

# TRAFFIC DISPATCHES

Number 20 February 2003

Hot trade in cool creatures:

## Live reptile trade in the European Union

by Karin Berkhoudt, Research Officer, TRAFFIC Europe

Live chameleons, snakes and other reptiles have become increasingly fashionable as pets. They are caught in tropical and temperate countries, and traded to shops worldwide. The European Union (EU) is the second-largest market after the USA and hence European hobbyists may have an impact on populations of reptiles in the wild.

To gain better understanding of the live reptile trade in the EU, TRAFFIC Europe examined the trade over a period of five years by collecting information through market surveys, visits to trade fairs, interviews and literature research, as well as an analysis of trade data available from 1990s. The study, which covers trade in non-CITES as well as CITES-listed species, is now nearing completion and its results will be published later this spring.

The EU market for live reptiles is diverse and trends can change quickly. For example, the demand for commercially produced colour morphs, especially snakes and geckos, has increased over the last decade and this is likely to have reduced the pressure on wild populations.

Owing to a lack of comprehensive trade data it is difficult to assess the extent of the trade in non-CITES species. Based on data collected by TRAFFIC, it is estimated that the ratio of CITES-listed to non-CITES species in trade in the EU is around 3:7. Among the non-CITES species in trade in the EU were species classified as critically endangered by the

IUCN Red List (2002), such as the Cyclades Blunt-nosed Viper *Macrovipera schweizeri* and Roti Island Snake-necked Turtle *Chelodina mccordi*.

On average, more than 130 000 live CITES-listed reptiles were imported annually to the EU from 1990 to 1999. During this period demand boomed and EU imports increased by over 300%, from about 60 000 specimens in 1990 to 225 000 in 1999. Shipments contained a range of 273 species from 22 different reptile families. Around 45% of the specimens were declared captive-bred.

The Green Iguana *Iguana iguana* comprised 45% of all imports, of which 85% were reported captive-bred specimens from Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua. The most significant supplier countries of wild-caught specimens such as geckos, chameleons, pythons and monitor lizards were Madagascar, Ghana and Togo. The main EU importers were Spain and Germany, each importing a total of around 300 000 specimens between 1990 and 1999, followed by the Netherlands, France, the UK and Belgium, each importing around 150 000 specimens.

In general, CITES-listed species were found to be more expensive than non-CITES species, the highest price observed was for one Angolan Python *Python anchieta* (EUR10 226). High prices and the increasing demand of wide variety of species in trade are strong incentives to



Reptile trade fair, Nimwegen, Germany; left *Chameleon melleri*

import live reptiles illegally. Unscrupulous traders that wish to abuse customs controls can use the confusion around reptile taxonomy as an excuse for mis-declared specimens.

According to CITES trade data between 1990 and 1999, 10 128 specimens were seized by EU Member States upon importation. Levels of penalty currently in place in some EU Member States in case of violation of wildlife trade regulations are insufficient to deter these illegal activities effectively. Enhanced co-operation between stakeholders, including governments and commercial partners in the EU and range States, is essential to promote sustainable levels of collection and discourage illegal trade practices.

For future updates on the report, see [www.traffic.org](http://www.traffic.org).

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Special section: TRAFFIC East Asia

## Ashish Bodasing

TRAFFIC is greatly saddened by the untimely loss of Ashish Bodasing on 15 January 2003 at the age of 35. He died of heart failure at his home in Johannesburg, South Africa. Nearly 11 years ago, Ashish joined TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa and, at the time of his death, was a Senior Programme officer. Ashish's career, while short, was nonetheless remarkable for its achievement. Ashish will undoubtedly be best remembered for his lead role in capacity building and training initiatives within Africa and beyond. In this regard, he was instrumental in setting up the ivory stock management programmes in Botswana and Zimbabwe, wildlife permit databases in South Africa and Tanzania, and law enforcement assistance initiatives in Zambia, Djibouti, and Laos. Ashish brought innovation, technology and humanistic values to all of his work and he was at the forefront of many of TRAFFIC's greatest successes. Ashish, your colleagues at TRAFFIC salute you at this moment of passing.

## Staff news

### *Director of Operations starts at TRAFFIC International*

*Marcus Phipps* joined TRAFFIC International as the network's new Director of Operations in mid-August 2002. Marcus joined TRAFFIC at the beginning of 1995 as head of the Taiwan office of TRAFFIC East Asia. He became Deputy Director of TRAFFIC East Asia in 1998, worked as Acting Regional Director during 2000 and again as Deputy Director in Hong Kong, while helping TRAFFIC International with the network finance systems capacity-building project. Marcus's new role covers a range of financial and administrative management issues; a new post at TRAFFIC International that greatly strengthens the network's institutional capacity.

*James Compton* started as Director at TRAFFIC Southeast Asia in mid-July 2002. James joined TRAFFIC in January 1999 as head of the Indochina office of TRAFFIC Southeast Asia after a previous career in journalism. He then worked as Senior Programme Officer at TRAFFIC Oceania from April 2000 until commencing in his current post.

*Julie Thomson*, the Representative for Indochina has been appointed the new Deputy Director of TRAFFIC Southeast Asia in October 2002.

*Rob Parry-Jones* started his work as the Co-ordinator of a TRAFFIC Oceania CITES Capacity Building project based in Suva, Fiji in January 2003. Prior to this post, Rob worked in TRAFFIC East Asia Regional Office as the Senior Programme Officer.

*Alexandre Affre*, Research Officer, moved from TRAFFIC Europe-France to TRAFFIC Europe Regional Office in Brussels in February 2003.

### *Welcome*

#### *June 2002*

*Pavel Fomenko* started his work as part-time Russian Far East Representative of TRAFFIC Europe-Russia.

*Mats Forslund* started his work as Programme Officer in TRAFFIC Europe's new national office in Sweden.

*Nicholas Phoon* joined TRAFFIC Oceania as a new Programme Officer.

#### *August 2002*

*Megan Whelan* joined TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa-South Africa as the Assistant Research Officer.

#### *September 2002*

*Zeenith Md. Abdullah* started as Finance and Administration Officer at TRAFFIC Southeast Asia.

*Alexandre Shestakov* commenced his work as National Representative of TRAFFIC Europe-Russia Programme.

#### *October 2002*

*Attila Steiner* started as Co-ordinator and *Katalin Kecse-Nagy* as Assistant of the new TRAFFIC Europe Candidate Countries Programme.

*Sware Semesi* started as a Research Officer of TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa-Tanzania office.

*Tina Leonard* joined TRAFFIC North America as the Senior Administrative Assistant.

*Verity Saunders* joined TRAFFIC International as the Accounts Officer to cover Tammy Tam's maternity leave.

#### *January 2003*

*Wolfgang Kathe* joined TRAFFIC Europe Regional Office as a Senior Research Officer.

### *Goodbye*

*Josephine Mremi*, Programme Officer, left TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa-Tanzania in June 2002.

*Christopher Robbins*, Senior Programme Officer, left TRAFFIC North America in June 2002.

*Elizabeth Scoggins*, Funding Development Officer, left TRAFFIC International in July 2002.

*Janet Ong*, Office Administrator, left TRAFFIC Southeast Asia in September 2002.

*Peter Paul van Dijk*, Senior Programme Officer, left TRAFFIC Southeast Asia in October 2002.

*Lorena Hidalgo*, Administrative Assistant, left TRAFFIC South America in December 2002.

*Fumihito Muto*, Regional Fisheries Officer, left TRAFFIC East Asia-Japan in February 2003.

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### *TRAFFIC Dispatches*

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TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, works to ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature.

*TRAFFIC Dispatches* is published to keep partners and supporters informed about our activities and accomplishments. TRAFFIC works in co-operation with the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

**TRAFFIC**

is a joint programme of



**IUCN**  
The World Conservation Union

## TRAFFIC Europe expands programme in Hungary and Sweden

On the first of October 2002, *Attila Steiner* started his work as Co-ordinator of the new TRAFFIC Europe Candidate Countries Programme. The new programme office is hosted by WWF Hungary in Budapest and will focus its work on five countries that are soon to accede to the European Union: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia.

The office will assist relevant authorities in their CITES implementation and enforcement efforts as well as in the preparation of the EU accession. To this end, the office will provide technical

support and expertise among other tasks to ensure that the candidate countries are adequately assisted in their efforts to reduce illegal wildlife trade along their borders, soon to become those of EU.

Prior to joining TRAFFIC, Attila worked for the WWF Hungary Programme Office where he was designing a number of nature conservation projects focusing on river and forest management.

The establishment of the new office has been made possible through the financial support of the Austrian Government, WWF Austria and TRAFFIC Europe.

A new TRAFFIC office in Stockholm was opened in October 2002 and is hosted by WWF-Sweden. The office is led by Mats Forslund, who has, since the late 1980s, been investigating the illegal wildlife trade in Sweden, particularly the wild bird trade. Mats will now spend 80% of his time for TRAFFIC examining trade concerns in Sweden and in other Nordic countries.

This development is linked to a new funding arrangement affecting TRAFFIC as a whole. Through the hard work of WWF Sweden, TRAFFIC has been included as one of the beneficiaries of a new three-year funding package to WWF from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency - SIDA. Together with a new pledge of additional direct support from WWF Sweden over the next three years, the SIDA money will provide over one million Swedish Krona (USD107 000) a year to support general programme funds of TRAFFIC offices in Southeast Asia, East Asia, East/Southern Africa and Sweden.

-- Laurie Kint, Communications and Administration Officer, TRAFFIC Europe



TRAFFIC Europe-Candidate Countries Programme Office opening ceremony was held on 22 October, 2002.

From left: Attila Steiner, TRAFFIC; Katalin Rodics, CITES Management Authority, Hungary; Marcus Ferenc, WWF-Hungary

## Timber: In harmony with CITES?

A TRAFFIC report titled *In harmony with CITES* released in October 2002 focuses on Malaysia as a case study to review the challenges to effective implementation of a CITES timber listing and recommend approaches to overcome the constraints, both perceived and actual, that were found. For example, the report identified a number of legal issues that need to be addressed and is calling for new regulations that will address the appointment of relevant CITES agencies, and administration, management and enforcement for CITES species.

The report also identifies the great need for co-ordination between agencies that are implementing CITES timber species, as well as those with the potential or expertise to assist in implementing CITES. These include the Department of

Agriculture, Department of Forests in all the States, Malaysian Timber Industry Board, Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation, Customs, and Wildlife Departments.

Such co-ordination is vital in enhancing enforcement efforts for timber species and ensuring that the relevant agencies, such as Customs, can improve their ability to control and prosecute timber-related crimes, both within the country and internationally. Efforts to monitor timber trade data also need to be co-ordinated so that it can be put to much greater use in, for example, detecting instances of illegal timber harvest and trade.

More research is needed to gather information that can help determine whether trade in CITES-listed species is detrimental to the survival of species. Current research plans for forest species in Malaysia need to devote efforts towards research on tree species found in Malaysia that can benefit from using some form of eco-labelling, including the possible use of CITES Appendix II listing.

TRAFFIC is calling for the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, the only CITES Scientific Authority in Malaysia, to co-ordinate these efforts with the relevant agencies and organisations in the country.

The report identifies a number of steps forward that would help countries to put to rest the misconception that CITES is just an international trade ban. When implemented effectively, CITES can help facilitate the controls, processes and tools that will assist countries in managing their timber resources so that species' populations do not reach the point where trade bans may be the only conservation option left.

For full copy of the report, visit [www.traffic.org](http://www.traffic.org). A Spanish version of the report will be available later this month. It will be distributed to South America region, to support among others implementation efforts of a recent inclusion of Big-leaf Mahogany to CITES Appendix II (see page 4). The report was generously supported by Environment Fund of UK Foreign and Commonwealth office.



# Significant progress made for timber and fisheries conservation at CITES CoP12

**Landmark decisions to regulate international timber and marine fisheries trades under the auspices of CITES were endorsed at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP12) held in Santiago, Chile in November 2002. CITES proved once and for all to be a key tool to complement other conservation and management measures, both at national and international level, for commercially important wildlife resources.**

Acceptance of the proposal to list Big-leaf Mahogany *Swietenia macrophylla* in Appendix II, first attempted ten years ago, was a major step towards sustainable management of this valuable tropical timber species. It is hoped that implementation efforts resulted from the listing will greatly support efforts to reduce unsustainable and illegal logging in the range states of South and Central America. The challenge now is to demonstrate that CITES Appendix II can help to prevent Big-leaf Mahogany suffering the same fate met by other American mahoganies (*Swietenia humilis* and *S. mahagoni*), which reached commercial extinction levels some years ago.

Appendix II listings of the world's two largest fish species, whale sharks and basking sharks, together with support given for international efforts to improve management of sharks and develop complementary ways of action to assist the implementation of the FAO International Plan of Action (IPOA) strengthened global commitment to find long-term conservation solutions for sharks fisheries. Parties directed the CITES Animals Committee to review in the future progress towards IPOA implementation with also a request for the Management Authorities of CITES to collaborate with their national customs authorities.

For the first time, Parties to CITES also committed to action on a large-scale

commercially exploited marine fish.

Despite the withdrawal of a proposal to list highly valuable and threatened Patagonian Toothfish in Appendix II of the Convention, the Parties endorsed a resolution aimed to boost efforts to control trade in Patagonian Toothfish and support the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) in its efforts to eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU). While welcoming these steps taken by CITES, concern remains whether this collaboration can move forward rapidly and effectively enough to address the imminent threat this commercially valuable species is facing from illegal fishing.

Thirty-two species of seahorse that are threatened by demand for traditional medicines, curios and the aquarium trade were also approved for Appendix II listing.

At CoP12, elephants proved once more to be a controversial issue. In the end, a proposal was accepted by the Parties allowing for controlled one-off sales of existing ivory stocks from Botswana, Namibia and South Africa (20, 20 and 30 tonnes of ivory respectively). These sales are strictly conditional and will go ahead earliest in May 2004 and only once monitoring baselines have been established under MIKE - Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants - in both African and Asian elephant range states.

The first analytical report on the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS), the other of the two CITES monitoring mechanisms set up to guide decisions relevant to trade in elephant products, was presented to the Parties by TRAFFIC. The results showed an increase in ivory seizures since 1998, linking it to demand of ivory in China among other factors. The report also identified number of other countries of concern and the Parties agreed a formal mechanism to assess control measures applied in these countries. Further analysis of ETIS will be reported back to the Parties at CoP13.

The listing of 26 Asian species of tortoises and freshwater turtles on Appendix II marked also significant progress made in species conservation efforts to date. A resolution on Asian big cats was also accepted, calling for better protection and further action by the Parties to control poaching and illegal trade of Leopard, Snow Leopard and Clouded Leopard.

In total, 49 species proposals were considered and about 100 species added to the CITES Appendices at CoP12. Now the challenge for CITES is to implement effectively the decisions taken by Parties through stronger international collaboration and sound conservation and economic strategies reflecting wider sustainable development goals and socio-economic factors. TRAFFIC will continue to build on these successes and seek long-term conservation solutions for commercially exploited wildlife resources.

A full TRAFFIC report on CoP12 will be published in *TRAFFIC Bulletin Vol.19 No.3* later this year. To learn more about TRAFFIC's efforts on key issues highlighted above, see briefing documents and other TRAFFIC documents available at [www.traffic.org/cop12](http://www.traffic.org/cop12).

TRAFFIC CoP12 communications work was generously supported by *The Rufford Foundation* and *WWF Species Target Driven Programme*.



# Working towards sustainable development

by Teresa Mulliken, Research and Policy Co-ordinator, TRAFFIC International

Although better known for its efforts to stem illegal and unsustainable wildlife trade, TRAFFIC has an equally important programme of work aimed at addressing wildlife trade within the wider context of sustainable development. This includes increasing understanding of the socioeconomic forces underlying the wildlife trade, researching the role wildlife trade plays in supporting rural livelihoods, and examining how market-based tools such as product certification schemes can be used to benefit both wildlife and people.

Much of TRAFFIC's work on resource security thus far has been linked to the use of wild species for medicine and food. TRAFFIC's work on the medicinal plant trade documented the importance that wild plants play in traditional and western healthcare systems. Based on this research, TRAFFIC staff in East Asia, Europe, India and South America have convened stakeholder dialogues involving representatives from governments, conservation, healthcare, development and other organizations to identify means of securing the future of both wild plants and the healthcare practices dependent on them (see *Dispatches No19*). Work in East/Southern Africa has demonstrated the critical role that wild animal species play in the diets of both rural and urban dwellers, expanding understanding of the 'bushmeat crisis' as a human as well as a conservation concern. TRAFFIC has been collaborating with IUCN-The World Conservation Union and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to bring this message to a wider group of stakeholders.

More recently, TRAFFIC has been working in partnership with the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) to examine the

livelihood impacts of wildlife trade controls, including those used under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The resulting report, *Making a Killing or Making a Living? Wildlife Trade, Trade Controls and Rural Livelihoods*, was released in mid-2002, and its findings presented at a workshop at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in August 2002. Among the reports conclusions was identification of a need for stronger linkages between the implementation of CITES, with its strong conservation mandate, and the Convention on Biological Diversity, with its wider focus on linking biodiversity use to achieving sustainable development.

As part of the follow-up to this report, TRAFFIC has been working with IUCN, ResourceAfrica and Fauna & Flora International (FFI) to build support for a workshop seeking greater CITES-CBD linkages. A similar partnership also involving IIED is working to bring greater attention to the issue of economic incentives within CITES decision-making. This group has offered to assist the CITES Secretariat in responding to the decision agreed at the most recent CITES meeting (CoP12) calling for a workshop to develop a research methodology to examine the interaction of incentives and policy, and the subsequent impact on conservation and livelihoods.

Another key task in the coming year will be to strengthen the capacity of the TRAFFIC network to understand the economic aspects of the trade in wildlife resources critical to human needs. TRAFFIC will continue to seek support for this and other work related to sustainable development through partnerships with governments, NGOs and others.

## A Note of Precaution

TRAFFIC has also teamed up with IUCN, FFI and Resource Africa to examine the application of the 'precautionary principle' to the use, trade and management of wild species. The initial project, made possible by a grant from IUCN's IIIC Fund, looks set to lead to a larger programme of work, including a broad 'situation analysis', case studies in developing countries and regional workshops.

## Madagascar: Increasing knowledge - decreasing detriment

TRAFFIC International is leading a new programme in Madagascar aimed to help government authorities improve the country's management of wildlife trade. The work is being carried out on behalf of the CITES Secretariat and with additional funding support from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund.

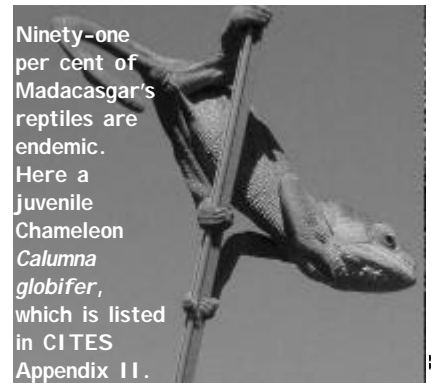
Madagascar is a key centre of biodiversity: 80% of its 10 000-12 000 plant species are endemic, as are 46% of its birds, 91% of reptiles, 99% of amphibians and 67% of its mammals. The value of this unique flora and fauna presents both opportunities and risks in terms of wildlife trade. Over recent years, scrutiny of Madagascar's substantial wildlife exports under the CITES Significant Trade Project revealed that all too often, exports of individual species were being permitted in the absence of clear evidence about possible conservation impacts. Attempts to introduce better controls have been badly undermined by illegal trade.

Launched officially in mid-February 2003 during a visit to Madagascar by the CITES Secretary General and TRAFFIC's Executive Director, the new programme takes a comprehensive approach to management of Madagascar's exports of CITES-listed species - the first time that such a country-level approach has been employed under the auspices of the CITES Animals and Plants Committees. The programme was welcomed by the new Minister of Environment, Water and Forests, *M. Sylvian Rabotoarison*, and will begin with a comprehensive situation analysis followed by a workshop in May 2003 where a strategy will be agreed to define remedial actions and elaborate resource needs. TRAFFIC is committed to assisting the implementation process that will follow.

Medicinal plants sold in Bogota, Colombia.



TRAFFIC South America



Ninety-one per cent of Madagascar's reptiles are endemic. Here a juvenile Chameleon *Calumna globifer*, which is listed in CITES Appendix II.

Chris van Tergast

# South America's role in the global catch and trade of Patagonian Toothfish

**A lack of co-ordination of fishing activities between South American countries targeting highly valuable Patagonian Toothfish could be contributing to the severe pressure the species faces globally from unregulated fishing. A new TRAFFIC South America study examines the fisheries activities and trade in the region and calls for urgent dialogue between South American countries to develop much needed management measures to achieve sustainable-use goals for the fishery and trade of the species in the region.**

A report titled *Fishery Activities and Trade of Patagonian Toothfish in South America: A Regional Perspective* analyses information for each of the five countries in the region engaged in the catch and/or trade of toothfish: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru and Uruguay.

Chile is the world's largest producer of toothfish products, with the majority of the catch taken from within its national waters. Around 80% of Chile's toothfish catch is exported to Japan and the USA and is worth USD90 million per year. Eighty-five per cent of Argentina's toothfish product is exported to Japan and the USA, and toothfish products provide earnings of USD30-36 million per year. Uruguay has significantly increased capture of the species over the past five years with catches climbing from 163 1997 to 5 000 t in 2001. Almost all of that catch is taken in high sea areas beyond Uruguay's national waters. The other two

countries included in this study, Brazil and Peru, have not engaged in extensive commercial fishing for Patagonian Toothfish to date, however both have plans to expand into the fishery in the near future.

"We have found two main weaknesses in the management of the Patagonian Toothfish resource in the South American region" said *Anita Sancho*, co-author of the report from TRAFFIC South America. "First, at the national level, the regulatory response of governments has often struggled to keep pace with the rapid expansion of the commercial fishery targeting this valuable resource, leading to conflict between fishing sectors and declining catch rates. Second, at the regional level, there is no co-ordinated approach to the conservation and sustainable use of Patagonian Toothfish in waters beyond those governed by the Commission for the Conservation of

Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)."

A major step towards more effective management of Patagonian Toothfish fisheries was achieved last November, when the 160 Parties to the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) agreed to co-operate with CCAMLR to strengthen controls over international trade in toothfish products. As over 90% of toothfish products enter into international trade such co-operation will assist to reduce the significant threat posed to the species from illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. All five South American countries included in the new study are parties to both CITES and CCAMLR (see page 4).

As in the case of earlier TRAFFIC studies on Patagonian and Antarctic Toothfish, the South American study concludes that there remain uncertainties surrounding catch and trade information for toothfish and makes a number of recommendations to address this problem and to strengthen decisions on management measures for the species.

Regardless of the information gaps that still exist, there is little doubt that Patagonian Toothfish stocks are rapidly declining and urgent action is needed to ensure the sustainability of this vulnerable species and to secure the future of the legitimate industry that depends on it. Recommendations contained in the report are aimed to support efforts in South America to develop regional management measures as well as strengthen national ones.

For more information on the study contact TRAFFIC South America, or visit <http://www.traffic.org/news/press-releases/toothfish1.pdf> for a full copy of the report. The production of this report was supported by *David and Lucile Packard Foundation*.



Patagonian toothfish processing plant in Peru.

# East Asia: A quarter of the world

TRAFFIC

東亞野生動物貿易研究委員會  
トラフィックイーストアジアジャパン  
트래픽 동아시아

## The Challenge

With a population of over 1.5 billion, East Asia is home to a quarter of the world's people. It holds a quarter of the world's economic power, as well. By helping to solve conservation challenges in East Asia, we help ensure sustainable use of a significant portion of the world's natural resources.

East Asia draws in a wide variety of products derived from wild plants and animals, particularly from its neighbours in Southeast Asia and the Russian Far East. This wildlife ranges from Tiger to musk deer and seahorse, to wild ginseng, orchids, and timber.

East Asia's people need basic commodities such as timber for housing and fish for food. They also have the economic power to buy luxuries, such as ivory and marine turtle shell. The challenge is to keep this trade in wildlife sustainable.

Japan is the world's second-largest economy and a major consumer of

wildlife. The "Tiger economies" of South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong are heavy consumers as well.

China supplies many of the wildlife products used in East Asia and throughout the world. It is the world's largest harvester of fish and the largest exporter of plant medicines. China also is a growing consumer, with increased wealth leading to greater use of both commodities and luxuries.

Since opening our first office in the region in 1982, TRAFFIC East Asia has worked with local and international partners to address the challenge of keeping this trade sustainable. There is still much to do, however. Policy-makers and frontline enforcement officers need more information to stop unsustainable and illegal trade. And consumers - as well as the industries that serve them - must learn that their purchasing decisions can decide the continued survival, or extinction, of endangered species.

## Our role

TRAFFIC East Asia is part of the global TRAFFIC network with offices in 23 countries and territories. TRAFFIC works to ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature.

Four approaches guide TRAFFIC East Asia's work:

- Producing objective information for a scientific approach to conservation.
- Providing tools and training to wildlife regulators through collaboration with frontline enforcement officers.
- Working with industry for voluntary measures to increase sustainability.
- Helping consumers know the environmental impact of their purchasing decisions.



Case Study: TRAFFIC East Asia

TRAFFIC East Asia works to ensure the sustainability of trade in wildlife.

One of our specialties is conservation of species used in traditional medicines. Over 80% of the world's traditional medicine comes from plants.

Here, plants collected in the wild are sold in Yunnan, China.

The key to TRAFFIC East Asia's success is partnerships. We work with many groups, including government, industry, and consumers. Together, we make a difference.

The TRAFFIC East Asia regional office is in Hong Kong, with additional offices in Beijing, Taipei and Tokyo. In the following pages, we highlight recent achievements and ongoing initiatives in the region.

# Working with practitioners of traditional medicine

**TRAFFIC**  
P.A.C. ASIA

東亞野生動物貿易研究委員會  
トラフィックイーストアジアジャパン  
트래픽 동아시아

Traditional medicines are used alongside "western" medicines in East Asia. Traditional medicines often use plants and animals harvested from the wild, and sometimes these are endangered.

TRAFFIC's recent survey of traditional medicine doctors in South Korea shows the effectiveness of consumer and industry awareness. Since TRAFFIC's initial work in South Korea, use of species such as tiger and rhinoceros has gone down. Doctors will prescribe substitutes if they are proven effective. This has led to TRAFFIC's work to find substitutes for endangered species used as medicine.

Eighty per cent of the world's traditional medicines are plants - with 40% of the world's exports coming from China, and 40% of the imports going to South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. TRAFFIC recently produced East Asia's first overview of this massive trade and, through both Chinese language and Korean language newsletters, we have

now entered dialogues with industry about international issues in conservation and sustainability.

With funding of over USD200 000 from the pharmaceutical company Johnson & Johnson and WWF, we are now expanding this work in China. A new Traditional Medicine Advisory Group, for example, aims to lead policy discussions about sustainability in China's use of traditional medicines. Members are drawn from across China's traditional medicine community.

TRAFFIC East Asia continually finds that the conservation community and the traditional medicine community share a mutual goal: to keep the wildlife resources of traditional medicine available for future generations.



Tiger bone medicines are now less prevalent in East Asia than a decade ago. This success has shown that East Asia's consumers can change, if given information and approached in the right way, respectful of the region's cultures and traditions.

## Achieving sustainable fisheries

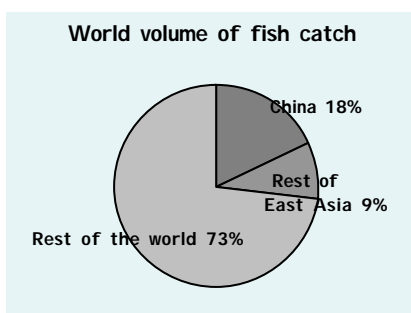
East Asia is both a major consumer and producer of fish. The world's fish stocks have declined dramatically in recent decades. Therefore, East Asia is essential to sustainability in the world's fish trade.

Early work by TRAFFIC East Asia centered on the trade in live reef fish for food. Our analysis of the trade in Hong Kong, and review of aquaculture in Taiwan, allowed for better regulation and

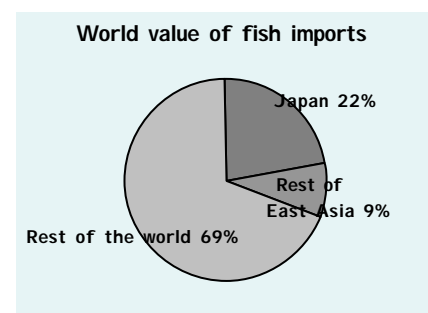
effective conservation actions.

Our current work has broadened to include issues as diverse as East Asia's trade in eels, China's sturgeon fisheries, Hong Kong's seahorse trade, and Taiwan's impact on whale shark populations. Funding partnerships have included The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Project Seahorse, and Taiwan's Council of Agriculture.

With support from the Packard Foundation, TRAFFIC recently began a review of the illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) trade in tuna. By describing IUU trade in tuna, we help regional fisheries organizations better regulate this resource. Finding complementary approaches to support regional fisheries organizations continues to be a key element in all TRAFFIC's fisheries work.



East Asia is both the leading producer and consumer of the world's fish products. To resolve global issues of fishery decline, East Asia must be involved - particularly China and Japan. [Data from FAO, 1999]





# Providing tools for regulators of wildlife trade

**TRAFFIC**  
FOUNDATION

東亞野生動物貿易研究委員會  
トラフィックイーストアジアジャパン  
트래픽 동아시아

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is the principal guide for regulating trade in endangered species. All the countries and territories of East Asia have legislation to implement CITES, with the exception of North Korea.

TRAFFIC works with CITES Management Authorities in the region to develop jointly the tools they need, such as up-to-date training and good identification manuals. In partnership with the CITES Secretariat, TRAFFIC continues to develop strategies for CITES capacity-building worldwide. In East Asia this is most clearly seen in China and Taiwan.

Sponsored by Taiwan's Council of Agriculture, we are developing a comprehensive training package for enforcers of Taiwan's wildlife trade laws. A similar initiative is underway in China,

in collaboration with the State Forestry Administration. The initial focus is on training packages for the CITES-sponsored Elephant Trade Information

**A trainer's perspective of a CITES workshop held in Taipei in 2000: "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 a closer working relationship with TRAFFIC East Asia-Taipei. This can only bode well for the future."**

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

System, funded by a generous grant of USD30 000 from the Rufford Foundation. Furthermore, TRAFFIC East Asia is regularly invited to give training to Customs officers in Japan.

Recent publications include the Chinese-language Guide to CITES Plants in Trade for use by Customs officials and a CITES Checklist to find species' scientific names from their Chinese common names.

TRAFFIC also works with government officials and academic specialists to find proper controls for wildlife trade. In Japan and Taiwan, we have provided expertise when wildlife laws need to be strengthened. Currently, we are researching the implications for wildlife trade of China's accession to WTO, the World Trade Organization. In this way, TRAFFIC East Asia helps develop policies for the sustainable use of wildlife.

## Applying the ecoregional approach

Wildlife species do not pay attention to national borders. The borders of "ecoregions," which are collections of ecosystems, bind them instead.

The use of these biological units, rather than administrative units, to guide resource management is an exciting new approach to conservation. TRAFFIC East Asia uses this new approach to monitor trade's impact in ecoregions such as the Yellow Sea, the Mountains of Southwest China, and the Indo-Burma "Hotspot".

In partnership with WWF, TRAFFIC East Asia has begun a socio-economic analysis of fisheries in the Yellow Sea,

bordering China and the Korean Peninsula. As wild fish stocks decrease, aquaculture increases. Aquaculture leads to habitat loss and the introduction of non-native species. Our analysis aims to find policy changes and positive economic incentives to protect and restore native species.

In the Mountains of Southwest China, TRAFFIC works with WWF and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund. We are building a conservation alliance to protect traded species, such as traditional medicines and wild fungi.

We are also planning a monitoring

programme for the China/Indochina border. This will help regulators in both China and Indochina prevent illegal and unsustainable trade in wildlife from the Indo-Burma Hotspot. The ecoregion holds threatened species as varied as elephants, orchids, and turtles. For example, three quarters of Asia's species of freshwater turtles are threatened, including critically endangered species like the Arakan Forest Turtle, the Painted Terrapin, and the Burmese Star Tortoise, all native to this region. According to IUCN, the primary threat is trade.



The Mountains of Southwest China ecoregion is home to the most diverse temperate biodiversity in the world. Zhong Tai, the science officer for Baimaxueshan Nature Reserve, works with local villagers to develop easy methods to ensure sustainable collection of economic threatened species such as pine mushroom and "worm grass". Partnerships throughout the trade chain - from local villagers and reserve officials all the way to end consumers - are the best way to protect this ecoregion.

# Get the word out!

Information is not meaningful unless it is understood and used. Communication is therefore key to success. TRAFFIC East Asia is committed to getting information to the consumers, producers, and government officials whose day-to-day actions can help - or harm - species in the wild.

We do this through several channels. Our research reports and professional manuals are targeted at government officials for use in policy and management.

Our newsletters, particularly those in Korean and Chinese, are targeted at the traditional medicine community, giving easy access to international trends in

conservation and sustainable use.

Our websites, in Japanese and Chinese, tell the public - East Asia's consumers - about issues of wildlife trade. The general public is also the target audience for TRAFFIC East Asia's Japanese-language newsletter.

These various tools have a single purpose: to build constructive dialogues between all stakeholders in the conservation and sustainable use for wildlife resources. We already have much information to allow for effective conservation. We must make sure that information is widely available and in the language of the people who will make the difference.



For more information, please visit:

TRAFFIC in Japanese:

[www.twics.com/~trafficj](http://www.twics.com/~trafficj)

TRAFFIC in Chinese:

[www.wow.org.tw](http://www.wow.org.tw) and [www.wwfchina.org/traffic](http://www.wwfchina.org/traffic)

TRAFFIC in English:

[www.traffic.org](http://www.traffic.org)

TRAFFIC East Asia

## Recent publications

A Survey of the Rhinoceros Beetle and Stag Beetle Market in Japan.  
*Shoko Kameoka and Hisako Kiyono.* 2003 (in press). (English and Japanese.)

A Question of Attitude: South Korea's Traditional Medicine Practitioners and Wildlife Conservation.  
*Sue Kang and Marcus Phipps.* 2003 (in press). (English and Korean.)

Taiwan Whale Shark Management and Trade.  
*Vincent Chen and Marcus Phipps.* 2002. 23 pp. (English and Chinese.)

Japan's Trade in Ivory after the Tenth Conference of the Parties to CITES.  
*Hisako Kiyono.* 2002. TRAFFIC Online Report No.6, 29pp. (English, Japanese language version in press.)

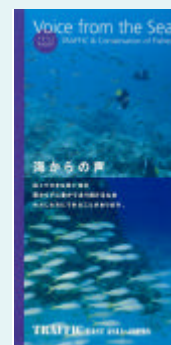
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An Assessment of China's Management of Trade in Elephants and Elephant Products  
*Caitlin O'Connel-Rodwell and Rob Parry-Jones.* 2002. TRAFFIC Online Report No.3, 67pp. (English and Chinese.)

The Guide to CITES Plants in Trade.  
*Vincent Chen and Michael Song.* 2001. 116pp. (Chinese.)

Musk Deer Farming as a Conservation Tool in China.  
*Rob Parry-Jones and Joyce Wu.* 2001. 34 pp. (English and Chinese.)

Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Endangered Species Used in Traditional East Asian Medicine: Substitutes for Tiger Bone and Musk  
*Sean Lam, Rita Chang, and Michael Song (eds.).* 2001. 101 pp. (Chinese.)



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**IUCN**  
The World Conservation Union

# Management and trade of Whale Sharks in Taiwan

by Marcus Phipps, Director of Operations, TRAFFIC International and  
Vincent Y. Chen, Senior Programme Officer, TRAFFIC East Asia-Taipei

**Taiwan is implementing the world's first Whale Shark harvest and trade monitoring system - an innovative and important step in the sustainable management of the fisheries resource. Despite these efforts, catch data from the Whale Shark Harvest Reporting System and market information from research released in a new TRAFFIC report titled *Management and Trade of Whale Sharks in Taiwan* raises the possibility of unreported or under-reported catches taking place or significant amounts of Whale Shark meat entering Taiwan's market through unofficial channels. The species is currently listed in the 'Vulnerable' category of the IUCN's 2002 Red List of Threatened Species and since last November, in Appendix II of CITES.**

The Whale Shark *Rhincodon typus* is the largest fish on earth. The species is widely distributed in all tropical and warm temperate seas, but little is known of its biology, ecology or its life history. The species is currently listed in the 'Vulnerable' category of the IUCN's 2002 Red List of Threatened Species and since last November, also in Appendix II of CITES (see page 4).

Use of the Whale Shark for food is mainly for its meat and has been documented in Taiwan, India, and the Philippines. Work carried out by TRAFFIC in co-operation with researchers at National Taiwan Ocean University in 1996-1997 identified Taiwan as a major, and possibly the largest, market for Whale Shark meat.

As might be expected given its overall size, the Whale Shark has particularly large fins, but the fins are not considered to be good quality shark fin and there is little demand in the food trade for this product in Taiwan. Trade is supplied both by Taiwan's harvest and imports from other countries.

In 2001-2002, TRAFFIC East Asia-Taipei carried out a comprehensive survey of Taiwan's Whale Shark trade and markets with funding from the *Taiwan Council of Agriculture's Fishery Administration* and *The David and Lucile Packard Foundation*. TRAFFIC East Asia-Taipei's aim was to contribute to a better understanding of Whale Shark trade dynamics, facilitate domestic conservation efforts, and encourage the Taiwan authorities to develop and implement appropriate fishery and trade management regimes for the species.

The project involved market and trade surveys of Whale Shark meat in 14 counties and cities around Taiwan. Harvest data as well as available

international and domestic trade data were reviewed. A total of 1659 retail stalls selling fresh fish at 85 markets in larger urban areas and around recreational fishery harbours were surveyed as were 290 restaurants island-wide.

Preliminary results of the Taiwan survey were presented to a number of forums including an international conference, the *Shark Conference-Sustainable utilisation and conservation of sharks* in May 2002.

The report shows a discrepancy between catch data from the Harvest Reporting System and the large quantity of Whale Shark products on the market. This raises the possibility of unreported or under-reported catches taking place or significant amounts of Whale Shark meat entering Taiwan's market through unofficial channels.

In its recommendations, the report encourages Taiwan's authorities to strengthen its reporting system further with comprehensive catch and trade data. The report also concludes that special attention needs now to be given to development of an action plan for sharks in Taiwan.

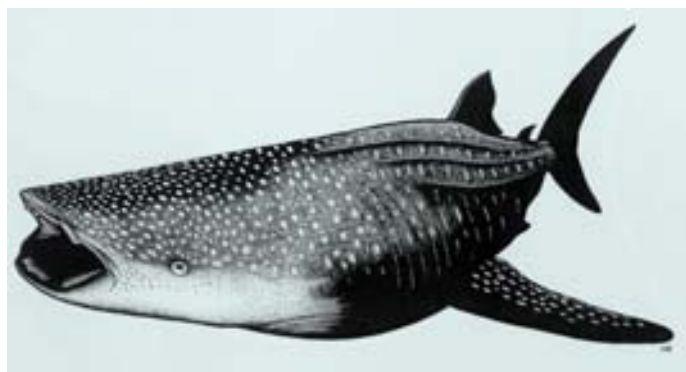
The recommendations of the report build on Taiwan's ongoing efforts to

manage the Whale Shark trade better. Taiwan currently implements the world's first Whale Shark harvest and trade monitoring system - an innovative and important step in the sustainable management of the fisheries resource. Taiwan's Fisheries Administration has set up the species-specific, monitoring system for catch and trade of Whale Shark in order to provide information to underpin a Whale Shark management system. In July 2001 the Taiwan government introduced a Whale Shark Harvest Reporting System and in March 2001 established commodity codes specific to Whale Shark to monitor Taiwan's trade in this species. In July 2002, a catch limit of 80 Whale Sharks in 2002/03 was introduced.

TRAFFIC East Asia-Taipei's work since 1996 has been instrumental in bringing the need for a management system to the attention of the authorities and continues to support the efforts towards improved management systems of Whale Sharks in Taiwan.

*For the report and full recommendations, contact TRAFFIC East Asia-Taipei or see [www.traffic.org/news/press-releases/taiwan\\_whale.html](http://www.traffic.org/news/press-releases/taiwan_whale.html).*

Whale Shark  
*Rhincodon  
typus*



From *Marine Biodiversity*

# Black Gold:

## Searching for a sustainable alternative to charcoal

by Rob Barnett, Senior Programme Officer and

Daniel Ndanyi, Research Officer, TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa

**Charcoal is a major source of fuel in East and Southern Africa, but its production is largely unsustainable. Ten tonnes of wood produces just one tonne of charcoal. Its production is ranked among the major forest depletion activities in the region. However, efforts to regulate production of charcoal or promote alternative sources of fuel seem to have failed. Four decades after independence 82% of Kenya's urban population still depends largely on charcoal.**

Although regulatory legislation and a presidential ban on charcoal production in Kenya exists, the trade continues unabated – operating informally, underground and largely unmonitored. In the light of this information void and the critical nature of current exploitation, TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa initiated a project in Kenya to document the extent of charcoal use in its capital city, Nairobi, and to assess the feasibility of using biomass wastes to produce charcoal briquettes as a substitute for wild-produced lumpwood charcoal. The project was generously supported by *The Rufford Foundation*.

Baseline surveys revealed that Nairobi consumes approximately 91 250 t of charcoal annually, equating to the destruction of over 900 000 t of green wood each year. Owing to the informal and underground nature of the trade, around 70% of charcoal is transported at night in order to avoid forest guard and police personnel, as well as the requirement to bribe them.

The trade chain from rural producer to end market involves many players, each taking a substantial cut of the profit. Rural producers sell to transporters at KSH100 (USD1.3) per bag (approximately 40 kg per bag). Transporters then sell in Nairobi to wholesale charcoal depots for about KSH235 (USD3.01). These depots then sell to end market retail outlets (usually street vendors) for about KSH350 (USD4.49) per bag. Such outlets only sell in larger quantities, whereas end market retail outlets sell to consumers in small four-litre tins for approximately KSH20 (USD0.25) per tin resulting in the sale of one bag of charcoal for around KSH800 (USD10.25).

As such, charcoal typically passes through four middlemen before being consumed, and is responsible for ensuring the livelihoods of many, where little

alternative potential for formal employment exists. Profits involved are substantial, with transporters often making a net profit of some KSH47 250 (USD605) per trip, a medium sized wholesale depot KSH50 000 (USD641) per month, and individual street vendors KSH13 500 (USD173) per month. In contrast to national average wages of KSH3 400 (USD44) per month, charcoal represents an extremely important income earner, that after agriculture is the second highest contributor to the country's Gross National Product.

Charcoal is in such high demand from a diverse range of consumers from households to food kiosks and hotels because it is the cheapest and most reliable form of energy available in Kenya. Price is the single most important determining factor, with alternative energy sources such as electricity, gas, and kerosene being prohibitively expensive and largely unavailable to most.

Whilst the survey found that some progress in promoting the sustainability of the industry has been achieved, with 70% of respondents in three Nairobi survey areas using fuel-efficient stoves, little other substantial and lasting progress has been made. An assessment of past projects, programmes and initiatives aimed at solving the charcoal issue over the past thirty years found that little scope for lasting success could be found from alternative energies (solar, wind, bio-gas) and substitute energies (gas, kerosene, woodlots) in the present Kenyan socio-economic climate.

**Biomass waste a sustainable alternative to lump wood charcoal?**

The assessment revealed that new carbonizing technology for converting biomass waste such as sugar cane bagasse, rice and coffee husks, and maize stover

into charcoal briquettes could substantially contribute to replacing unsustainable lump wood charcoal.

In collaboration with an implementing partner, Chardust Ltd., TRAFFIC set out to determine the viability of producing briquetted charcoal fuel from 27 potential wastes. A ranking system based primarily on availability and accessibility resulted in eight wastes being selected for full production trials using an open pit draught type carbonizer and screw extrusion equipment. The final part of the study comprised fuel quality testing, during which the strength, heat output, ash content, and other performance characteristics of the various fuels were determined.

The study's conclusion was that three biomass wastes, namely sawdust, bagasse and coffee husk had genuine potential for commercial fuel production. Indeed following the assessment, the UK Department for International Development has funded a project based at the Chemelil Sugar Cane Factory in western Kenya, aimed at establishing a plant to convert waste bagasse into charcoal briquettes thereby contributing to the overall sustainability of the charcoal industry.

*For more information on the study, contact TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa.*



# Enforcement support training by Justice Institute of British Columbia

by Ernie Cooper, National Representative, TRAFFIC North America-Canada

In the past 25 years TRAFFIC has developed its work on support to law enforcement. In this role, TRAFFIC gathers information to help enforcement through a variety of means, including field based research as well as desk-based investigations, assesses information for its intelligence value, trains and liaises with law enforcers, and provides tools and guidance on policy and other matters related to wildlife trade. From time to time TRAFFIC needs to review and revise its capacity to ensure that it can meet the needs of enforcement of wildlife trade laws.

A unique opportunity arose to further enhance TRAFFIC's enforcement support capacity with an offer from the Justice Institute of British Columbia\* to host a week-long workshop in Vancouver, Canada in late June, 2002. The workshop provided a catalytic opportunity to develop and improve TRAFFIC's enforcement support strategy, policies and operational guidelines, as well as train TRAFFIC staff in the typical enforcement support role. This intensive course was the first time an environmental non-governmental organisation received accredited enforcement support training from the Police Academy at the Justice Institute.

During the workshop, the Justice Institute of British Columbia led a series of demanding training sessions. A training programme was developed specifically for TRAFFIC. Sixteen TRAFFIC staff participated from around the world. Training sessions included managing investigations, analysing intelligence information, communications and liaison with enforcement agencies, computer

encryption and covert photography. Attendees were exposed to enforcement officers' points of view and were able to learn enforcement approaches and techniques, so that these efforts can be better supported by TRAFFIC. In addition, TRAFFIC staff were able to review and help each other in development of their regional enforcement strategies.

One of the most important elements was the ability of the Justice Institute to guide TRAFFIC in its approaches to law enforcement and the development of methods and protocols based upon enforcement techniques. This has greatly enhanced our capacity to deal with enforcement agencies in a professional way that is easy for them to relate to. As illegal wildlife trade constantly evolves, also resources are more stretched and increasing demands are made for information, training and support. With the training and accreditation now received, TRAFFIC can further its work on ensuring that governments, particularly in the developing world, are able to perform their enforcement roles effectively and that the wildlife trade is conducted legally and in a manner that does not compromise the sustainability of wild resources.

*The workshop was generously supported by The Rufford Foundation and TRAFFIC North America.*

\* The Justice Institute of British Columbia is a post-secondary educational institution that provides enforcement training in Canada and in a number of countries around the world.

# Wildlife trade campaign in UK

In February 2002, WWF-UK in partnership with TRAFFIC launched a campaign on wildlife trade in the UK. The goal of the campaign were set to effectively reduce and deter illegal wildlife trade in endangered species by ensuring that adequate enforcement actions and penalties in the UK are in place. Raising awareness of the impact of the UK wildlife trade through the actions of traders and consumers, was the second goal of the campaign.

A year later, the campaign has reached decision-makers and consumers alike and made a difference in raising awareness as well as impelled change in a number of initiatives undertaken. Especially noteworthy is the engagement in efforts to support a change in the regulation that implements CITES in the UK [Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Enforcement) Regulation 1997 (COTES)] by lobbying for an increase in the maximum penalty for wildlife trade crimes from two to five years thereby making these offences arrestable in the UK.

An Early Day Motion in the Houses of Parliament in support of the campaign goals was signed by 342 Members of Parliament. Over 100 000 people also signed the Campaign's petition asking for a change in law and stiffer penalties on wildlife crime. It is hoped that these developments will result in an appropriate amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill in Parliament later this year.

In the coming months the campaign will be focusing on its second goal, building awareness of the UK's impact on wildlife through trade. A report, which is nearing completion and will be published later this spring, examines how UK consumers can use wildlife and wildlife products sustainably and at the same time minimize the negative impact of the UK wildlife trade. Without realizing the consequences of our actions, we may be buying wildlife and wildlife products that are contributing to over-exploitation of species and habitats and as a result are sometimes threatening rural livelihoods and economies dependent on the wildlife trade.

To date the campaign has released a number of reports highlighting the UK role in wildlife trade, the legal framework, illegal aspects of the trade and links to organized crime as well as examining wildlife trade routes into the UK markets and the European Union.



For more information visit the campaign website at <http://www.wwf.org.uk/wildlifetrade> or contact TRAFFIC International.

# Cactus poaching, legal harvesting: A growing threat to Chihuahuan Desert Cacti

**D**emand for wild cactus and rare plants by landscapers and plant collectors may soon surpass supply in the Chihuahuan Desert of Mexico and the USA, according to a new study from TRAFFIC North America titled *Prickly Trade: Trade and Conservation of Chihuahuan Desert Cacti*.

The study, the largest-ever analysis of trade in Chihuahuan Desert cactus, found that unsustainable trade could endanger certain populations of cacti if measures are not taken to regulate their harvesting. The Chihuahuan Desert is home to almost a quarter of the 1,500 cactus species known to science, and booming desert landscaping trend, combined with poor regulation of legal plant harvesting, is putting pressure on many species. Use of cactus for low-water landscaping and demand for rare and newly discovered specimens by “cactophiles” is resulting in the heavy and illegal harvest of desirable species, which is likely a multimillion-dollar-a-year industry.

If the demand for wild plants is not reduced rapidly, especially cacti, from the Chihuahuan Desert, we run the risk of destabilizing populations and losing species.

A whole range of desert dwellers – from hummingbirds to mountain lions –

rely on desert plants for food or shelter. So in some situations, removing the cactus can be as disruptive to the ecosystem as clear-cutting a forest.

In recent years, Europe and Japan have been popular destinations for smuggled plants, seeds and fruits of rare and valuable cacti originating from the USA and Mexico. The UK is the second largest market after the USA for Chihuahuan Desert Species, followed by Germany, Sweden and Spain, Mexico, Italy and Canada. Nearly 200 species of Chihuahuan Desert cactus were identified on the UK market alone. Many consumers and tourists are unaware they may be breaking the law when they collect, purchase or export cactus from countries that restrict these activities. According to the report, Mexican authorities seized nearly 800 cactus specimens from travelers entering or passing through the USA from Mexico in 1998.

The report recommends better monitoring of the cactus trade, strengthening protection for the species that are under the most pressure from exploitation and developing community-based programmes to harvest common species and commercially cultivate slow-growing species. The report has led WWF

to begin work on a programme to establish a community-based nursery industry to grow native desert plants with seeds harvested from the wild. The program would also promote nature-based tourism in west Texas, a biologically rich region with high unemployment.

For further information on the report, contact TRAFFIC North America or see [http://www.traffic.org/news/press-releases/prickly\\_trade.html](http://www.traffic.org/news/press-releases/prickly_trade.html)



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## Working on import restrictions to better manage coral reef resources

by Caroline Raymakers, Director, TRAFFIC Europe

**I**nternational trade in live corals rapidly grew during the past decade to supply the expanding marine tropical aquarium market. In 1998, concerned about the increase of export quotas for certain species set by Indonesia, the world largest supplier of live corals, the European Union (EU) decided to suspend imports of a number of corals until it is clear that the level of export will not harm the status of their populations in the wild. TRAFFIC Europe has since worked with partners in Indonesia to design a mechanism for better monitoring of the collection of those species. A similar approach was initiated by TRAFFIC Oceania in Fiji in 2002. In both countries these efforts influenced the setting of reduced export quotas and the adoption of a zero quota for certain taxa.

Giant clams (Tridacnidae) are also found on coral reefs and traded internationally as well as locally for the

beauty of their shell (curio), colour of their mantle (aquarium) and taste of their muscle. TRAFFIC engaged in a project with Indo-Pacific countries where high levels of trade could endanger the status of certain giant clam populations.

Late maturity and dependence on sunlight are among biological parameters that render those species particularly vulnerable to overexploitation but few range States have set fisheries or trade limitations. The result of TRAFFIC's work will encourage the adoption of measures such as fishing licences, closed seasons and export quotas, keeping in mind the role of giant clams in coastal villagers' subsistence.

Coral reefs are complex and poorly known ecosystems where each type of organism, ranging from hard corals and giant clams to fish and queen conch (see *Dispatches No19*), has its role to play.

Their fragile balance will be preserved only through a variety of actions, from better resource management, to global climate change campaigns.

For more information, contact TRAFFIC Europe Regional Office.



Giant clam stocks.

TRAFFIC Southeast Asia

## A boost for TRAFFIC's fisheries and ETIS work

In December 2002, TRAFFIC received a generous support of USD200 000 from *The David and Lucile Packard Foundation* for its fisheries programme, allowing TRAFFIC to continue the momentum of its ambitious fisheries programme in 2003 with a full range of activities, aimed to support long-term conservation efforts in marine environment.

\*

In January 2003, the UK Government confirmed its support of GBP60 000 to TRAFFIC's work on the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS), one of the two monitoring systems operating under the auspices of CITES. Managed by TRAFFIC, ETIS now consists of nearly 8 000 records of elephant product seizures, which have taken place throughout the world since 1989. The funds received now will secure continuation of efforts to stamp out the continuing illegal trade in ivory and other elephant products.

\*

## New TRAFFIC On-line Series hosted at [www.traffic.org](http://www.traffic.org)

In May 2002, TRAFFIC launched a new *TRAFFIC Online Report Series*. It hosts reports published primarily in a PDF file format on TRAFFIC website. Reports in the series feature new research results and policy analyses for priority issues TRAFFIC is working on as part of its ongoing efforts to ensure that wildlife trade is not a threat to the conservation of nature.



Reports released in the series to date are:

*CITES Appendix III implementation for Big-leafed Mahogany Swietenia Macrophylla*. Report No.1, May 2002.

*An assessment of the illegal trade in elephants and elephant products in Viet Nam*. Report No.2, July 2002.

*An assessment of China's Management of Trade in Elephants and Elephant Products*. Report No.3, July 2002.

*An Investigation of the Ivory Market in Taiwan*, Report No.4, August 2002

*An assessment of the illegal trade in elephants and elephant products in Myanmar*. Report No.5, August 2002.

*Japan's Trade in Ivory after the Tenth Conference of the Parties to CITES*. Report No.6, September 2002.

\*

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