

# TRAFFIC DISPATCHES

Number 15 November 2000

## A new focus for TRAFFIC's conservation programme

by Stephen Nash, Programme Director, TRAFFIC International

**T**RAFFIC's vision is that wildlife trade will be kept at sustainable levels, without damaging the integrity of ecological systems, so that it contributes to human needs, supports livelihoods and helps motivate commitments to the conservation of wildlife species and their habitats. Our mission is to ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature.

To help guide and focus our conservation work towards achieving these, the TRAFFIC Network has adopted a new three-year strategy covering the period from mid-2000 to mid-2003. This new strategy, based on TRAFFIC's strategic plan for 2000-2010, outlines objectives and targets

for four major conservation objectives addressing the relationship between wildlife trade and key biological and human concerns. These objectives are to reduce wildlife trade threats to threatened species, reducing threats to priority ecoregions for biodiversity conservation, and to the security of key wildlife resources for human needs, and promoting the need for international co-operation in regulating and managing wildlife trade.

### 1. Ensuring wildlife trade does not result in the endangerment of any wild animal and plant species.

Many species are under direct or indirect threat from trade. Others may become so in the near future. TRAFFIC is mindful of its specific role in informing decision makers about the impacts of trade on species and motivating efforts to guarantee the ecological sustainability of trade in wild species. TRAFFIC also works to identify and address indirect impacts of wildlife trade on biodiversity conservation, including researching the trade in potentially invasive species and the detrimental impacts of wildlife harvests on "non-target" species such as fisheries by-catch.

Over the next three years TRAFFIC aims to increase knowledge and awareness among government, industry, consumers and local communities about trade in threatened species and the direct and indirect impacts of this trade on wild populations and on biodiversity conservation.

Our work will encourage governments, industry, consumers and local communities to take appropriate



David Lawson/WWF-UK

Indian Tiger *Panthera tigris*

actions to reduce threats to these species. Our regional-based programmes will contribute to the development and implementation of trade monitoring systems and trade management plans for priority species. TRAFFIC will be evaluating local and national controls for threatened species in trade, and pushing to strengthen them.

Over the next three years TRAFFIC will focus its efforts on a number of priority species and taxonomic groups, including African and Asian Elephants, African and Asian Rhinoceroses, Tiger, marine turtles, sturgeons, tortoises and freshwater turtles, Tibetan Antelope, Whale Shark and other sharks, and Bigleaf Mahogany and other threatened tree species.

### 2. Ensuring wildlife trade does not threaten the integrity of priority ecoregions.

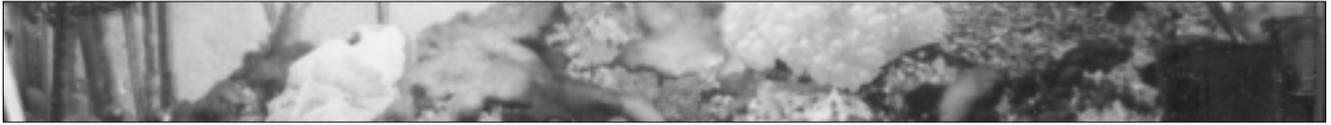
The world's conservation problems are being addressed at increasingly large bio-geographic scales. Many conservation efforts are now focusing on maintaining essential ecological processes and life support

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# WWF and TRAFFIC appeal to end illegal harvesting of native corals in Japan



Japanese native corals on display.

TRAFFIC East Asia-Japan

On August 2, 2000, WWF Japan and TRAFFIC East Asia-Japan presented an appeal to the Wildlife Department of the Environment Agency, the Fisheries Resources Department of the Fisheries Agency, and the fisheries divisions of the governments of Tokyo and 13 other prefectures. This appeal urged the recipients to take measures to prevent the illegal removal of coral growing around the Japanese coast. It was drawn up on the basis of a survey of the market for living corals collected from Japanese coastal waters and sold for ornamental aquarium purposes. The study was undertaken by TRAFFIC East Asia-Japan in cooperation with Mr. Takeshi Igarashi of Tohoku University School of Post Graduate Studies.

In 1999, TRAFFIC East Asia-Japan carried out telephone surveys of tropical fish shops and pet shops that advertise in aquarium hobbyist magazines and found that of the 78 stores surveyed, 45 stores claimed to stock living corals collected from Japanese coastal waters.

## New TRAFFIC office opens in Mexico

The TRAFFIC Network increased its size to 22 offices worldwide with the opening of the TRAFFIC North America-Mexico office in the beginning of September, 2000. The new office is co-located with WWF Mexico Programme Office in Mexico City.

Adrian Reuter joined the office to become the first National Representative of TRAFFIC North America-Mexico.

Most recently Adrian worked as a lecturer in the research, management and conservation of birds of prey at the National University of Mexico. Adrian has a long interest and involvement in wildlife trade-related activities and has also worked in the reptile field, among others.

TRAFFIC researchers visited tropical fish shops and pet shops in Tokyo and Kanagawa, and carried out site surveys and analysis aimed at identifying the coral species on sale at these stores and their origin.

Researchers found living corals on sale at 12 of the 16 stores visited, and the number of species sold at individual stores ranged from 2 to 60. The survey also found a wide variation in the retail price of corals, with the cheapest priced as low as 2,000 yen (approximately US\$20) and the most expensive selling for around 40,000 yen (approximately US\$390). On sale were species such as *Acropora pruinosa* and *Alveopora japonica*, which can be found on the shores of Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu.

It was also clear from the results that existing regulations in Japan governing coral collecting are inadequate. In order to prevent domestic trade in living corals from threatening the continued existence of native reef-building coral species, WWF and TRAFFIC in Japan propose that a number of steps be taken.

These steps include the prohibition of coral gathering in all prefectures where living corals are found. Secondly, coral species should also be added to the list of wild animals and plants under the Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. This listing would prohibit capture and transfer of coral species. In addition, specialists should determine the conservation status of species whose status is still unknown by carrying out follow-up field surveys. An English-language summary of the Japanese report is in preparation.

Akiko Ishihara, Programme Officer,  
TRAFFIC East Asia-Japan

## TRAFFIC staff news

### Welcome

Miriam van Gool has been appointed as the new National Representative of TRAFFIC Europe-Netherlands in August 2000. Miriam works also as Species Programme Head of WWF Netherlands.

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Elizabeth Scoggins has joined TRAFFIC International in the beginning of November 2000, replacing Celia Denton as the new Funding Development Officer. Most recently Elizabeth worked as Trust Fundraiser for Invalid Children's Aid Nationwide based in London, UK.

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### TRAFFIC Dispatches

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TRAFFIC is a joint programme of IUCN-The World Conservation Union and WWF\*-World Wide Fund for Nature. It aims to help ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature.

The TRAFFIC Network works in co-operation with the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

TRAFFIC Dispatches is published by TRAFFIC International to keep the Network's partners and supporters informed about our activities and accomplishments.

\* WWF is known as World Wildlife Fund in Canada and the USA.



# TRAFFIC hosts CITES Enforcement Training Workshop in Taipei

by Joyce Wu, Research Officer and Rita Chang, Administrative Officer, TRAFFIC East Asia-Taipei

Taiwan plays an important part in the global trade in plants. According to international trade data for the period 1992 to 1997, Taiwan ranked fifth in overall imports of medicinal and aromatic plants after Hong Kong, Japan, USA, and Germany. Taiwan is also an important exporter of plants such as artificially propagated orchids, with export volumes rivaling those of Thailand, the world's leading orchid exporter.

In order to strengthen awareness of plant conservation and trade issues among the relevant government agencies, TRAFFIC East Asia-Taipei hosted a three-day workshop on *CITES Enforcement Training Workshop – Plants*, from 27-29 September 2000, that was sponsored by Council of Agriculture (COA). More than fifty delegates from various government authorities participated, including delegates from the Board of Foreign Trade, Customs, the Quarantine Bureau, COA, and plant research institutes. Trainers included

experts from Taiwan as well as their colleagues from UK Customs (*see box article, right*), the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew, UK and TRAFFIC International.

The workshop, which was the fifth in a series of international CITES workshops held in Taiwan since 1995, focused on licensing and trade controls for plants, plant specimen identification, trade trends, and countering illegal trade. Providing useful tools to front-line enforcement staff was a principal objective of the workshop. In addition to lectures, the workshop also included practical exercises for participants to test their skills and to reinforce the knowledge provided in the lecture setting.

Overall, feedback from the participants was positive. Customs stated its intention to incorporate plant trade control issues in future training for Customs officers and the COA are planning to hold a similar workshop focusing on CITES-listed fauna next year.

## A trainer's perspective of the Workshop

You can never be certain of the success of any training workshop let alone one that is designed for a country with a very different culture and language; there are just too many unknowns. So how did I think it went? Well, good organisation is always a critical factor and, in TRAFFIC East Asia-Taipei, I can honestly say it couldn't have been bettered.

From the day we arrived to the day we left, their whole team worked tremendously hard late into the evenings to ensure that every small detail for the seminar was covered. This included a lot of last minute translation, obtaining of vast amounts of specimens and props for exercises and even acting (very realistically, I might add) as plant smugglers in the final exercise.

Active participation by the students is also crucial and a good judge on whether the trainers are getting their message across. In my fairly extensive experience of international training I can honestly say that I have never come across a more receptive group. They asked many searching questions throughout, performed enthusiastically in all the exercises, achieving high marks, and showed a general willingness to talk about problems they encountered in this area of work.

Of course, overall success can only be measured by how well the training is put into practice and whether the political will is there to ensure that enforcement of CITES is taken seriously. Only time will determine the first point. However from the high level discussions that took place with Deputy Director General of Customs Chen Mao-ting, there was a definite willingness shown to have closer working relationship with TRAFFIC Taipei. This can only bode well for the future.

Overall it was a very rewarding experience and I congratulate TRAFFIC East Asia-Taipei for producing such a well-run event.

*Charles Mackay MBE  
Senior Officer,  
CITES Enforcement Team  
Her Majesty's Customs and Excise  
Heathrow Airport, UK.*



Crawford Allan/TRAFFIC International

Group exercises are the key to good workshops - they break up the tutorials and give the delegates the opportunity to participate and share their experience. In the Taipei workshop this brought together representatives from a wide variety of agencies, working together to tackle stimulating problems set out in the varied exercises. In the picture, the delegates attempt to determine if the samples before them are of legal origin, based upon the scenario information supplied with each specimen.

# Over 20 organisations declare support for the conservation of natural medicinal resources

by Teresa Mulliken, Research & Network Development Manager, TRAFFIC International and Susanne Honnef, Medicine and Plants Officer, TRAFFIC Europe-Germany

## Joint Declaration for the Health of People and Nature

We, the signatories, declare herewith our joint interest in the conservation of natural medicinal resources:

Our future commitment to the health of people and nature shall entail an increasing contribution to the conservation of natural medicinal resources and shall not contribute to the overexploitation or endangerment of these resources.

To realise this, we will ...

...address the current lack of information on the trade in medicinal materials and pharmaceuticals of plant and animal origin by collecting and exchanging such information.

...to the best of our knowledge and ability, support the trade and use of products and raw materials of plant and animal origin that will not threaten the natural populations in the wild.

...aim for close co-operation between all stakeholders who share an ecological, social or economic interest in the conservation of natural medicinal resources.

...participate actively in the development and implementation of strategies that contribute to the sustainable utilisation of natural plant and animal resources.

Over 80 members of the commercial, conservation, government, health care and insurance sectors gathered at EXPO 2000 in Hannover, Germany on 13 October to participate in the symposium 'Medicinal Utilisation of Wild Species'. Convened by TRAFFIC Europe-Germany and WWF Germany, the symposium combined presentations and discussion on the use, trade and conservation issues affecting medicinal plant populations, and the people dependent on them for healthcare and livelihoods.

A key theme throughout the day was the need to address conservation concerns in a multi-disciplinary and collaborative manner. Over 20 participants demonstrated their support for such collaboration by signing a 'Joint Declaration for the Health of People and Nature'. Initial signatories included representatives of the phyto-pharmaceutical industry in Germany, practitioners' associations, the International Council for Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, WWF, IUCN and TRAFFIC. WWF Germany will serve as the depository for the Joint Declaration and, with TRAFFIC, will work to encourage and monitor its transformation from words into actions.

Each of the symposium's nine speakers highlighted specific characteristics and problems related to medicinal plant use and trade. Topics covered included a review of global, European and German medicinal plant use and trade and the related threats to medicinal plant species, and the need for more effective trade monitoring and conservation action. The importance of securing critical habitats for medicinal plants and other wild species was also brought forward. Such an approach is being pursued under WWF's "Global 200" campaign.

The importance of fully respecting benefit sharing and intellectual property rights associated with the use of medicinal plants was also stressed.



Miriam van Gool / TRAFFIC/WWF Netherlands

Panelists in the final session of the symposium at EXPO 2000.

Dr Uschi Eid, Parliamentary Secretary of the German Ministry of Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ), drew the attention to this issue and work supported by BMZ with regard to medicinal plants (see *TRAFFIC Dispatches* Number 12). A more holistic approach to healthcare was proposed, and an example given of how the medicinal plant industry can operate in a manner that ensures both environmental conservation and the quality of medicinal plant products. The closing presentation drew attention to the need for multi-sector partnerships in addressing conservation and other issues.

Although a wealth of information was provided, in his summary of the day's presentations, Steven Broad, Executive Director of TRAFFIC International, commented that the symposium raised nearly as many questions as it answered. "There are no simple means to address the interwoven issues of biodiversity conservation, benefit sharing, property rights and demands from local users, the health and commercial sectors. It is essential that different sectors follow up the results of this symposium and work together to address what will continue to be an urgent and complex set of conservation and development priorities."

For more information contact TRAFFIC Europe-Germany. For contact details see page 12.

# Studying the information needs of medicinal plant stakeholders in Europe

by Rolie Srivastava, Project Consultant, TRAFFIC Europe

In 1999 it was estimated that the world market for herbal remedies was worth approximately US\$20 billion with Europe leading at US\$7 billion, followed by Asia (US\$5.1), North America (US\$3.8) and Japan (US\$2.2 billion). Over the next two years, this market will continue to grow at a rate of approx. 8-10% per year according to the International Council for Medicinal and Aromatic Plants.

The growing demand and use of medicinal and aromatic plants threatens the resource base of many plants if they are continually extracted at unsustainable levels. One possible initiative, which could help to address this problem, would be to increase information exchange between different medicinal plant stakeholders.

For example, information on appropriate cultivation and harvesting methods could be shared with the industry sector to assist them in becoming more responsible partners in the medicinal and aromatic plant trade.

At the moment, relevant knowledge in Europe is scattered, difficult to access, and not geared towards long term conservation of wild plants. TRAFFIC Europe is addressing this information gap by conducting a feasibility study on the 'Establishment of a European Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Information Centre'. This study aims to assess the information needs of key medicinal plant stakeholders and to develop operational scenarios for the near future.

When established, the benefits of a European Medicinal Plant Information Centre could be far reaching. The centre could nurture a variety of activities including:

- acting as a resource and information centre for all stakeholders;
- collecting and disseminating medicinal plant conservation information;

- identifying information needs/gaps;
- providing information on regulations and policies for conservation and trade;
- promoting better practices in protecting and using medicinal plant resources; and
- providing updated and reliable data for the establishment of sound regulatory and management schemes for species traded commercially.

The feasibility study will be completed by December 2000 and TRAFFIC Europe plans to convene a meeting with key stakeholders early next year to discuss the scenarios and the next steps for establishing an information centre.



Dagmar Lange

Owing to habitat loss, there has been a decline in the number of many orchid populations throughout Europe. Today, Orchids are protected in most European countries and the family Orchidaceae is listed in Appendix II of CITES.  
Left: *Barlia robertiana*.

## Herbal Medicine Industry and conservationists meet in UK

As the European feasibility study continues, a separate but complementary initiative between a UK based herbal manufacturing company, Herbal Apothecary, and WWF-UK was launched in May this year.

Herbal Apothecary is committed to producing herbal products while encouraging ethical and sustainable approaches to growing and purchasing plant and herb material ([www.herbalapothecary.net](http://www.herbalapothecary.net)).

Herbal Apothecary together with WWF-UK organised an exploratory meeting between 20 key conservation groups and representatives from the herbal industry in the UK to discuss practical strategies for working together.

Presentations were given both by conservation groups, such as IUCN Medicinal Plants Specialists Group, Fauna and Flora International, and TRAFFIC Europe. British Herbal Medicine Association, Soil Association, National Institute of

Medical Herbalists and Medicinal Plants for Chinese Medicine among others were representing the industry.

The meeting also indicated a definite need and keen interest on both sides to work together on developing sustainable conservation strategies for medicinal and aromatic plants.

The meeting highlighted a need to share information between manufacturers, traders and conservation organisations, as well as to identify sustainable sources and a certification program.

These needs would invariably fall under the objectives of a European medicinal and aromatic plants information centre, if one was to be created. Another important point raised by the industry was the immediate need to promote self-regulation.

*For more information please contact the TRAFFIC Europe office. For contact details see page 12.*

# Mahogany matters

## TRAFFIC completes a market survey in the USA

The USA consumes more timber per capita than any other country in the world. Logs, lumber and other soft and hardwood products are imported to the country in amounts worth at least US\$13 billion annually. A small portion of the timber trade in the country is the one of American mahogany harvested in Latin America. However, the most traded species of the three American mahogany species, Big-leafed Mahogany *Swietenia macrophylla* constitutes a small, but very lucrative portion of timber trade, worth US\$56 million annually. Today the existence of Big-leafed Mahogany is threatened by an intensive and often illegal harvest that is driven by increasing demand from consumers in the USA and elsewhere.

Unless there is significant change, current harvest rates of Big-leafed Mahogany may make it yet another endangered and commercially exhausted species. The fate of Caribbean mahogany *Swietenia*

*mahogani* was a clear warning. Once it was heavily traded but is today extensively depleted.

In September 2000 TRAFFIC North America released a report titled “Mahogany Matters: The U.S. Market

for Big-Leafed Mahogany and its Implications for the Conservation of the Species” by Christopher S. Robbins. It reviews the scope and scale of the demand for big-leafed mahogany in the USA, as well as the conservation implications of such demand.

The report also includes an exhaustive analysis of global trade data along with a survey of mahogany importers, offering alternative options for improving species conservation. Big-leafed mahogany is exported from at least 14 Latin American countries and more than 120,000 cubic meters of the species enters international trade annually. Because of this international trade, it has also become a vital cornerstone to many of the national economies of Latin America.

### Consumer countries

Historically, the dominant markets for big-leafed mahogany have been Europe and North America. In recent years the USA has been by far the biggest consumer. In 1998, the USA imported 60 percent (75.5 cubic meters) and France 25 percent (31.6 cubic meters) of the big-leafed mahogany trade. Other importing countries in 1998 (in order of volume) included Canada, UK, Dominican Republic, Spain, Germany, Netherlands and, to lesser extent, several other European, Latin

More than 200 species of tropical hardwoods are imported into the USA from Africa, Asia, Oceania, Central and South America and the Caribbean. Mahogany, and particularly American mahogany, *Swietenia* spp. is considered one of most valuable and versatile tropical hardwoods. It is widely used by the furniture manufacturing industry in the USA. Left: Big-leafed Mahogany *Swietenia macrophylla* waiting to be shipped at Espinoza Sawmill in Madre de Dios, Peru.



Margaret Stern

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) trademark certifies that wood comes from forests that are managed in accordance with internationally endorsed principles and are harvested in an ecologically and socially responsible manner.



American and Caribbean countries.

Within the USA, the study shows that about 40 percent of big-leafed mahogany imports are destined for North Carolina, the furniture manufacturing centre of the USA, followed by Mississippi, Florida, Pennsylvania, Louisiana and California.

### A declining resource

The study reveals many indications of increasingly tight supplies of big-leafed mahogany within its range States. Mahogany has already been depleted in the Caribbean and Central America, moving the core of the harvest to the denser, tropical forests of South America - some of these areas being among the most biologically diverse regions of the world.

The study shows that Brazil, the biggest mahogany producer of the region, has decreased its export quotas in recent years, showing signs of increased concerns on exploitation and exportation also by government regulators. Still, despite the tighter controls, Brazilian mahogany continue to amount to half of all the mahogany trade destined for the leading consumer country outside Latin America, the USA. In Peru, there are indications that forests might be exploited rather than managed, as the distances from mahogany forests to mills continue to increase.

Furthermore, retail prices of mahogany are escalating rapidly, being 25 percent higher today than a decade ago. A reliance on substitute species, like African mahogany *Khaya* spp., is also growing.

Concerns about excessive levels of legal harvest are intensified even more by illegal exploitation of the species in the region, especially in Bolivia, Brazil and Peru. This illegal trade underscores the enforcement and management challenges which government officials are faced with in the range States.

### Steps forward

To overcome the current unsatisfactory trends in the mahogany trade, Latin America has improved national legislation for mahogany, invested in forest certification, convened regional management workshops and imposed logging pauses. Further, to date, Costa Rica, Bolivia, Brazil and Mexico have included mahogany populations in Appendix III of CITES. The re-establishment of a working group on mahogany at CITES COP11 in April 2000 has also prompted new challenges for future considerations of the harvest of and trade in the species.

The study urges the consumer States, headed by the USA, to support this development in the range States. It is crucial for consumers to demand for such mahogany products to carry the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) trademark. This trademark certifies that wood comes from forests that are managed in accordance with internationally endorsed principles and are harvested in an ecologically and socially responsible manner. Even though there are only two companies that are known to import solely FSC-certified big-leafed mahogany, the recent surveys and trends suggest that certified wood products are gaining increasing popularity in the USA.

The report also urges the USA government to increase import tariffs on minimally processed mahogany from Latin America that currently is exempt. On the other hand, it also urges that the duties on products of non-threatened tree species should be lowered or renounced. The report concludes that harvesting of and trade in big-leafed mahogany should continue to provide revenues for the local economies, only in a more methodological fashion by ensuring a long-term supply and the survival of threatened species.

*For more information, contact TRAFFIC North America. For contact details see page 12.*

## Recent publications

*Mahogany Matters: The US Market for Big-Leafed Mahogany and its Implications for the Conservation of the Species.* October 2000. TRAFFIC North America.

*Asian Turtle Trade: Proceedings of a Workshop on Conservation and Trade of Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises in Asia. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 1 - 4 December 1999.* 164pp. Chelonian Research Monographs in association with Wildlife Conservation Society, TRAFFIC, World Wildlife Fund, Kadoorie Farm & Botanic Garden, and US Fish and Wildlife Service. Number 2 - August 2000.

*Heart of the Matter: Agarwood Use and Trade and CITES Implementation for 'Aquilaria Malaccensis'.* 52pp. August 2000. A TRAFFIC Network Report.

*Food for Thought: The Utilization of Wild Meat in Eastern and Southern Africa. Trade Review.* 264pp. July 2000. TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa - Kenya.

*Evaluation of the Trade of Sea Cucumber *Isostichopus fuscus* in the Galapagos Islands During 1999.* 19pp. July 2000. TRAFFIC South America.

*Wings of Desire: The Insect Trade in Germany, with an Emphasis of Butterflies* (published in German). 62pp. May 2000. TRAFFIC Europe-Germany.

*Far from a Cure: The Tiger Trade Revisited.* 100pp. March 2000. *Species in Danger* series, TRAFFIC International.

# TRAFFIC features at natural health trade fair in Colombia

by Ximena Buitron, Programme Officer, TRAFFIC South America

TRAFFIC brought the conservation message to the medicinal plant industry at Colombia's first-ever natural health trade fair Exponat 2000, held in late September in Colombia. About 80 representatives representing industry and trade took part in the fair, including companies from Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Mexico, Venezuela, Guatemala and South Korea. The fair was sponsored by National Nutritional Food Association, USA; Natural Products Association, Mexico; BIONATURA, Brazil; FENAT as well as PROEXPORT, Colombia.

TRAFFIC was invited to participate and featured its trade-related work on medicinal plants and derived products. TRAFFIC's booth on conservation issues in the midst of commercial fair was a positive surprise for many, generating curiosity, interest and support. With the theme 'Securing the future of medicinal plant resources', the booth

highlighted the importance of taking care of the natural resources from which many of the products on sale at the fair were derived.

The three-day fair attracted 7000 visitors, with over 300 people requesting information from the TRAFFIC booth each day. Publicity for the booth was generated a few days prior to the fair at a related workshop on sustainable use of and trade in medicinal plants which was co-hosted by TRAFFIC South America

Interest from representatives from the commercial sector and the general public was keen, with visitors requesting various TRAFFIC publications and seeking advice on specific issues. There were also many inquiries on the legal requirements related to the import or export medicinal plants and derivatives, as well as requirements for starting business in the industry.

Many of the products on display

were produced in Colombia but raw materials used were partly of foreign origin. In most cases these raw materials were imported from Ecuador, Venezuela, Peru and Chile in South America, as well as Asia and Europe. Some products from the USA, India and Japan were also displayed.

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About 1000 people visited TRAFFIC's booth 'Securing the future of medicinal plant resources' during the fair.



Exponat 2000

## More endangered freshwater turtle species

The number of critically endangered freshwater turtles has more than doubled in just the last four years, according to a report released on October 3rd by TRAFFIC, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), WWF and other conservation groups. The report, consisting of proceedings from the Workshop on Trade in Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles in Asia, documents the threats facing the species and recommends actions to address the growing crisis. The workshop, held last year in Cambodia, brought together over 40 regional turtle experts from 16 countries, primarily within East, South and Southeast Asia.

The enormous demand for turtles and tortoises affects nearly all species around the world, but especially turtles and tortoises found in Asia. Softshell turtles are especially popular as a

luxury food in Asia, fetching prices that may be six times the price of lamb or chicken. In addition, turtle shell is traded to supply the traditional Chinese medicine industry. The turtle jelly made from the shell is claimed to have cancer-curing properties, and is consumed as a general health tonic.

The publication of the proceedings coincided with the release of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, which listed 24 turtle species worldwide as critically endangered, compared to ten species in the last assessment in 1996. According to the proceedings, the IUCN/SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group, as well as the Asian Turtle Trade Working Group, consider 66 of the 90 species of Asian freshwater turtles and tortoises as threatened. Half (45) are endangered, including 18 critically endangered species. One is already extinct: the



Peter Paul van Dijk / TRAFFIC Southeast Asia

*Hieremys annandalii*

Yunnan box turtle *Cuora yunnanensis*.

The workshop and proceedings present information on the status of more than 80 individual species; trade routes; types of demand; legislative and enforcement frameworks; and national and regional threats to turtle populations posed by the trade. According to the workshop participants, a thorough review and improvement of national legislation is needed urgently for effective protection of turtles in the region.

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# TRAFFIC launches into the Heart of the Matter

by Angela Barden, Research Officer, TRAFFIC International

TRAFFIC first began investigating the trade in agarwood in 1994. As explained in *Dispatches* Number 13, agarwood is just one of several names used to describe the fragrant, resinous and valuable heartwood produced by *Aquilaria* species, a genus of trees native to the Indomalaysian region. In August 2000, TRAFFIC launched its latest report on the tree, *Heart of the matter: Agarwood Use and Trade and CITES Implementation for Aquilaria malaccensis*.

The report focuses on the harvest and trade controls for *A. malaccensis* in key range countries, reviews available information on the wider trade in agarwood and recommends actions required to tackle issues such as unsustainable harvesting and illegal trade.

The launch of *Heart of the Matter* in Kuala Lumpur was organised to coincide with the XXI Congress of the International Union of Forestry Research Organisations (IUFRO). There was strong participation from the TRAFFIC Network, with talks given by the Directors of TRAFFIC India and TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, staff from TRAFFIC Southeast Asia and TRAFFIC International, as well

as the TRAFFIC's Executive Director. A representative of the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia also gave a presentation, and provided an update on their research into the artificial production of agarwood.

Attended by approximately forty people, the subsequent discussions benefited greatly from the participation of a wide range of stakeholders. These included representatives of Malaysia's Government from the Forestry Department, CITES authorities and the Customs & Excise Department, as well as those from the trade, timber certification, research, educational, conservation and development sectors.

It was evident from both *Heart of the Matter* and the launch discussions, that there is an urgent need for better information on which to base decisions for managing the resource and regulating the trade.

Particular areas highlighted for further research include the biology, status, identification of harvest and trade volumes of *Aquilaria* species in trade, the potential of cultivation and artificially enhancing agarwood production in contributing to sustainable management, and benefit flows resulting from harvests and

trade. In recognition of the need for status and distribution data, the Malaysian Forestry Department announced at the launch that it will include *A. malaccensis* in future forest surveys and review the issuance of harvesting licenses.

Agarwood has been used and traded for thousands of years with demand remaining strong today. *Heart of the Matter* resulted from research prompted by CITES Parties. At their meeting earlier this year, CITES Parties once again expressed concern and agreed that the CITES Plants Committee should continue to review the trade of *Aquilaria* species. Parties specifically called for particular issues to be addressed, including resolving the difficulty in differentiating between species in trade, and whether more *Aquilaria* species should be included in CITES Appendix II. *Heart of the Matter* encourages support for this process and the wider research mentioned above. To this end, TRAFFIC is seeking to convene a workshop involving the wide variety of stakeholders concerned with *Aquilaria* species to facilitate cooperation and begin identifying practical solutions to problems such as over-exploitation.

TRAFFIC will continue to conduct research to document more about the trade in agarwood. For example, once funding has been secured TRAFFIC Oceania will be investigating the booming agarwood trade in Papua New Guinea. TRAFFIC will also be encouraging information exchange and the development of practical guidelines for sustainable harvest. Collaboration is at the heart of the matter, if we are to secure the future of *Aquilaria* species.

*Copies of Heart of the Matter can be obtained from your nearest TRAFFIC office or can be downloaded in PDF format from <http://www.traffic.org/news/agarwood>*



TRAFFIC India / Dr. A.K. Gupta

*Aquilaria* trees are indiscriminately felled in search of the highly prized 'black gold' resulting in the drastic decline of wild populations. Left: *Aquilaria malaccensis*. Right: Agarwood perfume and chips.



Peter Paul van Dijk / TRAFFIC Southeast Asia

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systems, preserving genetic diversity, sustainably utilising species, and working towards realistic, lasting solutions.

This component of TRAFFIC's programme focuses on trade that may threaten the integrity of priority ecoregions of high biodiversity value or significance.

TRAFFIC will focus on researching and understanding wildlife trade processes acting on specific ecological landscapes, identifying threats and root causes to biodiversity loss, and promoting appropriate solutions.

To this end, TRAFFIC will be developing and strengthening partnerships with governments, industry, conservation organisations and other stakeholders involved in ecosystem-based conservation efforts in priority ecoregions.

Through our analyses we will establish baseline information on trade in wild resources/species in priority ecoregions, and assess and interpret levels of threat to biodiversity in priority ecoregions that are caused by wildlife trade.

TRAFFIC will be raising awareness about these threats, and will work towards enhancing the implementation of regulatory and other measures that can be used to reduce these threats.

Over the next three years, TRAFFIC will be focusing on coastal forests and marine areas of East Africa, the Eastern Arc Mountains and Miombo Woodlands of Africa, the Lower Mekong River of Southeast Asia, the vast Russian Far East, the Chihuahuan Desert of North America,

the Amazon Basin, and the Guyana Shield of northern South America.

### 3. Ensuring the security of wildlife resources of particular value for food and medicine, and to support other human needs.

With the world's human population expected to exceed 8 billion within the next 25 years, the security of wild resources used to supply basic human needs is at risk.

The demand for wild-sourced foods, medicines, fuelwood and timber is ever increasing, yet sound management of wild resources and sustainable harvesting is sporadic at best. The TRAFFIC Network seeks to ensure that wild resources valued for basic human needs are not threatened by unsustainable trade.

Towards this objective, TRAFFIC will be highlighting priority taxa of particular value for food, medicine and other human needs whose security may be threatened by unsustainable trade.

TRAFFIC will be increasing awareness of conservation issues among resource stakeholders and promoting dialogue between them.

Our work will contribute towards the development of national and regional management plans and regulatory measures for trade in wild resources, and improve participation in these plans.

Regional programmes will promote sustainable practices at the industry level, and encourage the development of guidelines, codes of practice and certification schemes for

sustainable practices at the industry level, for wild resources in trade.

Some offices will be preparing case studies on the adoption of alternatives and substitutes for threatened wild animal and plant resources, and on the implementation of proposed solutions that are expected to result in sustainable use of wild resources.

Over the next three years TRAFFIC will focus on trade in certain wild resources, primarily marine fisheries, freshwater fisheries, wood products and charcoal, medicinal and aromatic plants, bushmeat, wild bulbs, and traditional medicine.

### 4. Supporting the development and application of international agreements and policy approaches that prevent negative conservation impacts of wildlife trade and encourage that wildlife trade is at sustainable levels.

International co-operation in the regulation and management of use of wild resources is essential. There are approximately 200 multilateral environmental agreements, of which a number include provisions that regulate harvesting and/or trade in wild species.

Over the next three years TRAFFIC will be supporting the development of multilateral environmental agreements that concern wildlife trade, and guide/influence their evolution. We aim to build capacity at regional and national levels to enhance implementation and enforcement of these agreements, and we aim to contribute to the development, implementation and enforcement of the national wildlife laws that are the 'teeth' of these agreements.

TRAFFIC will also monitor the application of certification and accreditation schemes for wildlife products, and encourage international development, finance and trade mechanisms that complement efforts to ensure wildlife trade does not exceed sustainable levels.

Over the next three years, the TRAFFIC Network will mainly direct its efforts towards CITES, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and various regional fisheries and timber trade agreements.



Caroline Raymakers / TRAFFIC Europe

Over the next three years TRAFFIC aims to increase knowledge and awareness about trade in threatened species and the direct and indirect impacts of this trade on wild populations and on biodiversity conservation. Left: One of TRAFFIC's priority species, sturgeon (*A. Stellatus*) being fished at River Danube, Romania.

... Exponat 2000 - continued from page 8

Among the most commonly exhibited products at the fair were extracts from mallow, arnica cream and calendula, as well as products containing eucalyptus, "marañon", "zarzaparilla" (*Smilax*), and artichoke. These are used as natural health supplements and harmony complexes. Information was distributed at the fair by companies on the use of some species such as *Echinacea angustifolia*, *Hydrastis canadensis*, *Thuja occidentalis*, *Aloe vera*, *Symphytum officinale* and marine algae.

Products made from dragon's blood *Croton* spp. and cat's claw *Uncaria tomentosa*, originating from Peru and Ecuador, were also present. Both of these species are potentially threatened in these countries due to overexploitation and trade. Products made from Asian Ginseng *Panax ginseng*, a medicinal plant that is also potentially threatened, was also widely featured at the fair, the raw material originating mostly from Japan and South Korea.

Exponat 2000 was an important avenue for highlighting the impor-

tance of securing the future of medicinal plant resources, bringing to the attention of the commercial sector urgent concerns about the impacts not only on trade, but also to health care systems and wild populations. However, it also proved to be an excellent opportunity for strengthening links with the industry in South America and beyond. Hopefully, it is an important step in developing working synergies between the two sectors - industry and conservation.

*For more information on Exponat 2000 or the workshop on sustainable use of and trade in medicinal plants held in Colombia, contact TRAFFIC South America. For contact details see page 12.*

Asian Box Turtles  
*Cuora amboinensis* at  
exporter location in  
Medan, Indonesia  
awaiting international  
export to the food and  
TCM markets of  
East Asia.



Chris R. Shepherd / TRAFFIC Southeast Asia

...Freshwater turtles - continued from page 8

The report also calls for prompt enforcement of all local, state and national regulations and legislation concerning the conservation of turtles. More research needs to be done on the trade and greater public awareness efforts need to be made to highlight the threats facing these species.

*"Asian Turtle Trade: Proceedings of a Workshop on Conservation and Trade of Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises in Asia" (Chelonian Research Monographs, Number 2, 2000) is published by the Chelonian Research Foundation, in association with WCS, TRAFFIC, WWF, Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Gardens and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Copies are available from the Chelonian Research Foundation (www.chelonian.org)*

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