

# Asian Wildlife Trade Bulletin

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## Groundbreaking project promotes international co-operation to tackle unsustainable wildlife trade across China's borders

A ground-breaking TRAFFIC project has led the way for increased collaboration between China and countries throughout Asia. China's rapidly developing economy is increasingly generating demand for wildlife, thus China's wildlife trade has become significant not only within China but across its borders, having a big impact on the wildlife of neighbouring countries. Tigers, Tibetan Antelopes and Saker Falcons are just a few examples of the many species under threat due to cross-border trade. Therefore, the effective control of China's wildlife trade increasingly relies on collaboration between China and its neighbours. TRAFFIC, in collaboration with UKFCO (the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office), has initiated high-level dialogues and joint enforcement actions between China and countries such as India, Nepal, Viet Nam and the Russian Federation, addressing cross-border wildlife trade for the first time.

The first international dialogue took place in August 2005 in Urumuqi, Xinjiang province, China. This multilateral dialogue on wildlife trade - the 'CITES Silk Road seminar' - included 50 officials from 12 countries including India, the Russian Federation, the Central Asian Republics, and Mongolia, resulting in official recommendations distributed to all parties.

This was followed up with cross-border visits between the Chinese and Indian CITES Management Authorities in May 2006, and another with India and Nepal Government delegates coming to China in June 2006. The June 2006 meeting laid the foundation for joint CITES action,

focusing on Tigers (Asian big cats) & Tibetan Antelope.

In addition to supporting international dialogues, dual-language materials for CITES enforcement and education at key borders between China and its neighbours have been developed and distributed. For the Russia/China border, identification booklets in both Chinese and Russian on how to identify timber and the status of wildlife trade between the Russian Federation and China were published April 2006. The information has been distributed through WWF China forest workshops, and will be an important part of an upcoming China-Russia-Mongolia enforcement workshop to be held in late 2007.



A TRAFFIC poster in Vietnamese and Chinese promotes CITES enforcement at key border points between China and Vietnam.

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**TRAFFIC**  
the wildlife trade monitoring network

For China's border with Viet Nam and with the Russian Federation, tri-language (Chinese, Russian, Vietnamese) awareness posters were published in June 2006 and distributed the following month at the Greater Mekong CITES meeting in Kunming. The posters included information on endangered wildlife being traded across the borders, such as bear paws, musk, ginseng, deer antlers, antelope horns, orchids, freshwater turtles, pythons and more.

Currently in the works is a shared wildlife trade seizure database for CITES Management Authorities of the Greater Mekong Subregion, including China. A working version of this database has been completed and meetings for review and comments by CITES authorities in Lao PDR, Cambodia, Vietnam, and China for its ongoing development have been held. However, specific implementation plans have yet to be developed in part due to concern by CITES authorities over cost implications for staff training and maintenance.

'Promoting regional collaboration with CITES is the key to achieving our goal of sustainable management of biodiversity and improved environmental governance in the long-term,' said Dr Craig Kirkpatrick, Director of TRAFFIC East Asia. 'However, more work still needs to be done in terms of training front-line enforcement officials, and cross-border visits to reinforce relationships that encourage further information exchange.'

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*Promoting government action to protect the region's biodiversity*

## **Building law enforcement capacity in key trade hubs in Asia**

International trade hubs, such as airports and seaports, are key transit points in the movement of illegal wildlife, often in very large volumes. Wild fauna and flora is collected from around a region and is funnelled through these transit hubs before being distributed to the global market. As part of TRAFFIC's strategy to increase the frequency of successful interdiction of illegal wildlife trade cargoes, a multi-year training and capacity building initiative is being carried out. In recent months, supported by a grant from the US Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, TRAFFIC has provided training in important hubs where trade is flowing between producer and consumer regions, such as Singapore, Malaysia, Viet Nam and China (Kunming and Guangzhou).

TRAFFIC's experience in Asia has shown that enforcement personnel from a variety of agencies, including CITES authorities, Customs authorities, police and the port authorities themselves, are often poorly equipped and lack the capacity to carry out their basic responsibilities in an efficient manner regarding wild animals and plants. By promoting interagency co-operation and improving the capacity of front-line officers charged with detecting and intercepting illegal trade in airports

and seaports, TRAFFIC aims to encourage these agencies to work together more effectively for law enforcement.

The training sessions aim to build capacity in the understanding of wildlife regulations, species identification of CITES Appendix-I and Appendix-II species, and improving inspection processes and related skills – as well as gathering information on the needs of various agencies to deal with the challenges of controlling wildlife trade.

High volumes of trade in reptiles, birds, and forest products such as orchids and agarwood are common throughout the region, as well as specialized demand for high-profile wildlife products derived from Tigers, elephants, and marine turtles. Connecting the supply and demand nexus between Southeast Asia and China has been a major focus in improving producer-consumer co-operation in wildlife trade matters, and is part of TRAFFIC's support to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN). In China, training events have been held in Kunming (September 2006) and Guangzhou (April 2007) and delivered by a TRAFFIC training team in collaboration with China CITES Management Authority regional offices for Guangzhou and Kunming.

Workshops have revealed that awareness of illegal wildlife trade amongst front-line enforcement officers remains generally low, as does comprehension of CITES, to which all target countries are Parties. Other important feedback has been that the capacity to monitor and administer legal trade controls alongside detection of the illegal trade requires further improvement in technical capacity. For example, at a recent training session in Guangzhou, more than half of the participants had never heard of CITES and almost all had never been trained in wildlife trade issues.

Besides holding training courses in China, a major consumer country, TRAFFIC has also been conducting a series of capacity-building workshops for enforcement officers stationed at major trade hotspots in Southeast Asia. Between October



Markets like Qingping in Guangdong province are renowned for trade in wildlife such as freshwater turtles, of which three-quarters of the 90 species found in Asia are considered threatened or critically endangered. TRAFFIC is training enforcement personnel to improve detection and interception of illegal trade in Guangdong and other trade hubs in Asia. © Timothy Lam/TRAFFIC.

2006 and March 2007, TRAFFIC has conducted four training events in Viet Nam (Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City - November 2006), Malaysia (February 2007) and Singapore (March 2007). Altogether 174 officers attended the workshops from a range of CITES, Customs, fisheries, wildlife, cargo and checkpoint agencies.

Key issues raised as further needs by workshop participants include:

- lack of species identification skills for border control officers;
- an urgent need for co-operation between different agencies in wildlife trade cases;
- guidance on proper handling of confiscated specimens by border officers;
- lack of standard protocols for the investigations and subsequent prosecution of wildlife criminals.

There was a unanimous request for more regular training courses in CITES as well as species identification, without which it is difficult for the border control officers to carry out their CITES obligations and duties. TRAFFIC will continue to conduct such workshops in Southeast Asia (including Cambodia, Laos PDR, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines and Viet Nam) until December 2007.

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### Promoting government action to protect the region

## Lifting Tiger trade ban a catastrophe for conservation

Any lifting or easing of the current Chinese ban in Tiger trade is likely to be the death sentence for the endangered cat species, a new TRAFFIC report says.

The report Taming the Tiger Trade: China's Markets for Wild and Captive Tiger Products Since the 1993 Domestic Trade Ban warns that Chinese business owners who stand to profit from the tiger trade are putting increasing pressure on the Chinese Government to overturn the 1993 ban. This would allow domestic trade in captive-bred Tiger parts for use in traditional medicine and for clothing to resume.

The Chinese ban has been essential to prevent the extinction of Tigers by curbing demand in the country that was historically the world's largest consumer of Tiger parts. In compliance with the Resolutions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the ban has virtually eliminated the domestic market for Tiger products in traditional medicines.

"In the early 1990s, we feared that Chinese demand for Tiger parts would drive the Tiger to extinction by the new millennium. The Tiger survives today thanks in large part to China's prompt, strict and committed action," said Steven Broad, Executive Director of TRAFFIC. "To overturn the

ban and allow any trade in products from captive-bred Tigers would waste all the efforts that China has invested in saving wild Tigers. It would be a catastrophe for Tiger conservation."

The report resulted in wide international media coverage of China's Tiger trade. One thousand copies of the report have been distributed to key partners in China and abroad, and will be widely distributed at the Fourteenth Conference of Parties to CITES, to be held in the Netherlands in June 2000.

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### Consumers as partners

## Building consumer awareness amongst Taiwan's tourists

Travelling abroad is becoming increasingly popular in Taiwan, with tourists purchasing souvenirs made from wild animals and plants. To raise awareness amongst tourists that many wild animal and plant species are becoming rare and endangered and are under strict protection, TRAFFIC has developed a short video and brochure aimed at increasing awareness of wildlife trade issues.

The brochure offers consumers information on species including primates, Tigers, bears, rhinos, musk deer, birds, tortoises, sea turtles, crocodiles, snakes, lizards, seahorses and their products, which are protected by law and which require permits for import and export. One hundred thousand copies of the brochure will be distributed to travel agents and airlines throughout Taiwan.

The 60-second video has been produced using 3D animation. It illustrates in a humorous and simple way how people can help wildlife by not buying certain endangered wildlife products when traveling abroad. The film will be shown by airlines on international flights departing Taiwan as well as distributed to high schools in Taiwan.

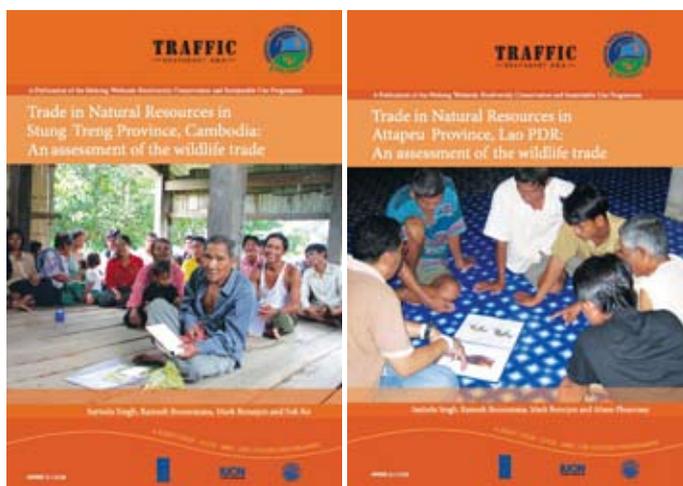
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One hundred thousand copies of a TRAFFIC brochure aimed at raising awareness of wildlife trade issues amongst tourists are being distributed to travel agents and airlines throughout Taiwan.

## TRAFFIC assesses methods to link biodiversity conservation and livelihoods in Lao PDR, Cambodia

## Senior CITES Secretariat officer John Sellar meets with NGOs and government authorities in Beijing



Two new TRAFFIC reports offer an overview of the trade of natural resources in Lao PDR and Cambodia.

In anticipation of CoP14 to be held in the Netherlands beginning June 3, 2007, senior CITES Secretariat officer, John Sellar, met with Chinese authorities and international NGOs on March 29, 2007, to learn more about the current situation of trade in Tigers and elephants in China.

Participants included representatives of China's State Forestry Administration, the China Wildlife Conservation Association (CWCA), the China Arts and Crafts Association (CACA), the China CITES Scientific Authority and CITES Management Authority, as well as representatives of TRAFFIC, Conservation International (CI), and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW).

At the meeting, TRAFFIC gave a presentation on its recent Tiger market surveys in China as well as distributing the recently published TRAFFIC report *Taming the Tiger Trade: China's Markets for Wild and Captive Tiger Products Since the 1993 Domestic Trade Ban*.

CI discussed their public awareness projects in Tibetan communities, and IFAW presented information from a recent survey of illegal products for sale in China's Tiger farms. A representative of CACA spoke about China's ivory carving industry.

Discussions included consideration of why Japan may be approved to buy ivory stockpiles, while China may not. Some participants emphasized that ivory carving is a long-time Chinese tradition dating back thousands of years. Following this theme, participants also discussed whether or not the use of Asian big cat skins in Tibetan clothing is a tradition or a fashion trend, along with possible solutions for dealing with privately owned Asian big cat skins.

After the meeting, Mr. Sellar travelled to the Tibet Autonomous region to see first-hand China's trade in Tiger skins and to Guilin to visit one of China's Tiger farms.

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Trade in elephant and Tiger products, such as this Tiger skin used to trim traditional Tibetan clothing, was the main subject of discussion during a recent visit to China by the CITES Secretariat. © TRAFFIC

As a contribution to the IUCN Mekong River Basin Wetland Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme (MWBSP), TRAFFIC conducted field studies in two demonstration sites located in Lao PDR and Cambodia to investigate trade in natural resources. In addition, the field studies sought to identify economic, ecological and social factors that influence local patterns of trade in natural resources.

The findings have been published in two separate reports which offer an overview of the trade of natural resources, including fish, wildlife (terrestrial and aquatic vertebrates aside from fish), and non-timber forest products in Lao PDR and Cambodia.

'The studies undertaken in the provinces of Attapeu, Lao PDR and Stung, Cambodia represent an innovative approach aiming to explore patterns of natural resource extraction and trade and the potential importance that this trade has for meeting the subsistence needs of local communities,' said Sulma Warne, Co-ordinator of TRAFFIC's work in the Greater Mekong subregion.

The information revealed the types of resources being traded, trade routes, trade dynamics (e.g. networks, prices, volumes), trends in trade over time and regulations and current management practices. In terms of trade patterns, the research identified that market access is a key determinant of trade patterns. This emphasises the growing concern that ongoing road improvements in Attapeu and Stung Treng are facilitating an expansion of trade in natural resources from the demonstration sites.

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Promoting government action to protect the region

## TRAFFIC works to improve wildlife enforcement in India

Lack of adequate capacity has been perceived as a major handicap for India's Forest Department and other enforcement agencies engaged in curbing wildlife crime and illegal trade across the country. To address this challenge, on March 12, 2007, TRAFFIC India organised a one-day workshop in Delhi to assess the training needs of wildlife enforcers.

Participants included representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, the State Forest Department, the Customs Bureau, the Central Bureau of Investigation, State Police, Army and other enforcement agencies.

As a first step, the workshop aimed to assess the training needs for various levels across enforcement agencies. The next step will be to develop appropriate training modules and an enforcement handbook for field practitioners that addresses the present scenario of wildlife crime and illegal trade in the country and surrounding regions.

The workshop was chaired by Sri Vinod Rishi, former Director General of the Wildlife Preservation, Govt. of India and Director of the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy. Ravi Singh, Secretary General and CEO of WWF India gave an overview of WWF India, while Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India, introduced TRAFFIC India and the objectives of the workshop.

Participants discussed linkages of wildlife criminals and the role of various agencies to check such offences. The need for various enforcement agencies to work together was emphasized.

The workshop resulted in the identification and prioritisation of various subjects and areas to be taken up for future training aimed at various organisations to improve their capacity to fight wildlife crime. The workshop will also help in the development of a Wildlife Enforcement Handbook presently being undertaken by TRAFFIC India.

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A TRAFFIC workshop in Delhi assesses the training needs of wildlife enforcers in India. © TRAFFIC

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the wildlife trade monitoring network

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