

TRAFFIC POST

the wildlife trade monitoring network

ISSUE 11
MARCH, 2011

TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



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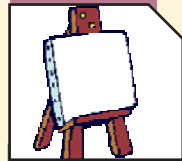
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South Asia unites to curb illegal trade in endangered wildlife



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

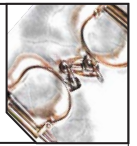
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Briefing participants, Dr Chandrawansa Pathiraja, Director General of the Department of Wildlife Conservation, Sri Lanka repeatedly stressed the need to conserve wildlife in order to develop the ecotourism industry which has the potential to be one 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/

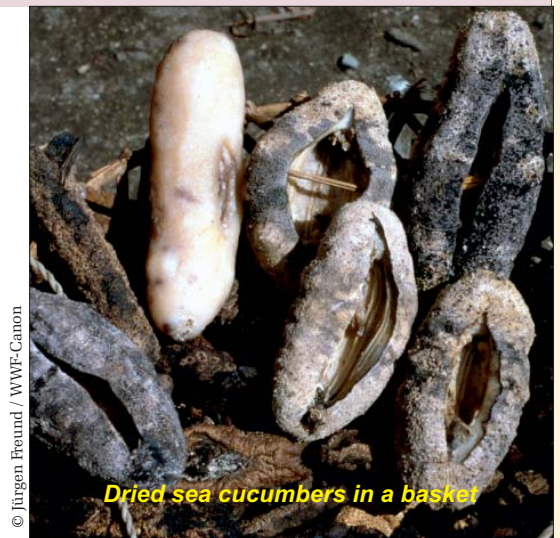
Source:

<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.

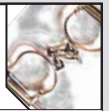
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Dried sea cucumbers in a basket

© 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 Lakshadweep 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.

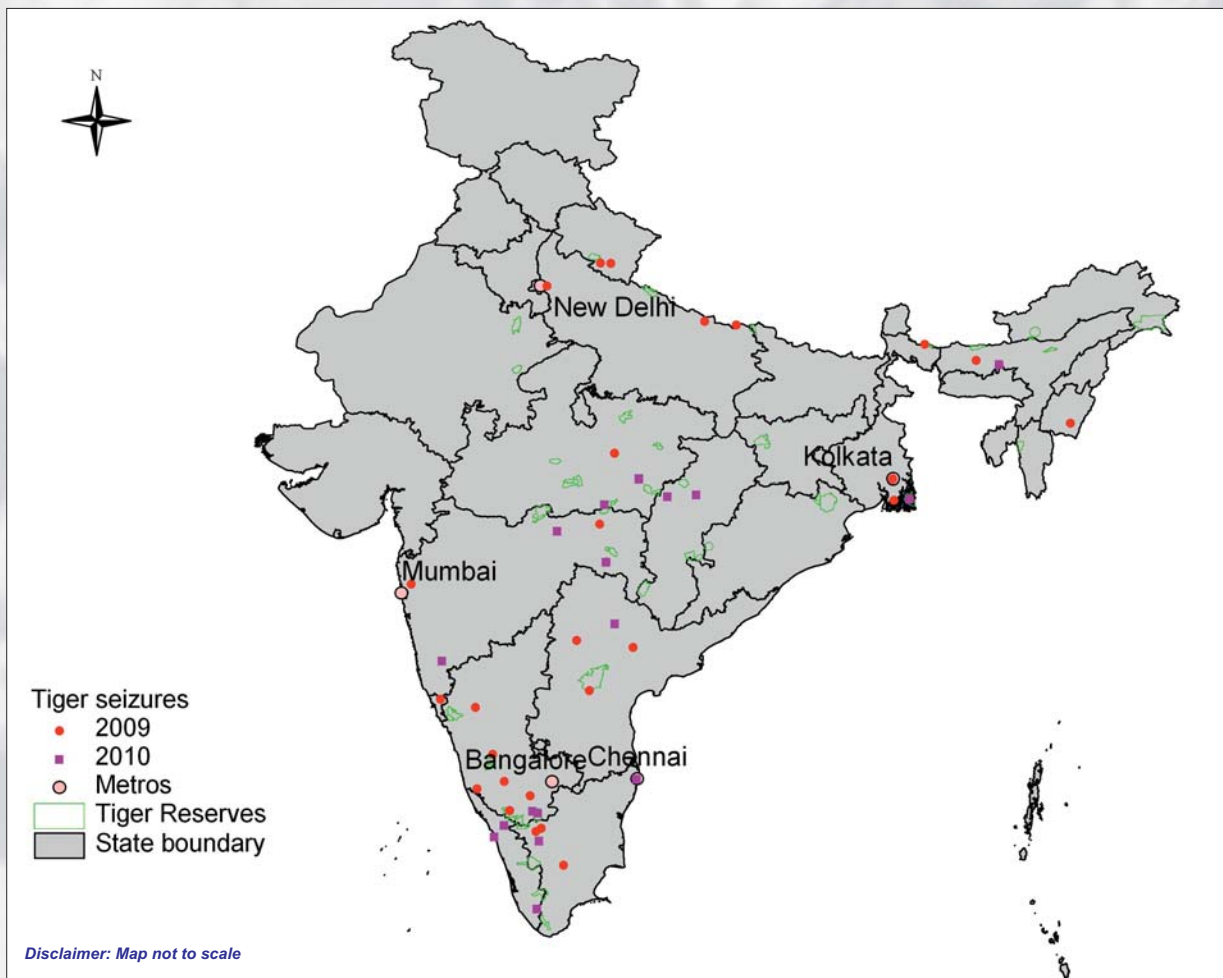
“Good enforcement alone will not solve the problem. To save Tigers in the wild, concerted action is needed to reduce considerably the demand for Tiger parts in key countries in Asia,” said Steven Broad, Executive Director of TRAFFIC.

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

Continued from page 10

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>

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