the customs control of Uzbekistan. They were transported without the necessary accompanying and permits, and many of the objects were hidden among the belongings and discovered by dogs.

The National Dog Training Center of the Customs Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan is engaged in training service dogs to search for and detect objects of wild flora and fauna. As part of joint activities

and assistance to the National Dog Training Center in training service dogs, three German Shepherds were acquired in August 2024 from a foreign elite kennel of a neighboring country. The dogs coped well with the trip and adaptation period, have already been registered and taken on staff.

Employees of the dog training center expect good offspring from the newly arrived dogs, which in general will help the ongoing breeding work of the center. And as a result, it should improve the working qualities of service dogs. This will generally help strengthen the service-search work of dogs to prevent illegal import and export of wildlife at the customs of Uzbekistan.

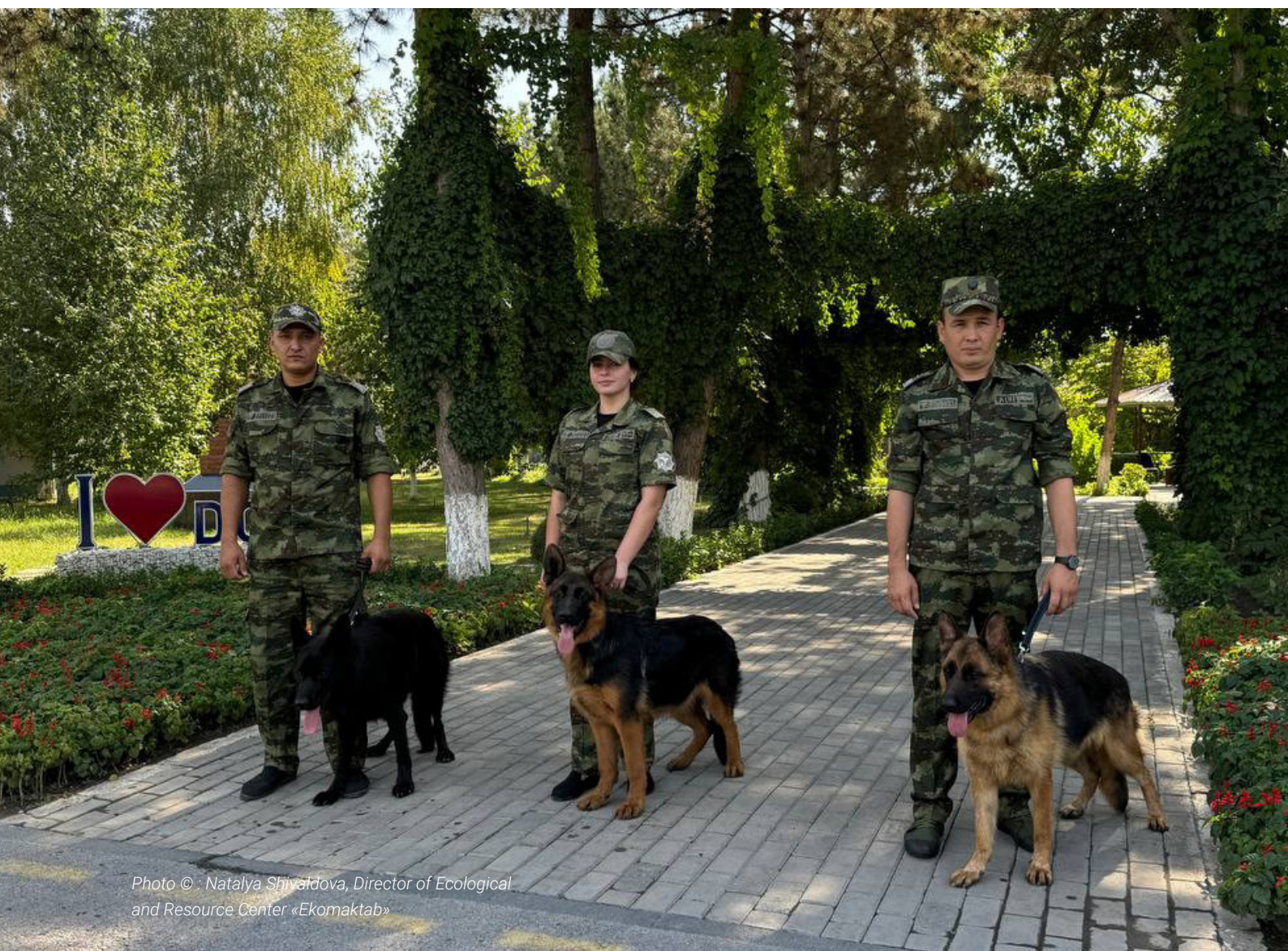


Photo © : Natalya Shivaldova, Director of Ecological and Resource Center «Ekomaktab»



**IUCN Regional
Conservation Forum**
Europe, North and
Central Asia
Bruges 2024

IUCN REGIONAL CONSERVATION FORUM EUROPE, NORTH AND CENTRAL ASIA FORUM TOOK PLACE IN BRUGGE ON SEPTEMBER 30 – OCTOBER 01, 2024.

Information and photos were provided by: <https://engage.iucn.org/group/europe-north-and-central-asia-rcf-30-sept-3-oct-2024/about>

Once every four years, the IUCN convenes its Regional Conservation Fora as a crucial platform for the IUCN Members, Commissions and the Secretariat to prepare for the upcoming IUCN World Conservation Congress.

Bringing IUCN constituents from two Statutory Regions – West Europe, and East Europe, North and Central Asia, RCF24ENCA was a major opportunity to present their work and sustainable development issues and conservation priorities from the global to regional perspectives, advance the next IUCN quadrennial programme and help inform and steer IUCN's strategic direction in the regions.

Forum gathered around 400 delegates, including IUCN Member organisations from the regions, experts and scientists from IUCN Commissions, representatives of the private sector, partner organisations and institutions, donors and foundations, and Host City representatives. The first-day programme was open to all, and includes the official opening ceremony, High-Level Talks, Thematic Sessions, Forum Fair and Youth Oasis.

The other two days of the programme was opened only for IUCN Members and Commissions, focusing on preparations for the IUCN Congress 2025 through discussions on the Motions process, draft IUCN Programme and 20-year vision, and regional priorities.

On September 30, 2024 [TRAFFIC hosted a side-event](#) with the target of shining a light on wildlife trade Central Asia at the [IUCN Regional Conservation Forum for Europe, North, and Central Asia](#). Bakytbek Tokubek uulu, TRAFFIC Project Manager in Central Asia, presented an overview of wildlife trade in the region and examples of recent capacity building activities that TRAFFIC and its partners Fauna & Flora, Ekomaktab and ACBK have been implementing in the region.

At the IUCN Regional Conservation Forum, TRAFFIC emphasised the relevance of combatting wildlife trafficking in the Central Asian Region and stressed how using wild resources sustainably and managed by communities can bring benefits to local communities.

One such resource that feeds local economies and is found in food, tea, and medicine throughout the world is liquorice. When managed well, the roots can bring essential income to local businesses and communities and can contribute to landscape conservation, but liquorice requires a long recovery time between harvests, and if this is mismanaged

it can threaten the plant's survival as well as make land susceptible to landslides and floods. [TRAFFIC can offer recommendations](#) to government and other organisations to manage this careful balance and ensure important trades such as this carry on into the future.



Photo © engage.iuch.org



INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON TRAINING DETECTION DOGS TO COMBAT ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING IN TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN

THE SEMINAR TOOK PLACE AT THE NATIONAL DOG TRAINING
CENTER OF THE STATE CUSTOMS COMMITTEE OF UZBEKISTAN IN
TASHKENT FROM OCTOBER 31 TO NOVEMBER 1, 2024.

Information and photos were provided by: Natalya Shivaldova, Director of Ecological and Resource Center «Ekomaktab»

**Titled “Enhancing Capacity in Training
Service-Search Dogs to Prevent Crimes
Against Wildlife”, the event brought together
officials from the Customs and Border
Services of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and**

**Kyrgyzstan to exchange knowledge and
strengthen cooperation in combating the
illegal trade of endangered species and their
derivatives.**

Participants included staff from the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection, and Climate Change of Uzbekistan, the Institute of Zoology of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, the Ecological Resource Center Ekomaktab, the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan, and representatives from Fauna and Flora and TRAFFIC. The seminar was part of the “Strengthening Capacity and Fostering the Will to Combat Wildlife Crime in Central Asia” project, which previously funded the purchase of three service dogs. The project is supported by a grant from the United States Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

During the seminar the TRAFFIC team provided insights into illegal wildlife trade in Central

Asia and launched their inaugural newsletter. Cynologists from Kazakhstan shared their expertise in using detection dogs for wildlife law enforcement, and experts from the Institute of Zoology compiled a collection of 16 wildlife scent samples (saiga horns, bear arms, feathers of falcons etc.) — including those of CITES-listed vertebrates—to assist with training. Practical sessions demonstrated methods for teaching service dogs odor detection and showcased their work in settings like baggage areas at airports and vehicle checks. During the seminar Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Cynology Center of the Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan for Financial Monitoring and The National Cynology Center of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan.



A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a brown bear's head, focusing on its fur and a portion of its eye. The bear's fur is thick and brown, with some lighter patches. The bear's eye is partially visible, looking towards the left. The background is dark and out of focus.

3. SELECTED CITES NEWS OF RELEVANCE FOR THE CENTRAL ASIAN REGION

THE 20TH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE
OF THE PARTIES (COP20) IS SCHEDULED
TO BE HELD IN SAMARKAND, UZBEKISTAN
FROM MONDAY 24 NOVEMBER TO FRIDAY
5 DECEMBER 2025

More data could be found here: <https://cites.org/eng/node/141145>

Following the Notifications to the Parties No. 2024/028 of 31 January 2024, No. 2024/055 of 22 April 2024, and No. 2024/110 of 3 October 2024, and after an informal consultation with the Standing Committee, CITES Secretariat announced the Parties that the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP20) will be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, from Monday, 24 November to Friday, 5 December 2025.

Online registration is expected to be open to all participants in April 2025. All Parties and observer organizations registered for

CoP19 will receive a unique registration link. The registration deadline is Thursday 25 September 2025 for observers (non-Parties, United Nations and its specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and private sector). While there is no mandated registration deadline for Parties, all delegates from Parties are nevertheless strongly encouraged to also register before Thursday 25 September 2025. Enquiries about registration should be sent to registration@cites.org



CITES ANIMALS COMMITTEE UPDATES ON CENTRAL ASIA.

More data could be found here: <https://rst.cites.org/public/case-details/221>

The CITES Animals Committee is a scientific advisory body made up of experts representing each of the six geographical regions of CITES (Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Central and South America and the Caribbean, and Oceania), focusing on wildlife trade and capacities to regulate and conserve wild animal populations. The Animals Committee meets twice between the meetings of the CITES Conference of the Parties and their role is to provide technical support to decision-making about species where there are knowledge gaps regarding species of animals that are (or might become) subject to CITES trade controls.

Between 12 – 19 July, the 32nd meeting of the CITES Animals Committee took place in Geneva, Switzerland.

The main update relating to Central Asia was that the *Testudo horsfieldii* – the Central Asian Tortoise - remains in the Review of

Significant Trade (RST) for Uzbekistan, with recommendations for Uzbekistan to establish an annual zero export quota for wild and ranched specimens of the species. The Review of Significant Trade is designed to identify Appendix-II listed species that may be subject to unsustainable levels of international trade and identify problems and solutions concerning effective implementation of the Convention. Quotas are set based on the findings from the RST. The Secretariat stated that changes to this quota can only be made once any updated quota is given to the Secretariat and Chair of the Animals Committee, justifying any number proposed based on scientific evidence that demonstrates the proposed offtake is sustainable. The Secretariat also asked Uzbekistan to provide information on the level of offtake of specimens from the wild needed to supplement captive breeding operations.

It was agreed that Uzbekistan needs to submit to the Animals Committee meeting following:

- Provide information and details on source codes for different specimens and how individuals from different sources are differentiated.
- Provide evidence of the ability to produce such high numbers of specimens - Provide information on initial stock, subsequent introductions and annual production.
- Provide more information on what measures Uzbekistan is taking to ensure that wild specimens cannot be laundered through captive-breeding facilities and exported as specimens reported as produced in captivity.
- Provide information on whether they intend to move all trade to captive breeding in the future.

APRIL 2025

WORKING TO ENSURE THAT TRADE
IN WILD SPECIES IS LEGAL AND
SUSTAINABLE, FOR THE BENEFIT OF
THE PLANET AND PEOPLE.

TRAFFIC

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