



# DISPATCHES

April 1998

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## Assistance under way for sturgeon trade controls

TRAFFIC is assisting preparations to help ensure international trade controls are implemented effectively for sturgeon and sturgeon products, such as caviar and meat.

As of 1 April 1998, all sturgeon and sturgeon products in international trade must have special documents under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

CITES member countries decided in June 1997 to list 23 species of sturgeon in Appendix II of the Convention, however they delayed the effective date of the listing to allow member countries adequate time to prepare. The remaining four species of sturgeon were already covered under CITES, two of them under CITES, two of them under Appendix I which bans international commercial trade.

Experts believe world populations of sturgeon may have already declined by up to 70 per cent. Today, only four species in the Caspian Sea provide up to 90 per cent of the world's caviar supply. While the CITES monitoring and control system could contribute to the long-term survival of Assistance under way for sturgeon trade controls

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TRAFFIC Europe, which produced the 1996 report *Sturgeons of the Caspian Sea and the International Trade in Caviar*, has comprehensive plans to assist. Some components are under way while others still need funding assistance.

Among the activities under way is the frequent dissemination of updated information on the implications of the Appendix II listing. For example, a booklet about CITES implementation for these fish and their products in the European Union has been developed and will soon be published.

TRAFFIC Europe has also collected information on the identification of sturgeons and sturgeon products and reviewed availability and application of forensic identification techniques. This is important because in order to implement a CITES listing properly, enforcement authorities need to be able to determine the species from which any product originated.

A uniform marking system could help, and CITES Parties have already called for the exploration of such a system. In January, TRAFFIC Europe participated in the *First Meeting on Conservation of Sturgeons and on Enforcement Aspects of their Inclusion in Appendix II of CITES*, which recommended this type of system include such details as the species' scientific name, the country and basin of origin, and the harvest year. The meeting was held in Moscow and convened by the CITES Secretariat. A full report will be published in *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, the journal of the TRAFFIC Network.

In North America, where the USA in particular has long been a significant consumer of caviar, TRAFFIC North America will co-host a *Symposium on the Harvest, Trade and Conservation of North American Paddlefish and Sturgeon* in Tennessee in May.

The symposium, co-hosted by the Southeast Aquatic Research Institute and the Tennessee Aquarium, aims to convene representatives of state and federal fisheries, industry, and non-governmental organisations to discuss the listing and other issues likely to affect populations of North American sturgeon and paddlefish.

The meeting will provide a timely opportunity to discuss issues related to the long-term sustainability of these fish in North America, which is also a producer of caviar from both wild and farm-raised sturgeon.

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# Moving into new media...

Information about TRAFFIC activities around the globe is now available on the World Wide Web, following the launch of a TRAFFIC Network web site in November.

The web site, [www.traffic.org](http://www.traffic.org), includes details about the Network's purpose and priorities as well as updates on recent and ongoing projects and investigations.

Development of the site was identified as a priority in the strategy and action plan that guides the TRAFFIC Network's approach to communications.

The World Wide Web presents both a new and innovative means for TRAFFIC to further share information about the Network and its findings with those who can make a difference to policies and programmes on wildlife in trade.

The new TRAFFIC Network site also complements existing information about TRAFFIC on the web sites of other organisations, our partners and the web sites maintained by TRAFFIC East Asia-Taipei and TRAFFICEast Asia-Japan.



The TRAFFIC East Asia-Taipei site, [Wildlife on the Web \(WOW\)](#), was launched in September 1996 and has had at least 24 000 visitors. The Chinese-language site features articles on wildlife trade and other conservation issues of interest to Taiwan and the region.

Efforts to further develop the site received a significant boost in October when Liang Yi Cultural Undertakings Co. Ltd. held an exhibition of wildlife art in Taipei. The exhibition included a charity auction to benefit WOW.

The art works combined traditional Chinese embroidery techniques in wildlife paintings by four noted British wildlife artists: Ray Harris-Ching, Simon Combes, Matthew Hillier, and Alan Hunt.

The exhibition culminated in the auction conducted by Sotheby's with proceeds of NT\$500 000 (US\$17 500) going to support WOW.

TRAFFIC East Asia-Japan launched its [web site](#) in November 1996. The Japanese-language site features the newsletter produced by the office on wildlife trade issues.

**Visit the TRAFFIC sites:**

<http://www.traffic.org/>

<http://wow.org.tw/>

<http://twics.com/~trafficj/>

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## ...and new geographical regions

TRAFFIC USA marked the start of the new year by expanding its area of responsibility to the other two countries of **North America**: Canada and Mexico. The move included a change of name to TRAFFIC North America, addition of a TRAFFIC representative in Canada and plans to initiate a trade research programme in Mexico.

The three North American countries are all major players on the international wildlife market. In addition, while all three countries have strong legislation controlling wildlife trade, there are still significant enforcement problems that impede the effectiveness of this legislation. In Canada, important moves have been made in recent years to improve capacity to effectively monitor and regulate wildlife trade. However, comprehensive wildlife trade legislation came into effect only in 1996 and the Canadian government now faces the challenge of effectively enforcing the legislation's many provisions.

"There is much to learn about the dynamics of wildlife trade in Canada, and bringing Canada into the fold of TRAFFIC's expertise and experience in these issues will improve Canada's stewardship of its wildlife resources and those of other jurisdictions," said Nathalie Chalifour, the new National Representative for TRAFFIC North America-Canada based in Ontario at WWF Canada.

TRAFFIC is also exploring the possibility of establishing presences in **Central America**; **South America**; and **West and Central Africa**. Studies of the feasibility of such a move have been conducted for each region, and TRAFFIC is now seeking funding to proceed.

- Central America has long been recognised as a significant producer, consumer, exporter and transshipper of wild plants and animals, ranging from parlor palms to iguanas. Illicit trade is thought to be substantial.
- In South America, the use and trade in wildlife and wildlife products through, within and from the region is significant. However, quantitative information on trade volumes and the impact upon the species in question is often poor to non-existent.
- In West and Central Africa, wildlife trade is very large and has a significant impact upon numerous species. Of greatest concern is the rapidly increasing exploitation of the rich forestry and timber resources of the Congo basin.

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# Need for further research into Tiger bone and musk substitutes agreed

By Judy Mills, Director, TRAFFIC East Asia

Delegates from around the world came to Hong Kong in December 1997 to discuss substitutes for Tiger bone and musk in traditional East Asian medicine (TEAM), with the aim of taking commercial pressure off the Tiger and musk deer while not endangering the future of TEAM.

More than 110 participants from 16 countries and territories attended *The First International Symposium on Endangered Species Used in Traditional East Asian Medicine: Substitutes for Tiger Bone and Musk*, which was organized by TRAFFIC East Asia and the Chinese Medicinal Material Research Centre of The Chinese University of Hong Kong.



Photo credit: Michael J. B. Green

The substitutes symposium came at the suggestion of traditional Chinese medicine specialists who attended an international symposium on TCM and wildlife conservation co-hosted by TRAFFIC East Asia and the Hong Kong Agriculture and Fisheries Department in 1995.

While discussion during the 1995 event was sometimes acrimonious, the 1997 symposium underscored a consensus between TEAM specialists and wildlife conservationists about the need for substitutes for medicines from animals and plants that are or may be in trouble in the wild. As important, both TEAM representatives and conservationists voiced their desire to continue the new dialogue for the sake of endangered species and the traditional medicine industry.

Also of significance was the fact that two of the main sponsors of the substitutes symposium were Asia-based TEAM companies, while the other two main sponsors represented wildlife conservation interests - a sign of the partnership emerging between members of the medicinal community and conservationists. The Rufford Foundation was the prime sponsor and patron of the symposium.

The agenda featured presentations from TEAM researchers about possible substitutes for Tiger bone and musk; Tiger and musk deer experts on the current status of the animals in the wild; conservation groups working to enlist TCM users in conservation measures; and from specialists in marketing to Asian consumers.

Tiger bone was chosen as a topic for the symposium because of the Tiger's highly endangered status, while musk was chosen because of its importance to TEAM and because the musk deer is vulnerable but not yet endangered in the wild.

Owing to the fact that the Tiger now may number as few as 5000 in the wild because of habitat destruction and over-hunting, international trade in Tiger parts is banned. In addition, China removed Tiger bone from its official pharmacopoeia and banned trade in medicines containing Tiger bone in 1993.

The bone of a wild rodent, a mole rat *Mysospalax baileyi* or *sailong*, is one of the most promising substitutes to replace Tiger bone under research at this time, according to the presenters. In fact, there is a new *sailong*-bone wine being marketed in mainland China for some of the same purposes Tiger-bone wine was once used. The bones of dogs, cows, goats and other domestic animals were discussed, as were combinations of herbs and bones.

While medicinal properties of lynx and leopard bone are being researched, their status in the wild and under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) would disqualify them as Tiger bone substitutes.

Musk, which is taken from the scent gland of male musk deer *Moschus spp.*, is used in some 300 TEAM prescriptions, in western homeopathic medicine and expensive perfumes. International trade in the musk from some populations is allowed under a system of CITES permits.



photo:  
Michael J B Green

Pods of a male musk deer

However, the annual demand for musk in China alone is estimated to be 500-1000 kilos, which would require the glands from at least 100 000 deer. While it has been estimated that some 700 000 musk deer remain in the wild, no one knows how long these species can withstand the current levels of hunting to meet the commercial demand for musk.

One presenter from mainland China said that China had harvested 2000 kilos of musk each year from its own musk deer populations in the 1950s and 1960s, but that amount had fallen to 500 kilos annually in the 1980s due to

declining musk deer populations. By the 1990s, very little of China's musk needs could be met from its own musk deer herds.

The three main musk substitutes under consideration in China at this time come from the Muskrat *Ondatra zibethicus*; two civet species, *Viverra zibetha* and *Viverricula indica*; and from synthetic materials, one speaker said.

IUCN/SSC Deer Specialist Group member Michael Green, who is considered to be one of the world's foremost authorities on musk deer, told the delegates that the harvesting of musk without killing the deer may be a viable option to provide real musk while providing incentives for local people to protect the deer and its habitat. However, he noted that this option would require strict regulatory systems to guard against over-exploitation.

TEAM researchers who spoke emphasized that they must find substitutes that are not simply similar but identical in effect to Tiger bone and musk. Other presenters addressed the challenge of getting both practitioners and consumers to accept substitutes once they are proven effective.

Successful substitutes would have to be effective, low-cost and without side effects. In addition, substitutes must not endanger other plants and animals in the wild. For example, while the mole rat or *sailong* is considered to be a pest species in parts of China and may number up to two million in total, some populations have declined to the point where they are considered rare. In addition, the conservation implications of harvesting large numbers for medicinal use have yet to be fully explored.

One TEAM representative who spoke during a round-table discussion at the end of symposium said he had once believed that wildlife conservationists were trying to "kill" the TEAM industry. Now, he said, he understands that the survival of TEAM is inextricably linked to wildlife conservation initiatives. At the same time, conservationists were heard saying that the symposium left them with a new understanding of TEAM and the importance of enlisting TEAM interests in the initiatives to conserve wild species.

The organizers hope the partnership recognised between TEAM representatives and wildlife conservationists during the December symposium will ultimately help save the Tiger from extinction, and prevent the musk deer and other wild species of medicinal value from going the way of the Tiger.

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# Tiger, rhinoceros medicines readily available in North America

TRAFFIC is recommending that the Canadian, US and Chinese governments increase law enforcement and take other measures to help stop illegal international trade in Tiger and other endangered species medicines.

The action follows publication of a new TRAFFIC North America report documenting the ready availability in both Canada and the USA of products claiming to contain Tiger, rhinoceros and other endangered species.

Of the products with manufacturing information on the label, all were labelled as having been manufactured in China, despite that country's 1993 ban on the manufacture and export of Tiger and rhinoceros-based medicines.

The report, *While Supplies Last: The Sale of Tiger and Other Endangered Species Medicines in North America, 1996-1997* documents the findings of TRAFFIC surveys in the Chinese communities of Toronto, Vancouver, Atlanta, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco and Seattle.

The report's release came only one week before the start of the Year of the Tiger in the Chinese lunar calendar. This year also marks the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), under which international trade in all Tigers and their parts and derivatives is banned.

Of the 110 shops surveyed, 43 per cent offered Tiger-bone products for sale, including wines, plasters and manufactured medicines. In total, 50 per cent of the shops offered for sale medicines claiming to contain Tiger, rhinoceros or Leopard products.

As CITES member countries, both Canada and the USA prohibit import of Tiger, rhinoceros and other endangered species products. In addition, legislation in both countries prohibits domestic commercial trade. However, prosecutions of those selling these illegally imported products are few, if any,



Photo: I. Ledgerwood

because the burden of proving the products actually contain the species rests with the government. Doing so is difficult. For example, to date forensic tests are unable to detect the presence of ground up Tiger bone. Once these products get past the enforcement net at the borders, the market flourishes.

The widespread availability of these medicines in North America illustrates the need for Canada and the USA to develop national strategies to address illegal trade in such medicines.

TRAFFIC also recommends that the USA and Canada adopt legislation to prohibit the import, export and sale of products claiming to contain endangered species, whether or not these products actually contain the species in question. In March 1998, Canada introduced a regulatory proposal with labelling provisions. The process began with public consultations. The US Legislature is also considering adopting labelling legislation. Such legislation was recommended as an action for all countries at both the ninth and tenth CITES meetings.

Action must also come from China. Despite the ban, TRAFFIC has found such medicines for sale around the globe and in China itself. China is best placed to lead a global investigation of the true origin of these products. To help, TRAFFIC has provided the names of manufacturers found during the course of the investigations.

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# CITES and African Elephants

## *The decisions and next steps explained*

*Several decisions regarding African Elephants and trade in elephant products were taken in June 1997 at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. These decisions are far-reaching and there is no doubt that elephant conservation has entered a new era. The decisions have also raised a number of important questions addressed in this briefing by Tom Milliken, Director of TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa.*



Photo: Nina Marshall/TRAFFIC

### **Was the African Elephant transferred to Appendix II?**

No. Effective 18 September 1997, only the African Elephant populations of Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe will be in Appendix II. The African Elephant populations of 34 other African countries remain in Appendix I, as does the Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus*.

### **Does this mean that Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe can immediately trade ivory and other elephant products?**

Beginning 18 September 1997, all three countries may export sport hunting trophies for non-commercial purposes and live elephants to "appropriate and acceptable destinations". Zimbabwe will also be able to export elephant hides, and leather goods and ivory carvings for non-commercial purposes. Non-commercial purposes means, for example, curios purchased by tourists as personal effects. Zimbabwe was the only one of the three proponent countries to request such trade.

In regard to the limited resumption of trade in raw ivory as agreed by the CITES Parties, it will not be allowed to take place until at least 21 months from the date of the Harare decision, and only then under agreed quotas and if specific criteria and conditions are met and certified by the CITES Standing Committee. The Standing Committee is the executive body of the Convention made up of government representatives from each region of the world. The

earliest this trade in raw ivory could take place would be 18 March 1999.

### **What are the conditions which need to be met before exports of raw ivory can resume?**

The most important conditions call for the remedy of deficiencies in enforcement and control measures identified by the CITES Panel of Experts in the three African countries and in Japan; the support and commitment of the relevant range states to international co-operation in law enforcement; and the establishment of an international reporting and monitoring system to track illegal hunting of elephants and illegal trade in elephant products.



Photo: Jorgen B. Thomsen

The CITES Standing Committee must ensure that all of the conditions have been met, and establish a mechanism whereby trade in ivory can be halted and the African Elephant populations of the three countries can be returned to Appendix I in the event of non-compliance with the agreed conditions or a proven escalation in illegal hunting of elephants and/or trade in elephant products due to the resumption of trade.

The three African countries must also withdraw their reservations to the 1989 Appendix I listing of the African Elephant. A reservation is an official objection allowed under the terms of the Convention.

### **If these conditions are met, how much ivory can each country export?**

The quota for Botswana was set at 25.3 tonnes, for Namibia at 13.8 tonnes, and for Zimbabwe at 20 tonnes. This is the maximum volume of ivory eligible for export. These quotas are regarded as experimental, and the impact of their export will be closely monitored. Any subsequent export of raw ivory would need the approval of a two-thirds majority of CITES member countries at a future Conference of the Parties. The next meeting of the Conference of the Parties will be held in November 1999 in Bali, Indonesia.

Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe have agreed to restrict exports to raw ivory of certifiable national origin which has been marked and registered in accordance with CITES procedures. Ivory which was confiscated or is of unknown origin will not be eligible for export.

### **Can the ivory be purchased by anyone and exported anywhere in the world?**

No. Japan has been designated as the only country that can receive exports of raw ivory from Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe. Shipping to any other destinations will be prohibited. Japan was selected by the three African countries as the sole importer not only because it is a traditional market for ivory, but also because ivory products produced by Japanese manufacturers can all be consumed nationally without leaving the country. Thus, the re-export of worked ivory products to other destinations can be prevented, which simplifies trade monitoring and eliminates a potential avenue for illegal trade to develop. Indeed, it was a condition of the transfers to Appendix II that Japan prohibit export or re-export of any ivory for commercial purposes.

### **Are there any other safeguards in place to ensure that illegal ivory will not filter into the system and that elephant conservation benefits?**

Yes. In addition to the conditions noted above, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe have also agreed to restrict the sale of ivory to a single, government-controlled centre in each country, and to export all purchased ivory in a single annual shipment from each country through the most direct route possible to Japan. All countries have further pledged to allow independent monitoring of the sale, packing and shipping process to ensure compliance with all conditions. Finally, all three countries have promised that all net revenues from the sale of ivory will be directed back into elephant conservation for use in monitoring, research, law enforcement, other management expenses or community-based conservation programmes within elephant range.

### **What did the CITES Parties agree with respect to stocks of ivory held by other African Elephant range states?**

Elephant ivory continues to accumulate in most range states for a variety of reasons. TRAFFIC and the CITES Secretariat have estimated that more than 470 tonnes of legal ivory is held by government or private individuals. In 1994, the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties mandated that African Elephant range states begin a dialogue process and try to resolve the issue of Africa's growing stocks of ivory. As a result, representatives of the range states met to discuss African Elephant conservation issues, first in Senegal and then in Zimbabwe. At the June 1997 CITES meeting in Harare, the CITES member countries accepted a subsequent proposal from these range states to allow for the once-off purchase for non-commercial purposes of government stocks of ivory. The ivory, however, must be declared to the CITES Secretariat within 90 days of the end of the CITES conference. After this 18 September 1997 deadline, TRAFFIC has been mandated by the Parties to undertake an independent audit of all declared stocks of ivory.

## **What will happen to the ivory which the range states declare to the CITES Secretariat?**

Although the precise mechanism and many of the details need to be determined by the CITES Standing Committee, the basic idea is for donor countries and organizations to step forward and purchase the ivory for non-commercial purposes. This means that the ivory could not be re-sold in any form and most likely would be destroyed. Disposal of such stocks of ivory would eliminate the security problems and financial liabilities that ivory stocks currently pose to African governments responsible for their safekeeping.

## **If that happens, who will get the money and how much will they get?**

The CITES decision explicitly requires that range states direct any revenues generated from this once-off disposal of ivory stocks into conservation trust funds in each country to support conservation, monitoring, capacity-building and local community-based conservation programmes. In this way, the disposal of such ivory stocks will directly generate resources for the conservation of African Elephants. The precise details of how much money could be generated by such a scheme, including the price for the ivory, remain to be worked out. Ultimately, it will depend on the response of the donor community. The CITES decision specifically notes that the donor community previously failed to fund the Elephant Conservation Action Plans that all range states had produced at the urging of donor countries and conservation organizations following the 1989 listing of the African Elephant in Appendix I. It is hoped that this initiative will be more successful.

## **Will all of this attention on ivory stocks and the eventual resumption of even a limited ivory trade endanger other populations of elephants?**

Some degree of illegal killing of elephants has continued in many range states since 1989 when the ivory trade ban was enacted. While poaching is at a lower level than prior to the ban, in some countries, the illegal off take may have increased in recent years due to a variety of factors, such as reduction in funding for anti-poaching measures and the number of enforcement personnel in the field. Whether or not the recent decisions taken at the CITES conference will further stimulate illegal killing of elephants remains to be seen, but such concerns need to be, and have been, taken seriously. Before any trade in ivory can commence, the CITES Parties have committed themselves to establish a comprehensive international monitoring system to track illegal trade in ivory throughout the world and the illegal killing of elephants in range states.

## **How will the monitoring system work?**

The CITES Parties recognised TRAFFIC's Bad Ivory Database System (BIDS) as "the appropriate instrument for measuring the pattern and scale of illegal trade in ivory and other elephant products". BIDS was independently developed by TRAFFIC in 1992 to hold records of ivory seizures and confiscations that have occurred anywhere in the world since 1989. Already, through TRAFFIC's own efforts, BIDS contains more than 4,150 records, indicating that some 100 tonnes of ivory has been seized in over 40 countries worldwide since 1989. Now, all CITES Parties will be obliged to routinely provide data on ivory seizures to TRAFFIC, a development which will greatly enhance data collection and make BIDS an even more effective tool for monitoring illegal trade in elephant products on a global basis.

There is, however, no standardised monitoring system to measure current levels and trends of illegal elephant killing in African and Asian elephant range states. The CITES Parties mandated that such a system be established, and the African and Asian Elephant Specialist Groups of IUCN's Species Survival Commission and TRAFFIC are charged with developing a uniform reporting protocol and database. The monitoring system will not only focus on the number of elephants being illegally killed, but also attempt to measure the effort and resources being applied to protection and detection in the field, as well as other factors that influence elephant mortality such as civil strife, the flow of illegal arms and ammunition, drought and the loss of habitat. The major challenge for such a system will be to assess the true relationship between any illegal killing of elephants and the international ivory trade.

## **Taken as a whole, will the various decisions made at the CITES conference improve the conservation of African Elephants?**

There is little doubt that far-reaching decisions were made at the CITES conference, and that elephant conservation has entered a new era. While there appears to be broad commitment, both within and outside of Africa, to make the CITES decisions work to the benefit of elephant conservation, these new developments will need to be carefully monitored and evaluated to ensure their success. There is tremendous potential to put African Elephant conservation on a far more equitable footing with a broader range of options designed to generate substantial revenues for conservation purposes. At the same time, the mandate to establish far-reaching and effective programmes for monitoring the impact of the CITES decisions is also a major step forward, and a sign of the Convention's maturity. And finally, the African Elephant range states dialogue process will continue, providing a ready forum for all stakeholders to share their experiences in facing the challenge. There is an inherent element of risk in charting new directions, but the fact that the situation will be subject to a thorough review during the next two years and at the next CITES Conference of the Parties should ensure that if problems do arise, elephant populations would not decline seriously before corrective

measures could be taken in an expedient manner.

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# The Decisions

In June 1997, the CITES Parties agreed to:

- transfer the African Elephant populations of Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe from Appendix I - the highest level of protection under CITES- to Appendix II, which allows international trade under a system of permits;
- allow all three countries to export elephant sport hunting trophies for non-commercial purposes, and live elephants, beginning September 18, 1997;
- allow Zimbabwe to export elephant hides and leather goods and ivory carvings for non- commercial purposes, beginning on the same date;
- allow a one-time export of ivory stocks from these three countries to Japan in 1999, but only if specific and strict conditions are first met; and
- under a specific procedure, allow for one-time registration for non-commercial disposal of ivory stocks held by African countries with elephants.

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# Next steps: action in the event of problems

In March 1998, the 40th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee agreed that in the event of non-compliance with the decisions' conditions or escalation of illegal hunting or trade as a result of resumption of legal trade in raw ivory, it will ask the CITES Depository Government - Switzerland - to propose to transfer one or more of the three elephant populations back to Appendix I unless the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties is less than six months away; and request Botswana, Japan, Namibia and Zimbabwe to immediately cease authorising commercial trade in raw ivory.

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## Next steps: ivory stocks

TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa recently finished auditing the ivory stocks of 15 African countries participating in a one-off procedure under CITES for the non-commercial disposal of such stocks to benefit elephant conservation in their countries.

Under the procedure, which was established by the Parties in June 1997, only countries with African Elephant populations can participate and first they had to declare their ivory stocks to the CITES Secretariat by 18 September 1997. The decision also called for TRAFFIC, in co-operation with the Secretariat, to undertake an independent audit of each declared ivory stock.

The audits followed a training workshop for consultants and staff convened in October by TRAFFIC in collaboration with the Kenya Wildlife Service. The workshop resulted in a standard methodology for the audits, which were conducted over a three-month period beginning in November 1997.

Upon finishing the audits, TRAFFIC determined that Togo's stocks were not eligible because they were held privately. All or part of the stocks declared by the other 14 countries were accepted, though privately held stocks in the Central African Republic and Sudan were excluded from the final total.

TRAFFIC presented the audit results to the CITES Standing Committee at its meeting in March. The Committee accepted the results and agreed that the representatives of the eligible countries should now discuss how they want to proceed.

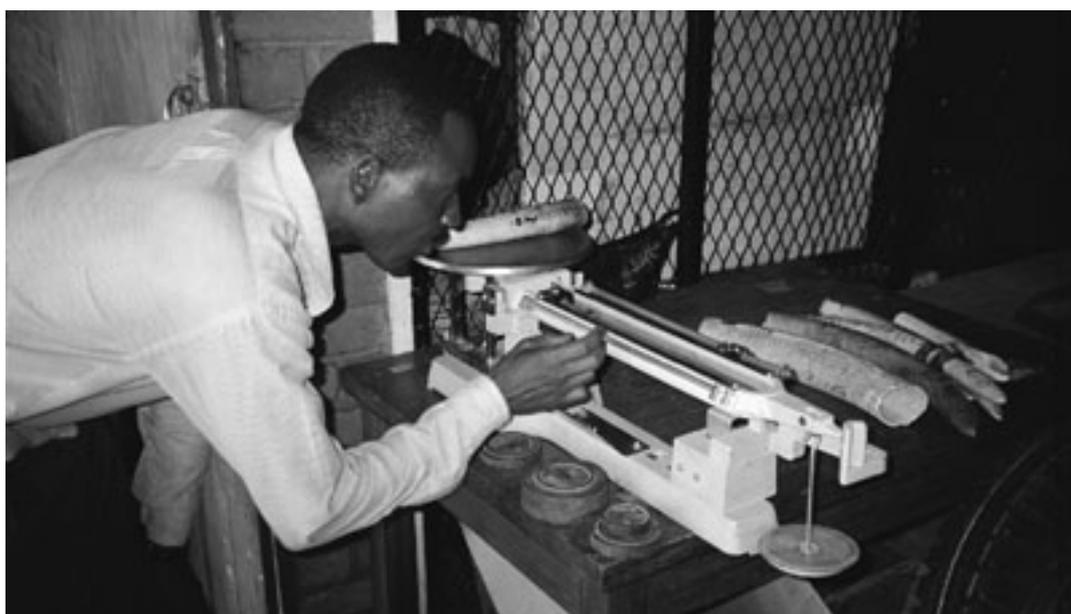


Photo: R. Barnett/TRAFFIC

The auditor's view in the stockrooms of Malawi (above) and Botswana (below). In total, the 14 countries' declared and audited ivory stocks now eligible for non-

commercial disposal comprise 39 947 ivory tusks and pieces.



Photo: R. Barnett/TRAFFIC

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## Next steps: monitoring

TRAFFIC and IUCN/SSC are moving ahead with establishment of systems to monitor the trade in elephant products and illegal killing of elephants, as mandated by the CITES decisions in 1997.

TRAFFIC and SSC presented a joint report to the CITES Standing Committee in March on how best to establish the systems.

To assist in developing the report, which was accepted by the Committee, TRAFFIC and SSC first convened a workshop of experts in December 1997 in Kenya. Further input was also sought within TRAFFIC and the SSC African and Asian Elephant Specialist Groups on issues raised during the workshop.

To meet the challenge posed by the decisions, TRAFFIC's Bad Ivory Database system will become the cornerstone of an expanded integrated information system called the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS). The primary means of collecting data will be through a standardised form on seizures to be distributed soon by the CITES Secretariat.

The monitoring system for illegal killing of elephants will have three components: a national reporting protocol for each range state, a representative sampling of specific sites within both African and Asian Elephant range states, and a verification process for anecdotal reports of elephant killing. Data for the system will come from a variety of sources, particularly a national reporting form being developed.

The systems' success will depend in part upon donors and others to help ensure that the needed resources are available for the systems and to enable CITES Parties to participate effectively.

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# Factfile: The medicinal trade in wildlife

*The medicinal trade in plants and animals is one of the TRAFFIC Network's top priorities for research and action during 1997-2000. The goal: to support conservation of wild plants and animals used for medicinal purposes through the collection and analysis of biological and trade data and the development and dissemination of information and advice on the medicinal trade.*

- The World Health Organization estimates that up to 80 per cent of the world's population relies on plant and animal-based medicines for their primary health care needs.
- Medicines made from wild species are used as remedies for a variety of health problems, from the common cold to cancer.
- The utilisation of wildlife medicinals is particularly widespread in developing countries where traditional medicines containing wild animals and plants are common.
- Wildlife-based traditional medicine systems include Muti medicine in Africa, Jamu medicine in Southeast Asia and Ayurvedic and Unani medicines on the Indian subcontinent. However, none is so widely practised as traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). TCM utilises more than 1000 plant and animal species, from bears to seahorses to orchids.
- Derivatives of wild plants and animals are not only widely used in traditional medicines. Today, they are increasingly valued as raw materials in the preparation of modern medicines and herbal preparations utilised around the globe.
- The demand for wildlife medicinal products is rising and is likely to continue to do so well into the 21st century, largely as a result of growing human populations and the increased popularity of natural remedies in the industrialised world.
- Rising demand for wildlife medicinals has led to increased and often unsustainable rates of over-exploitation.
- Faced with the combined pressures of increased exploitation and reduced habitat and numbers, a growing number of medicinal species are becoming threatened or in danger of extinction. These include all species of rhinoceros, Tigers, and American Ginseng.
- Although a great deal of information on the medicinal trade is available from published pharmacopoeias and ethnobiological studies, in most cases little is known regarding harvest and trade volumes, trade controls, market dynamics and the conservation impact.
- The importance and potential impact of the trade in medicinal species is increasingly receiving attention at the international level. Member countries of CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, have acknowledged that

many traditional medicines rely on wild species and called for work with medicinal communities to eliminate the use of endangered species and to develop awareness of the need to avoid over-exploiting others.

- Projects on wild plants and animals utilised as medicine are under way or planned by each of the seven regional TRAFFIC programmes and TRAFFIC International. These are many and varied, including broad reviews of specific uses to identify and predict possible threats and indicate possible solutions.

Photo: D. Gagnon/WWF



**American Ginseng *Panax quinquefolius***

*For nearly three centuries, the root of this herbaceous plant has been collected in the wild and exported mostly to East Asia, where it is processed for domestic and international use in traditional Chinese medicines. Among its many uses, the root of this plant is utilised as a tonic for the lungs, stomach, spleen and heart.*

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# Ayurvedic and Tibetan medicine study

A comprehensive project that aims to help sustain the medicinal plant resources of the Indian Subcontinent is planned by TRAFFIC India.

A key component will be an in-depth review of Ayurvedic and Tibetan medicine systems to identify sources of the plant material in use, market structures, trade dynamics and whether key species can sustain current medicinal demand.

The project is part of a package of TRAFFIC medicinal plant projects funded by Bundesministerium Für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit (BMZ) via WWF International to address dwindling medicinal plant resources and the effects on wild populations of plants and health care systems. The focus will be on work in geographical areas where medicinal plants are major but also potentially threatened raw materials of local health care systems.

The projects, all of which will be undertaken during 1998-2000, also include research and action to assist in the conservation of plant resources used in traditional medicine in East Asia and to support more effective management of the trade in South America's medicinal plants.

At the international level, efforts will promote attention to and action on medicinal plant trade issues.

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# Medicinal Plant trade in Europe: a symposium

Europe is one of the world's biggest consumers of medicinal and aromatic plants and plant parts, importing at least 120 000 tonnes annually. There is also significant domestic trade in and exports of Europe's medicinal and aromatic plants.

To foster needed discussions about the European trade, TRAFFIC is organising The First International Symposium on the Conservation of Medicinal Plants in Trade in Europe. One of the main goals will be to channel attention towards establishing long-term conservation strategies for wild medicinal plant species in trade.

The symposium, to be held 22-23 June at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in the UK, is being organised by TRAFFIC Europe in collaboration with WWF, the IUCN/SSC Medicinal Plant Specialist Group and Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Funding for the symposium has been kindly donated by the Rufford Foundation.

The event will include presentations of the findings from recent medicinal plant trade surveys in a number of European countries, such as Albania, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Hungary, Spain, the UK, and Turkey.

The findings of these studies will also be published as a regional overview in the TRAFFIC Species in Danger series that same month.

The symposium will be divided into five themes:

- the status of Europe's medicinal plant trade;
- from collectors to users;
- management regimes and regulations;
- conventions and international agreements; and
- workable solutions: options from the field.

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# **CITES at 25: a milestone for one of the world's largest conservation treaties**

This year marks a milestone for CITES: the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Convention.

CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, was first signed in 1973 by 21 countries. The Convention entered into force in 1975. Today, it has 143 member countries. The most recent signatories include Cambodia, Uzbekistan and Yemen.

Like any international agreement, the success of CITES can only be as good as the national measures taken by its member countries. With 30 000 plant and animal species and a range of commodities from live elephants to plant-derived medicinal preparations subject to CITES controls, CITES implementation and enforcement can present a considerable challenge.

International trade controls and therefore CITES are not a panacea to conservation problems, as evidenced by the precarious status of the Tiger - four of five species of which have been covered under the Convention since its founding. As few as 5000 Tigers may survive in the wild, where poaching for trade is just one of the factors causing population declines.

However, the Convention has played an integral role in helping to ensure that endangered species do not become extinct as a result of international trade. Despite its name, CITES also plays a critical role in regulating trade in other species that are not threatened with extinction but could become so if international trade went unchecked.

And there are success stories. Most notable are crocodilians, the revival of which is characterised as one of the greatest conservation success stories of the last quarter century and a dramatic demonstration of the effectiveness of CITES. In 1969, all 23 species were endangered or depleted or decreasing in numbers. Today, at least one-third of crocodilians can sustain a regulated commercial harvest and only four species are critically endangered.

In many cases, international trade controls applied to crocodilians have been accompanied by well managed ranching programmes. These CITES-approved programmes produce sustainably harvested hides for the international market, garnering the support of the reptile leather industry and governments while also helping to supplant illicit trade.

The effective implementation of CITES takes active participation and commitment by governments. It also takes understanding and co-operation from producers, traders and ultimately, even the consumers. The TRAFFIC Network remains committed to a wide range of activities in support of CITES, including research, technical advice, capacity building, enforcement training, and public awareness.

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# JEC Fund helps TRAFFIC

TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa has become the first TRAFFIC office to benefit from the JEC Fund - the Japan World Exposition Commemorative Fund-by receiving a 1997 Toyota RAV4 vehicle and a new Gestetner 2635 photocopy machine.

The JEC Fund was established after the extremely successful 1970 World Exposition in Osaka, Japan, the first such event in Asia. The exposition attracted more than 64 million visitors from around the world.

The JEC Fund supports a range of products addressing international goodwill, health, education, welfare and the conservation of nature.

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