

TRAFFIC POST

the wildlife trade monitoring network

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TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



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CITES UPDATE



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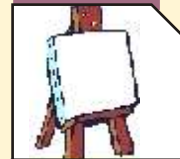
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“Tigernet”– India's first consolidated database on Tiger mortality and crime launched



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There has been a legitimate concern in India for some time about the accurate reporting of Tiger deaths and the circumstances surrounding them, with conflicting information from official sources and NGOs, and accusations of secrecy over some findings. To tackle this and to bring in greater transparency and clarity in the process of tracking and evaluating Tiger mortality in India, TRAFFIC India joined hands with the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) to develop and maintain an online database on Tiger mortalities and crime in the country.

“Tigernet” (<http://tigernet.nic.in/>) was launched in January 2010 by Shri Jairam Ramesh, Hon. Minister of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India, in New Delhi and is probably the first ever consolidated database in India on mortality and poaching related to Tigers and other protected species within Tiger reserves in the country. The new system allows enforcement officers such as the Tiger reserve directors and chief wildlife wardens to record information on Tiger

mortalities, to monitor patterns of where poaching incidents are occurring and use this information to strengthen anti-poaching efforts.

This endeavour is believed to be the most scientific and comprehensive one to underpin the issue of wildlife poaching in the country taking the Tiger as a flagship species. Proper record keeping and accurate statistics are an integral part of the process of monitoring and curbing an illegal activity that has wide ramifications for the biological heritage of the country. Therefore, the data collected by the website will help in gauging trends of poaching, regional and national significance of Tiger mortality and provide pointers for effective moves to be undertaken on the ground to mitigate the problem. It is anticipated that the new website will simplify the whole Tiger death reporting system and allow a more accurate and transparent picture to be generated of the poaching and other threats facing the nation's Tiger population. Automatic reminders will be sent to official staff to upload details surrounding any Tiger mortalities, including the findings of post mortem examinations.

The website also provides an option for concerned citizens of the country to send in details about wildlife mortality they are aware of.

Samir Sinha, Head–TRAFFIC India said, “Collection of streamlined information is the first step toward addressing the root cause of a misdeed and this website has to be seen in this context”.

He further added, “It is hoped that it will engender a spirit of honesty and co-operation among all major stakeholders in Tiger conservation in the country for remedial action to save the majestic predator of the Indian jungles along with all the other denizens that cohabit with this species”.



India's wildlife law enforcement gets a boost with the launch of TRAFFIC's latest Handbook



© TRAFFIC India

From left to right: Mr Samir Sinha, Hon. Minister Shri Jairam Ramesh and Mr Ravi Singh

As a step forward towards strengthening wildlife enforcement in India, Shri Jairam Ramesh, Hon. Minister of Environment and Forests launched TRAFFIC India's Handbook on Wildlife Law Enforcement in India on 16 February 2010 at the WWF–India Secretariat in New Delhi. The book has been produced with support from WWF–India and is authored by Samir Sinha, Head–TRAFFIC India.

The handbook is a comprehensive and detailed publication on wildlife trade and crime, conceived from several discussions with senior enforcement officials and experts. It aims to support the efforts of various enforcement agencies in their fight against wildlife crime. The handbook is for use by officials from the Forest Department, Police, paramilitary forces guarding our borders, the Central Bureau of Investigation, Department of Revenue Intelligence and others working on wildlife enforcement in India. It can be used as an important resource material during trainings conducted on wildlife enforcement and other related issues.

Its special features include sections on prevention of offences, identifying early signs, the scene of wildlife crime, the internet as a tool for illegal wildlife trade, securing electronic evidence and conducting interrogation.

In his foreword to the book, Shri Jairam Ramesh stated, “The handbook is a comprehensive document that highlights emerging threats from illegal wildlife trade and offers valuable information on identifying and responding to such threats.”

“I would recommend the field practitioners, enforcement and policing authorities and anyone with a keen interest in protecting our natural heritage to make use of this handbook in the best possible way”, he also said at the launch.

Mr Ravi Singh, SG & CEO, WWF–India further commented, “From a conservationist's point of view, the handbook is a vital input at the present stage of India's conservation history, being published at a time when many of our own species and conservation landscapes are depreciating, some beyond even long-term recovery. I am confident that the handbook will help the practitioners and concerned individuals in standing firm against erosion of our natural heritage.”

Mr Samir Sinha, Head–TRAFFIC India and also the author of the book said, “I am deeply touched by the support and appreciation I have received for this book. It is hoped that this handbook will prove a useful tool in the battle against illegal wildlife crime in India.”

TRAFFIC India helps poachers surrender



Six hardcore poachers from north-eastern India surrendered during a ceremony organized by TRAFFIC India on 26 November 2009 at Bansbari, Assam. The poachers turned themselves in with six firearms, three deer antlers and two deer skins along with traps and nets to Sh. Khampha Bargayari, Dy Chief, Bodo Territorial Council (BTC).

The poachers operated in and around Manas National Park, Assam, and most were known to be active in the region. Between them they are said to have killed two Tigers, a Rhinoceros and three Asian Elephants in recent years. Their surrender is a boost to conservation effort in the region.

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In October 2009, three poachers were arrested, based on information provided to the Forest Department through an intelligence network established by TRAFFIC India. Earlier, apprehended individuals in Assam had indicated that active poachers in Kaziranga Tiger Reserve, Orang National Park, Pobitara National Park and Manas National Park were interested in changing their ways and surrendering if support for an alternative source of livelihood could be provided. This led to co-operation between TRAFFIC India and BTC to identify the relevant individuals, resulting in the recent surrender.



© TRAFFIC India

Surrendered poachers at the ceremony



© TRAFFIC India

Items recovered from the surrendered poachers

Sh. Khampha Bargayari, Dy Chief of BTC said at the surrender ceremony that in the coming year, BTC plans to budget a rehabilitation programme for the surrendered poachers where they will be provided employment at dairy farms and co-operative stores set up by BTC.

TRAFFIC India hopes that the surrender of these poachers will set a positive example for all others operating in the area. This is surely a step ahead in our mission to help curb illegal wildlife trade.

Forest and police officials in Bhopal receive training on wildlife enforcement



TRAFFIC India, in collaboration with the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), Govt. of India and Defra (the Department for Food and Rural Affairs, Govt. of UK) held a training workshop on wildlife law enforcement for forest and police officers in Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh from 4—6 November 2009. The workshop was attended by 50 personnel from both the Forest and Police departments of Madhya Pradesh.

Inaugurating the workshop, Mr R S Negi, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) of Madhya Pradesh, highlighted the need to strengthen wildlife enforcement and develop effective intelligence network for tackling wildlife crime. The workshop was also attended by Mr Sartaj Singh, Hon. Forest Minister, who stressed the need to develop wide networks to curb the growing menace of wildlife trade.

During the workshop, Mrs Rina Mitra, Director—WCCB talked about the importance of local action in monitoring wildlife trade. She also expressed hope that better communication between States will help in stalling transborder crime.

Mr Samir Sinha, Head—TRAFFIC India highlighted the nature of international illegal wildlife trade and how it has emerged to become a form of organized trade.

This workshop was the second in a series conducted by TRAFFIC, WCCB and Defra. The first was held in Chennai in August 2009.

TRAFFIC India participates in India's first BioFach



BioFach, the World Organic Trade Fair, was held for the first time in India; from 18–20 November 2009 in Mumbai. It was inaugurated by Mr Dawcho Lepcha, Hon. Minister for Food Security and Agriculture Development, Sikkim.

TRAFFIC India, representing the FairWild Foundation, participated in the three-day fair and showcased its work on the ISSC–MAP (International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants) project that has been implemented in the States of Uttarakhand & Karnataka.



© Khalid Pasha

Besides promoting the FairWild standards (including ISSC–MAP) at the fair, TRAFFIC India and its delegation of medicinal plant experts, local partner NGOs, State Government representatives and harvesters/collectors from the field (local community) interacted with those involved at various levels in the medicinal plant sector. Overall, TRAFFIC India's participation helped generate interest among visitors on sustainable practices for collection of various MAP species from the wild.

The Hon. Minister Mr Lepcha said that creating an organic world is the right mantra for the eco-conscious 21st Century. He pledged to make Sikkim a fully organic state by 2015.

Mr Khalid Pasha, Co-ordinator–TRAFFIC India, who attended the three day fair said, “BioFach marks the beginning of a new era for organic farming and the medicinal and aromatic plants sector in India. The fair will help bridge the gap between the overseas and domestic markets for such products”.

BIOFACH is a World Organic Trade Fair, originally from Nurnberg, Germany and now organized in five other countries, worldwide (Brazil, China, India, Japan and USA).

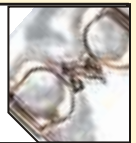
Karnataka begins implementing sustainable practices for collection of medicinal and aromatic plants



To mark an end of the three-year project that entailed demonstrating ISSC–MAP (International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants) in the state of Karnataka; and to celebrate the beginning of a new phase wherein the various stakeholders of the medicinal plant industry begin to put into use the ISSC–MAP principles and standards for harvesting of the plants, FRLHT (the Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions) organised a workshop in Bangalore in collaboration with TRAFFIC India on 29 January 2010.

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TRAFFIC Alert



Man held with 40 endangered lizards

Delhi Police arrested a man and seized 40 monitor lizards alive from his possession in West Delhi on 11 January 2010. The accused was allegedly planning to sell the lizards, which were tied up and stuffed into seven gunny bags, to a client who failed to turn up. The poacher had tied the limbs of the lizards together to keep them immobile. The police arrested the accused while he was sitting in a park in Raghbir Nagar (West Delhi) with his wife and children with the seven gunny bags with him containing the lizards.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

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

Despite legal protection, monitor lizards continue to be exploited for their skin which is used to make articles of apparel and household use viz. handbags, wallets, shoes and watch straps including scabbards for kukris and drums. The skin of the Indian Water Monitor Lizard is also used as upper leather for expensive shoes in the international market (Bhanotar, et al. loc. cit.).

Live monitors are seen in India during festivals and in fertility rites. Their eggs are considered a delicacy and the entire animal is also eaten (Murthy 1978 and 1988, Smith, 1930 and Das, 1989); oil extracted from fat is used in the treatment of failing eyesight (Murthy, 1986) and in cooking (Auffenberg, 1986; Das, 1989).

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The workshop was attended by the various stakeholders to the projects including officials from the Karnataka Forest Department, the CEO of the State Medicinal Plant Board, community members from both field sites of the project in Karnataka and the project initiation and execution team.

The project was began in January 2007 and aimed to demonstrate the international standards for harvesting medicinal and aromatic plants from the wild, to assist stakeholders engaged with the harvesting and trade of these plants, and to help traders and industry to implement best practices.

Mr G A Kinhal, Member of the Advisory Board for ISSC-MAP, who initiated this project in Karnataka highlighted the role of all stakeholders in making the project a success and thanked the Karnataka Forest Department for co-operating in the implementation of ISSC-MAP in Karnataka.

Mr Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India commented, "In my 20 years of experience as a forest officer, I heard the concept of sustainability being talked about only in conference rooms, so it is extremely touching to hear communities now understanding and accepting the concept as a way for long-term sustenance of resources."

The ISSC-MAP standard was developed by WWF-Germany, the IUCN/SSC Species Survival Commission Medicinal Plant Specialist Group (MPSG), TRAFFIC and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation. For more details, please visit <http://www.floraweb.de/map-pro/>

TRAFFIC Alert



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Monitor fat is used as an aphrodisiac and the excretion used in the treatment of eye and skin diseases (Hussain, 1771, Khan, 1911 and Vohora and Khan, 1979). Travelling hakims in India also exhibit a variety of drugs and tonics derived from these animal sources (Das, 1989).

Source:

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/man-held-with-40-endangered-lizards/566779/0>
<http://envfor.nic.in/divisions/re/ta5p5.html>;
http://zsienvvis.nic.in/edb/end_reptilia/reptilia_data/varanus_salvator.htm
http://www.endangeredspecieshandbook.org/trade_reptile_lizards.php
http://www.zsienvvis.in/edb/end_reptilia/reptilia_data/varanus_salvator.htm
http://www.zsienvvis.in/edb/end_reptilia/reptilia_data/varanus_bengalensis.htm
<http://envfor.nic.in/divisions/re/ta5p5.html>
<http://www.expressbuzz.com/edition/print.aspx?artid=0s1fPYCUMak=>

Bombay Scottish School wins Wild Wisdom



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From left to right: Mr Cyrus Sahukar, Mr. Ravi Singh and Miss Ekta Chowdhary

Students from Bombay Scottish School, Mumbai, won the national level wildlife quiz titled Wild Wisdom while students from Rajagiri Higher Secondary School, Kalamassery, Kerala and Delhi Public School, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh were the two runners up. This inter-city quiz was held on 18 November 2009 at the Sanskriti School in New Delhi and was organised by WWF-India and TRAFFIC India.

Five teams were selected based on a written preliminary round from the 13 that participated from cities across the country. The five finalists were named after five endangered wild animals that are primarily

threatened by poaching—Elephant, Rhinoceros, Otter, Whale Shark and Tiger.

The quiz was hosted by Mr Cyrus Sahukar of MTV Fame and Miss Ekta Chowdhary, Pantaloons Femina Miss India 2009 was the chief guest of the day who gave away certificates and trophies to winners. The winning teams were taken to the prestigious Jim Corbett National Park in Uttarakhand.

This quiz is part of TRAFFIC India's initiative to generate interest among children and youth on wildlife and trade-related issues.

Shahtoosh shawls seized from J&K emporium in New Delhi

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) recovered three banned Shahtoosh shawls from the Jammu and Kashmir government's emporium in Central Delhi on 3 December 2009 and arrested the emporium manager. Mushtaq Ahmed, manager of the Kashmir Government Arts Emporium on Baba Kharak Singh Marg, was remanded in judicial custody. The agency is currently trying to find out how Ahmed procured the shawls.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Tibetan Antelope *Panthelops hodgsonii*, despite being accorded the highest protection status under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, has become a fashion victim. Its international trade is also prohibited under CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). However, seizure reports like the above indicate that the trade in Shahtoosh continues.

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TRAFFIC India develops a booklet on Important Aspects of Investigation in Wildlife Offences



TRAFFIC India has developed a booklet on *Important Aspects of Investigation in Wildlife Offences*. Authored by Saurabh Sharma, Advocate-High Court, Delhi, the booklet attempts to pull together various aspects of investigation into wildlife offences as per the legal procedures prevalent in India. Successful investigation involves combining the best available scientific tools and techniques with established legal procedures that can stand scrutiny in courts of law. The booklet attempts to interpret and present in a simplified way various aspects of investigation as laid out in the laws of the land, and the interpretations of various law courts of these aspects. The booklet draws on the author's experience of successfully fighting some of India's high profile wildlife offence cases in the courts of law across the country.

TRAFFIC Alert



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Shahtoosh is manufactured from the underwool of the endangered Tibetan Antelope (Chiru) and perhaps three to five Chirus are killed to make one shawl. Reports have confirmed there is a ready supply of the wool from Kashmir's weavers who make the luxurious shawls that are then supplied to affluent customers in India, Nepal, the Middle East and Europe.

Source:

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/3-shahtoosh-shawls-seized--J-K-emporium-manager-held/550508/>

Over 500 Indian Star Tortoises seized on Indo-Bangladesh border

Border Security Force (BSF) jawans seized a consignment of 670 tortoises at the Kalandi border post in the Sundarbans, West Bengal, during the early hours on 13 November 2009. The reptiles were being smuggled across the border into Bangladesh. The guards on duty spotted a group trying to cross the river that demarcates the border. While the smugglers managed to escape they left behind about 15 sacks containing 670 tortoises of which 500 were

TRAFFIC India adds.....

The Indian Star Tortoise *Geochelone elegans* has become one of the most commonly traded wildlife species. This is despite the fact that in India, hunting and trade of the species is banned under Schedule IV of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and international trade is prohibited under CITES (Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) where it is listed in Appendix II.

Commonly known as Tarewala kachua, Star Tortoises are largely threatened by illegal trade. Due to their small size, live tortoises can easily be carried in baggage with fruits and vegetables. They are often wrongly declared as fish, crabs and souvenirs. Star Tortoises are either traded for their meat or for the live pet trade.

OUTPOST: China's call for increased conservation efforts marks the beginning of the Chinese Year of the Tiger 2010



The State Forestry Administration (SFA) of China issued a Directive on 4 January 2010 calling for increased protection of wild Tigers through natural habitat management, stronger law enforcement action against illegal trade in Tiger parts and products, stricter regulation of captive breeding regulations and enhanced public awareness campaigns.

Poaching of Tigers across Asia coupled with habitat loss has led to a dramatic decline in global Tiger numbers in the wild from around 1 00 000 animals a Century ago to approximately 3200 today. Currently, China has only around 20 wild Amur Tigers *Panthera tigris altaica*.



© Klein & Hubert / WWF

Although domestic trade in Tiger parts has been illegal in China since 1993, demand for parts, such as Tiger bone for tonic wines and skins for clothing and display, still exists. In 2008, TRAFFIC's market surveys in Gansu and Ningxia provinces found the illicit trade in Tiger products still existed, although at a low level.

The SFA Directive includes a mandate to crackdown on illegal smuggling and trade in Tiger parts and products, specifically asking local forestry bureaus in China to collaborate with other law enforcement agencies to increase monitoring and undertake enforcement measures against such trade.

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The Directive calls for promoting public awareness to reduce consumption of Tiger parts and a public rejection of illegal trade, and suggests encouraging and motivating people to report wildlife crime to the authorities.

The Directive also calls for increased monitoring and management of Tiger captive breeding facilities through creation of a database to track all Tigers births and deaths in such facilities and the secure storage of stockpiles of Tiger bodies and parts. Those facilities without storage capabilities will have to destroy their stockpiles under the supervision of local authorities, and each operation will be required to demonstrate it has met the appropriate conditions before it will be issued with a permit to open up for public viewing.

“TRAFFIC welcomes the measures proposed by the State Forestry Administration ahead of the Year of the Tiger, which is make or break time for wild Tigers,” said Professor Xu Hongfa, Head of TRAFFIC's China team.

“2010 will determine if the Tiger's future burns bright or continues to fade away.”

OUTPOST:

Asian countries pledge to double Tiger numbers by 2022



Ministers and senior delegations from 13 Tiger range States Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Thailand, and Viet Nam committed to implementing measures to double the number of wild Tigers by 2022 at the 1st Asia Ministerial Conference on Tiger Conservation held in Hua Hin, Thailand in January 2010.

The post-conference declaration includes pledges to protect wild tigers and their prey from poaching through regular patrolling of tiger habitats and elimination of national and cross-border trade in tiger and tiger parts as well as a commitment to support communities living in and around tiger landscapes and minimize human-tiger conflicts.

The countries also appealed for the commitment of international institutions to help finance and support the new conservation efforts.

“The World Bank stands ready to support regional projects in the tiger range countries and to mobilize the donor community and develop innovative financial instruments to support tiger conservation funds,” said World Bank President Robert B. Zoellick, in a video message to the conference.

The Royal Government of Thailand, who hosted the meeting, announced plans for increased patrolling of tiger habitats in Thailand, assistance for restoration of tigers populations in neighbouring countries and more secure funding for the ASEAN–Wildlife Enforcement Network.

Michael Baltzer, Leader of WWF's Tiger Initiative, commented: “We are delighted to see a ray of hope for the tiger as represented by the tiger range countries' commitment to work together to double wild tiger numbers by 2022.”

Currently there are around 3200 tigers left in the wild. A Century ago the figure was estimated at 1 00 000.

TRAFFIC Alert



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A significant part of the trade is meant for international markets. Two recent investigations undertaken by TRAFFIC at wildlife trade markets in Thailand and Indonesia clearly indicate the Indian Star Tortoise is in the top three tortoise species traded. Over the years Bangalore, Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata, Pune, the Port City of Kandla in the Gulf of Kutch, Kutch, the coast of Gujarat and Rajasthan have emerged as common trade points for smuggling the Indian Star Tortoise.

Source:

<http://www.hindu.com/2007/06/02/stories/2007060202801300.htm>
<http://www.ptinews.com/pti%5Cptisite.nsf/All/ABE0FF6E0AB002FD652573410056363>
<http://www.mumbaimirror.com/net/mmpaper.aspx?page=article§id=35&contentid=1458082400>
<http://www.thehindu.com/2009/11/14/stories/2009111458082400.htm>

Blackbuck skin seized from a shoe showroom in Kolkata

The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) and Kolkata Police conducted a raid at the popular Sreeleather showroom in Kolkata's Lindsay Street in October 2009 and seized Blackbuck skin which was on display amongst shoes and bags. A senior Sreeleathers executive was arrested for illegal possession and procurement of the skin although company officials insisted it was cow skin. However, forensic tests by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Kolkata, in November 2009 confirmed the skin was indeed that of a Blackbuck.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Blackbuck *Antelope cervicapra* is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, which prohibits hunting of and trade in the species. It is also listed in Appendix II of CITES (Convention of the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) that prohibits all international trade in the species. The above case, in which a reputable company was involved in openly selling the skin of a protected species is of concern. It clearly demonstrates that despite legal protection, the species is still hunted for its skin.

Source:

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/blackbuck-skin-seized-from-kolkata-shoe-show/536080/>

OUTPOST:

International enforcement agencies to tackle wildlife trade in concerted moves



Representatives from the secretariats of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), INTERPOL, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Customs Organization (WCO) held their first-ever joint meeting in Vienna late last year to design strategies intended to prevent and combat the illegal trade in wild animals and plants.

Willem Wijnstekers, Secretary General of the CITES Secretariat, announced that the discussions had led to a proposed International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime that will enhance law enforcement capacity at international, regional and national levels to bring greater co-ordination to protect the world's natural resources and to bring to justice those who seek to exploit them in a criminal fashion. This is a strong signal that all relevant agencies are now towards taking concerted action to curb illegal trade in tigers and other wildlife products.

CITES UPDATE:

Conservation of Asian Big Cats to be discussed at CITES CoP 15



The upcoming CITES Conference of Parties CoP 15 at Doha, Qatar will see another series of discussions on the fate of Asian Big Cats—comprising five species, namely: tiger, leopard, snow leopard, clouded leopard, and Asiatic lion. All Asian big cats have been included in Appendix I of CITES since 1975, with the exception of the Asiatic lion *Panthera leo persica* and the Amur tiger *Panthera tigris altaica*, which were included in Appendix I in 1977 and 1987, respectively. Two agenda documents relate to Asian big cats:

- Document 43.1 Report of the Secretariat
- Document 43.2 Proposed revision of Resolution Conf. 12.5 on conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix-I Asian big cat species (submitted by the Kingdom of Sweden on behalf of the European Community Member States)

In Document 43.1, the Secretariat summarizes the latest actions towards delivery of Decisions 14.65-14.72. Little impact has been made on the threats facing ABCs following CoP14. Following the adoption of those Decisions in 2007, the Parties subsequently failed to deliver on them in full. The Secretariat states that the conclusions and recommendations of the 1999 report to SC42 from the CITES Tiger Missions Technical Team are still valid and relevant today. This shows that solutions have long been evident but that sustained and widespread political will, financial support, and effective implementation are needed to give these a proper chance to succeed.

Document 43.2 proposes amendments to Resolution Conf. 12.5 aimed at increasing regional cooperation, improving enforcement controls and procedures, ensuring tiger-breeding operations are consistent with the conservation of wild populations, improving reporting, improving compliance, and encouraging an expansion of a database such as EU-TWIX. WWF and TRAFFIC support this document in principle, particularly measures to curtail captive tiger breeding to a level supportive only to conserving wild tigers. However, it needs to be pointed out that there are many important issues to discuss at this CoP relating to Asian big cats and that this one issue should not dominate all the discussions, at the expense of ignoring issues such as the need for stronger penalties, closing of legislative loopholes, and greater resources for enforcement efforts. The recommendations outlined above should be applied to all countries with intensive operations breeding tigers on a commercial scale.

These discussions will be watched with interest, especially in India and all other tiger range and consumer countries as they are likely to have a significant impact on tiger conservation in years to come.

Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India adds, "India played a significant role in the tiger related discussions during the CoP 14 and we are hopeful that it will take up the same leadership role during the CoP 15."

TRAFFIC's recommendations on the proposals to amend the Appendices of CITES due to be discussed at CoP 15 can be viewed at <http://www.traffic.org/cop15>.

IN FOCUS: Red Sanders Red Alert



© Samir Sinha

A series of recent seizures of Red Sanders has indicated that smugglers are getting increasingly more sophisticated in transporting the valuable timber out of India. In 2009 alone, 322.50 tonnes of Red Sanders were seized from 26 out of 41 seizures reported in India. Since the beginning of 2010, at least eight seizures of Red Sanders have taken place already.

Red Sanders *Pterocarpus santalinus* is endemic to the southern parts of India's Eastern Ghats, mainly the State of Andhra Pradesh. For centuries, the prized wood has been made into objects for traditional wedding dowries in Japan, and used to make traditional musical instruments. Today the wood, also known as Red Sandalwood, is in great demand in China and Japan, where it is used to make furniture and carvings as well as medicines. In India it is used to make a dye.

Preliminary research by TRAFFIC suggests that while the use of the rare timber for furniture may be the most significant driver of recent Red Sanders smuggling, off-cuts from the furniture industry are then sold on into the traditional medicine trade.

However, the tree species has been heavily overexploited and its export, except in special circumstances, is prohibited under India's Foreign Trade Policy. It is also

protected under the Red Sanders and Sandalwood Transit Rules of Andhra Pradesh Forest Act, 1967 and international trade is controlled through the listing of *Pterocarpus santalinus* in Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

"It is evident from the spate of seizures taking place that smugglers of Red Sanders are operating on a massive scale and are running highly organized international smuggling rackets," commented Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India.

According to India's Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) latest annual report, the DRI made 15 Red Sanders seizures in 2008—2009. This was slightly down from just over 20 in each of the years since 2005, when the largest total seized was 466 cubic metres of logs in 2005—2006.

Smuggling attempts uncovered often involve the concealment or misdeclaration of the timber in shipments as everything from jute bags to zinc oxide to mustard oil cake and even salt. Logs have often been intercepted being transported by road from India to China via Nepal.

Since 2006, almost 1000 tonnes of Red Sanders have been recovered from near various Customs and border posts across India, including the Indo-Nepal border. On the Nepal side, over 400 tonnes of the wood have been seized during the same period, almost all of it destined for China.

However, other overland smuggling routes are becoming apparent. In October 2009, a consignment of around 2000 logs was intercepted by DRI officers near Aizawl, in north-eastern India, believed to be en route to China. Six Chinese nationals were arrested at the scene.

Elsewhere in north-eastern India, according to media reports, at least 100 tonnes of Red Sanders have been seized in Manipur and Mizoram since August 2009, and 600 tonnes seized by the forest department in transit in Dhubri and Burdawan.

According to the DRI report, in 2008—2009, on five occasions the DRI seized shipping containers with Red Sanders en route to Dubai, and in two cases each it was to UAE and Malaysia. However, a recent seizure finds criminals getting more sophisticated in getting the wood aboard ships to be smuggled out of India.

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In November 2009, two clearing agents at Chennai port were arrested in a case involving 32 tonnes of Red Sanders logs. The men were said to have used the name of their regular export clients who were unaware of the scam and made duplicate shipping bills, complete with the signatures of all Customs officials concerned. They forged rubber stamps and even duplicated the time locks used by Customs to seal export containers meant to ensure their authenticity. The cargo was then cleared by the agents and loaded onto ships and cleared for export without any Customs check. In December 2009, part of the same consignment was uncovered after DRI officials recalled a container destined for Dubai and discovered 339 Red Sanders logs weighing 9 tonnes aboard.

“We are seeing several changes to the nature and scale of the illicit trade in Red Sanders,” said Sinha. “For example, logs are being transported via different routes overland and are being shipped to the Middle East, although whether this is to markets in that region or it is just being used as a transit point, remains to be seen.

“The DRI are to be congratulated for their diligence in uncovering these smuggling routes and techniques, but as well as stopping the smuggling in India, we urgently need to find out more about what can be done to control the drivers of the Red Sanders demand in China, Japan and elsewhere.”



SIGNPOST: Other significant news stories to read



Global surge' in rhino poaching: Rhino poaching around the world is on the rise despite efforts to protect the animals, a report warns. The global surge in the illegal trade has been driven by demands from Asian medicinal markets, the study by conservationists concluded. It suggests that a decline in law enforcement is the main reason for the rise in poaching in Africa. For more information, please visit <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/8388606.stm>

Sharks killed for oil used in Swine Flu vaccine: Vaccines being made to protect people from swine flu may not be so healthy for threatened species of sharks. That's because millions of doses of the pandemic H1N1/09 vaccine contain a substance called squalene, which is extracted from shark livers. More commonly found in beauty products such as skin creams, squalene can be used to make an adjuvant, a compound that boosts the body's immune response. For more information, please visit <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2009/12/091229-sharks-liver-oil-swine-flu-vaccine.html>

Ivory mafia makes a killing in Kerala: Inter-State ivory peddlers are flourishing in Kerala despite the vigil mounted by the police and the Forest department. Authorities admit the number of elephants wild and tamed falling victim to these rackets is increasing by the year. Forest officials call the criminals 'ivory mafia'. Ivory worth crores of rupees had been seized by the department personnel in 2009 but smuggling of ivory has still not stopped. Officials say the seized ivory may not constitute even half the volume of the contraband being smuggled out of the State. For more information, please visit <http://www.dailypioneer.com/231667/Ivory-mafia-makes-a-killing-in-Kerala.html>

Europe seeks ban on tuna trade: Europe acted on Monday, 22 February 2010, to bring about a worldwide ban on commercial fishing of bluefin tuna, the king of Japanese sushi and sashimi, in a move that has already angered Tokyo. However, the proposal unveiled by the European Commission, which has still to be agreed by national governments, is that any ban based on scientific evidence concerning falling stocks only comes into force in 2011. For more information, please visit http://www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/World/Story/STIStory_493519.html

Monkeys, butterflies, turtles...how the pet trade's greed is emptying south-east Asia's forests: Countries across south-east Asia are being systematically drained of wildlife to meet a booming demand for exotic pets in Europe and Japan and traditional medicine in China posing a greater threat to many species than habitat loss or global warming. More than 35 million animals were legally exported from the region over the past decade, official figures show, and hundreds of millions more could have been taken illegally. For more information, please read <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/feb/21/illegal-wildlife-trade>

