

CITES: key outputs at a glance

It was a mixed conservation bag at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP 14) to CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), that took place in The Hague, Netherlands, in June. It ended with TRAFFIC applauding some sound decisions, but ruing other missed opportunities, particularly the decisions not to list red, pink and other corals, or two species of sharks—Spiny Dogfish and Porbeagle.

"There were some key decisions on eels, sawfishes, elephants and Tigers, but it's a shame countries missed the opportunity to assist with conservation of several commercially traded marine species," said Steven Broad, Executive Director of TRAFFIC.

TRAFFIC was disappointed that Parties failed to come up with sufficient extra funding to implement the Convention and assist countries with enforcement and capacity building. Enforcement issues were prominent during the meeting; (see separate article in this issue).

Key conference outcomes included:

Compromise on African Elephants

African Elephants dominated much of the media coverage and many of the conference discussions. Prior to the CITES meeting, a limited sale of ivory from three southern African countries was given formal approval, whilst on the penultimate day of the meeting, following some tense negotiations, Zambia and Chad presented a compromise document on behalf of all African Elephant range States.

The document, which was adopted by consensus, allows an increase in the one-off sale of ivory to include ivory from stockpiles in Botswana, South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe that have accumulated since 2002. After the sale, there will be a nine-year suspension of further sales of raw ivory.

However, the key issues of how to tackle elephant poaching and illegal domestic ivory markets in Africa and Asia remain unanswered.



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A giant Tiger photo mosaic unveiled by the International Tiger Coalition at CITES

Tiger farms rejected

A notable conservation success was the Decision, adopted by consensus, to reject the raising of captive Tigers for trade in Tiger parts, and to reduce the size of large-scale commercial Tiger farms "to a level supportive only to conserving wild Tigers". Three countries with wild Tigers—India, Nepal and Bhutan—were joined by the USA in calling on China to phase out the country's privately run "Tiger farms" that house almost 5000 animals.

INSIDE:

- CITES stamp of approval
- New standard for collection of wild plants
- International law enforcement networks
- EU targets wildlife trade enforcement
- Tanzania's disappearing timber revenue
- Merbau—an opportunity for PNG?
- TRACE: tracking wildlife crime with forensics
- TRAFFIC signs MoU with SACEP
- Traditional medicine in Viet Nam
- TRAFFIC donors January 2006 - November 2007



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Inside: New international standard for collection of wild plants

Recommendations for rhinos

New TRAFFIC research presented at the conference revealed an alarming increase in the volume of rhino horn entering illegal trade since 2000. The recommendations of the report for better law enforcement and protection measures for African rhinos were adopted by the Parties. Parties were also requested to report on stockpiles of rhino horns held, to be reviewed by TRAFFIC, who were also invited to review the routes by which horns enter illegal markets.

Mixed fortunes for sharks

Delegates failed to list two shark species—Spiny Dogfish and Porbeagle—in CITES Appendix II, which allows trade under strict conditions. However, all except one species of sawfish (ray-like sharks) were listed in Appendix I, which prevents all commercial trade. The single exception was listed on Appendix II.

Most timber proposals withdrawn

The EU withdrew its proposal to include in the Appendices Cedrela—a group of tropical tree species found in Latin America—after facing hostile pressure from Latin American and Caribbean countries. The listing would have helped ensure better management and measures to control trade of these threatened species.

All the other proposals to list tropical timber species in Appendix II were withdrawn, with one exception—Brazil wood, which was listed with an amendment to exclude certain items made from the wood, such as musical instruments.

Better protection for the European eel

European eels have declined throughout most of the species's distribution area and are now threatened.

European Eels were listed in Appendix II, a decision that will help ensure trade in this species is well-managed and legal, an essential measure for its survival. The European Eel has declined

throughout its range due to over-exploitation and pollution.

Pink, red and other corals remain unprotected

The listing on Appendix II of red, pink and other coral species in the genus *Corallium*, was overturned in plenary. These corals, which are used mainly for the manufacture of jewellery, have been over-harvested as a result of lack of international trade controls and a consistent management plan. An Appendix II listing would have helped address these problems, but commercial interests won through.

Marine turtles

A welcome and significant development was Cuba's announcement of a voluntary moratorium on their marine turtle fisheries from 2008. There was support too for marine turtle conservation by Parties through the Inter-American Convention for Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC) and the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the wider Caribbean region (Cartagena Convention).

Strategic vision

Delegates adopted an ambitious new Strategic Vision that attempts to link CITES to the broader conservation and development agenda.

"CITES member countries now need to step up their efforts to secure the resources needed to meet the goals they have set for themselves, especially the support needed by developing countries to manage wildlife trade at sustainable levels," said Broad.

Other outcomes relevant to TRAFFIC's programme and targets:

These included: instructions for Parties to investigate the scale of internet trading in wildlife; better understanding of the ivory trade through TRAFFIC's continued operation of ETIS and other means, including development of an Elephant Action Plan;

improving international co-operation on conservation and trade control for Asian big cats and parts thereof; approval for export of Vicuña wool by Bolivia; collaboration between the Central Africa Bushmeat Working Group and the Convention on Biological Biodiversity; better law enforcement for illegal trade in freshwater turtles and tortoises; improvement in monitoring of trophy hunting; better labelling of legal caviar and support for sturgeon conservation; adoption of an Action Plan for the control of international trade in Bigleaf Mahogany; better enforcement of Saiga protection measures; instructions for the Plants Committee to develop protocols for formulating non-detriment findings for timber species, *Prunus africana* and medicinal plants; better protection measures for medicinal plants.

Other events

TRAFFIC and WWF hosted a breakfast meeting for Ministers attending the Ministerial Roundtable convened by the Dutch Government. Thirty-six guests (of which 17 were Ministers or Vice-Ministers), from 23 countries, representing all continents, attended.

Following a keynote speech by James Leape, Director General of WWF International, case studies were presented by TRAFFIC staff focusing on the trade in Ramin (an Asian timber species) and Vicuña (an Andean camelid). These demonstrated how political will, regional co-operation and consumer-producer relations are important to implement CITES regulations effectively. The case studies promoted some lively discussion of the issues raised.

Overall, the event, which was organized by WWF Netherlands, and chaired by Laurentien van Oranje-Nassau, was deemed a great success.

CITES stamp of approval



Caviar - but is it legal? The CITES stamp will help consumers decide

From 1 July 2007 all caviar sold in the UK has had to display labels approved by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The non-reusable labels give detailed information about the origin and age of the caviar, and, if appropriate, where it was repackaged in the UK.

Illegal caviar trade is a major concern as the main threats to sturgeons are overfishing and poaching. In the last 15 years the Caspian Sea sturgeon population has been reduced by 40%.

The European Union (EU) is the single biggest consumer of caviar, with 636 tonnes imported between 1998 and 2005 compared to 326 t imported by the USA over the same period. Between 2000 and 2005, 12 t of illegal caviar were seized in the EU.

"TRAFFIC is delighted to see the UK Government introducing the caviar labelling scheme, which will help stamp out the illegal trade in this valuable product and is a vital step in helping to save sturgeons from extinction," said Steven Broad, Executive Director of TRAFFIC.

Containers of caviar arriving in the UK for trade or repackaging must also display labels that state its country of origin. If caviar is still contained in the original container from the country of origin then it should have a label affixed from that country's CITES Management Authority. Caviar without these labels will be illegal and liable to be seized.

Anybody trading in illegal caviar within the UK is liable to a two year prison sentence and/or a fine of up to GBP5000 (USD10 000).

New international standard for collection of wild plants

A new standard to promote the sustainable management and trade in wild medicinal and aromatic plants (MAP) was launched in February 2007 at Biofach, the World Organic Trade Fair, held in Nuremberg, Germany.

The International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (ISSC-MAP) was drawn up following extensive consultation with plant experts and the herbal products industry worldwide. It promotes appropriate management of wild plant populations to ensure plants used in medicine and cosmetics are not over-exploited. The Standard is based on six principles: maintaining wild MAP resources, preventing negative environmental impacts, legal compliance, respecting customary rights, applying responsible management practices, and applying responsible business practices.

"Traders and companies, collectors and consumers must share the responsibility for maintaining populations of medicinal plants which are valuable natural resources," said Susanne Honnef, Medicinal Plant Programme Leader of TRAFFIC. "The ISSC-MAP principles and criteria show how this can be achieved in practice."

More than 400 000 tonnes of medicinal and aromatic plants are traded annually, with much of the material harvested from the wild. Almost 70,000 species are involved, many of them are in danger of over-exploitation and even extinction through over-collection and habitat loss. For example, conservations believe nearly 300 species are threatened in India alone.

Traditional Medicinals, one of the industry's leading companies, is investigating applying the new standard to the collection of Bearberry, a shrub whose leaves are used for the treatment of a variety of conditions, mainly of the diuretic and urinary tract.

"Sustainable supplies will mean long-term benefits for the local people who rely on the Bearberry trade for supplementary income," said Josef Brinckman, Vice-President of Traditional Medicinals.

Several projects financed by the German government have recently announced they will implement the ISSC-MAP standard.

Organizations and experts involved in the ISSC-MAP consultation included: the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), the IUCN SSC Medicinal Plant Specialist Group (MPSG), WWF-Germany, and TRAFFIC, plus industry associations, companies, certifiers and community-based NGOs.



Wolf's Bane *Arnica montana* is used in the treatment of bruising, but is becoming rare throughout its European range

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International law enforcement networks the way forward for CITES

by Azrina Abdullah, ASEAN-WEN Support Project Leader

The 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) in The Hague, Netherlands, ended in June 2007 with many new decisions being taken that will affect the legality of trade in a variety of animals and plants—from timber to marine species to large mammals. But underpinning the success of all such decisions is the need for comprehensive law enforcement to regulate and combat any illegal trade in these species.

The previous meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP13) in Bangkok, Thailand, in October 2004, prompted decisive action by governments in the South-east Asian region, resulting in political commitments towards improved implementation and enforcement of the Convention from the 10 Member Countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Subsequent efforts led to the agreement of an ASEAN Regional Action Plan on Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora 2005–2010 the following year. Key objectives under the action plan included improved legislation, better law enforcement networking and more science-based decision making and information sharing.

Between CoP13 and CoP14, ASEAN CITES Parties moved with greatest momentum on the roll-out of the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN), which was launched in December 2005. Since then, the Network's operations have grown steadily, bringing together countries from across the ASEAN region to improve the effectiveness of wildlife trade enforcement measures. The 10-country intergovernmental initiative has also engaged with countries outside the region, including China and the USA—both major demand markets for wild animals and plants and a great diversity of by-products—as well as making links with the European

Union (EU) and Australia. Other institutions brought into the ambit of ASEAN-WEN have included the Secretariats of ASEAN and CITES, Interpol and the World Customs Organization (WCO), including WCO's Regional Intelligence Liaison Office.

TRAFFIC is continuing to work with Wildlife Alliance (formerly known as WildAid), via a co-operative partnership with the US Agency for International Development (USAID), to provide technical assistance to the government agencies that are implementing ASEAN-WEN.

The latest CITES meeting in the Netherlands (CoP14) provided an opportunity to reflect on the positive successes of regional enforcement initiatives, including ASEAN-WEN, particularly during two side events that focused on enforcement issues.

The first of these was hosted by the Coalition Against Wildlife Trafficking (CAWT) on *Forging partnerships to improve wildlife law enforcement*. It was chaired by the US Assistant Secretary of State, Claudia McMurray, with panel members including representatives from ASEAN-WEN, Interpol, the CITES Secretariat, North American Wildlife Enforcement Group (NAWEG) and TRAFFIC. The event focused on the organizational and political aspects of partnerships and the need for high-level government support in raising the profile of international wildlife trafficking.

Discussions included how to catalyse political will on this issue, and how regional enforcement networks can serve as a framework for partnerships. Representatives from enforcement networks discussed the benefits of CAWT membership in strengthening the overall partnership.

The second enforcement side event, hosted by the UK Government (Defra) with assistance from TRAFFIC, provoked discussions on how to combat wildlife crime effectively at national, regional and international levels. This built on a similar UK Government-hosted event at CoP13 in Bangkok on *Willing co-operation for effective enforcement of CITES*, which had recognised that motivating political will and close co-operation remain the lynchpins of effective CITES enforcement.

The UK CoP14 side event highlighted developments in regional and inter-regional collaboration since CoP13. Several EU Member States showcased their successes in this area, and used the opportunity to draw attention to the role of the EU in improving wildlife law enforcement. EU Ministers had called on the European Commission (EC) and Member States to develop a strengthened, co-ordinated EU response to address illegal wildlife trade. This had resulted in an EU Wildlife Trade Enforcement Action Plan that was unveiled during the side event, and subsequently published

in the *Official Journal of the European Community* (L145, 20 June 2007)

Mr Adisorn Noochdumrong of Thailand's CITES Management Authority introduced ASEAN-WEN as an example of regional co-operation that had resulted in enforcement action on the ground. Participating governments are creating interagency task forces involving national police, Customs and CITES officers. These task forces serve as focal points at the regional level to combat transnational wildlife crime and exchange vital law enforcement intelligence between countries. Since ASEAN-WEN's inception, several high-profile wildlife seizures involving protected species of animals and plants have taken place, enforcement officers have been trained and the involvement of the judicial sector in combating wildlife crime has been prioritised. Future plans include encouraging more prosecutions, enhancing inter-agency co-operation at national and regional levels, maintaining political will for the initiative, and increasing awareness of ASEAN-WEN amongst the public and law enforcement officers.

Mr Noochdumrong commented: "The side event was a great opportunity to examine common approaches to international law enforcement networking, and ASEAN-WEN is keen to develop further collaboration with the EU in the near future."

Captain Aroon Promphan from the Natural Resources and Environment Crime Division, Royal Thai Police, and Dr Norhayati Tahir from Royal Malaysian Customs, also attended, representing the interagency structure of ASEAN-WEN.

The UK's Peter Starling from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs presented information on the Partnership for Action against Wildlife Crime (PAW), which comprises more than 90 government and non-governmental organizations involved in combating wildlife crime in the UK. He also drew delegates' attention to the re-established National Wildlife

Crime Unit (NWCU), a multi-agency Unit combating wildlife crime across the UK. His overriding message was of the benefits brought about through improved communication within both national initiatives. Robert Boljesic from the Slovenian CITES Management Authority spoke about the Slovenian Wildlife Committee, established in 2002. This Committee has resulted in closer co-operation between CITES authorities, police and Customs in Slovenia, which has led to steadily increasing numbers of wildlife crime seizures and penalties for offenders.

Lucy Swan from the EC's Directorate General responsible for the Environment highlighted the work of the EC Enforcement Group, which involves law enforcers from all 27 EU Member States. She highlighted some of the Group's successes and several tools that have been developed in the EU, including EU TWIX—an internet tool for EU enforcement officers to exchange information about illegal wildlife trade. Swan also introduced the EU Enforcement Action Plan, which represents a major step forward for national wildlife law enforcement efforts, inter-regional collaboration and for capacity building in countries outside the EU.

"Giving high priority to CITES enforcement is crucial to combat illegal trade. This EU Action Plan demonstrates the EU's commitment to effective enforcement," Ms Swan noted.

Key messages emerging at the side event included recognition of the need for improved communications within countries and at the regional and inter-regional levels, the need for secure mechanisms for exchange of information between enforcement agencies, and increasing the level of awareness of wildlife crime at all levels, from the public right up to decision makers. Challenges remain such as insufficient co-ordination and co-operation among countries, limited human and financial resources, low priority placed on the enforcement of CITES and insufficient penalties imposed on offenders.

Captain Aroon Promphan also joined the CITES Secretariat's John Sellar, Senior Officer, Anti-smuggling, Fraud and Organized Crime; Benito Perez, Acting Chief, Division of Law Enforcement, US Fish and Wildlife Service; and Peter Younger, Wildlife Crime Programme Officer, Interpol, in a press conference on law enforcement co-operation.

The Secretary-General of the CITES Secretariat, Willem Wijnstekers, noted that wildlife law enforcement successes recently show what can be achieved when the international community works together.

"Recent advances must not make us complacent—we need to allocate a much higher priority to bringing wildlife criminals to justice," Wijnstekers added.

The law enforcement-related side events at CoP14 also served to highlight that although individual countries require different approaches in tackling wildlife crime, there is a high degree of overlap in thinking and approach to this issue worldwide. Many strong national laws and adequate penalties exist, and there are mechanisms for co-operation and collaboration within and between countries. These facilitate the flow of information, which is vital in combating illegal wildlife trade although there is still much to be done, particularly in the field of wildlife forensics and capacity building.

"ASEAN-WEN is an example of what can be achieved, and its ongoing progress can serve as a model for establishing similar inter-governmental law enforcement networks in other regions of the world," said James Compton, TRAFFIC's Southeast Asia regional Director.

"Countries can tackle illegal international wildlife crime through close collaboration, provided there is sufficient political will, backed up by adequate human and technical resources," he added. "These are the critical factors that enable law enforcement agencies to make a tangible difference on the ground, and break down the often highly organized networks that control illegal trafficking of wild animals and plants."

European Union targets wildlife trade enforcement

In June 2007, the European Commission (EC) launched an Action Plan to improve wildlife trade enforcement within the European Union (EU) and in countries where the trade originates. It marked the latest step in a global approach to tackling wildlife crime.

The announcement was made during a UK Government sponsored event held in collaboration with TRAFFIC, during the 14th meeting of CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) Parties in The Hague, Netherlands (CoP14).

"Giving high priority to CITES enforcement is crucial to combating illegal trade. This EU Action Plan will demonstrate the EU's commitment to effective enforcement," said Lucy Swan, Chair of the EC CITES Enforcement Group.

Leading up to the launch of the Action Plan, in December 2006, EU Environment Ministers had formally acknowledged the need for EU assistance in promoting the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife in developing countries and effective implementation of CITES.

The EU Action Plan will help strengthen implementation and enforcement of legislation in EU Member States. Crucially, there will be support for enforcement efforts in producer countries, including capacity building on law enforcement, and increasing awareness of illegal wildlife trade.

The Action Plan builds on existing initiatives to combat the increasing illegal wildlife trade fuelled by the growing demand in the EU. These include EU TWIX (*EU Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange*), an EU enforcers' intranet for exchanging information on wildlife seizures across all 27 Member States, ASEAN-WEN, a wildlife enforcement network between South-east Asian nations, and CAWT (Coalition Against Wildlife Trafficking), a US Government-led partnership of NGOs and governments aimed at tackling

international wildlife crime.

There is a huge and escalating demand in EU Member States for exotic pets, tropical timber and other wildlife products sourced outside its borders.

In May 2007, TRAFFIC released a report that found the EU tops the list for major importers by value of many wild animal and plant products, including tropical timber, caviar, reptile skins and live reptiles.

The report, *Opportunity or threat: The role of the European Union in global wildlife trade*, was the first ever analysis of the volume and scope of wildlife trade products imported into the EU.

"As EU membership has expanded, so has the size of the market and demand for wildlife products," said Rob Parry-Jones, Acting Head of TRAFFIC in Europe. "While much wildlife trade is legal, we cannot ignore the growing illegal trade stemming from the demand for exotic pets, timber and other wildlife products. This is a serious threat to the survival of species such as reptiles and sturgeons."

Between 2003 and 2004, EU enforcement authorities made over 7000 seizures, totalling over 3.5 million CITES listed specimens.

The legal trade of wildlife products into the EU alone was worth an estimated €3 billion in 2005. Wildlife products imported into the EU include caviar from the Caspian Sea region, snakeskin handbags and shoes, rare reptiles as pets, as well as snooker cues made of Ramin, a tropical hardwood tree from South-east Asian forests.

TRAFFIC estimates that from 2000–2005, skins of 3.4 million lizards, 2.9 million crocodiles, and 3.4 million snakes, all species

listed under CITES, were imported into the EU, along with 300 000 live snakes for the pet trade.

During the same period, the EU imported 424 t of sturgeon caviar—more than half of all global imports—and in 2004 alone, it imported more than 10 million cubic metres of tropical timber from Africa, South America and Asia, worth €2 billion.

Well-regulated and legal trade can bring benefits to local people, local economies and conservation. For example, the EU imports 95 per cent of exported Vicuña wool, providing significant income for 700 000 people in impoverished Andean communities. Vicuña is a wild relation of the llama that is sheared and its wool exported, in accordance with CITES regulations, from Bolivia, Peru, Argentina and Chile. Sustainable development of the Vicuña wool trade has been supported by Italy, Germany and the EC.

"The EU's demand for wildlife products is having a huge impact on wildlife and people all over the world," said Maylynn Engler, first author of the report.

"The EU has a key role to play in ensuring excessive demand does not cause over-exploitation of wildlife outside its borders and has a responsibility to help countries manage their resources."

Meanwhile, the EU wildlife trade website; www.eu-wildlifetrade.org, has been updated to provide information in 20 EU languages aimed at the commercial wildlife trade sector on various aspects of wildlife trade in the EU.



Tanzania's disappearing timber revenue leads to anti-corruption action

Millions of dollars worth of timber revenue is being lost each year in Tanzania because of poor governance and rampant corruption in the forestry sector, according to a hard-hitting TRAFFIC report launched in May 2007. The report, *Forestry, governance and national development: Lessons learned from a logging boom in southern Tanzania*, was authorized by the Tanzanian Government and documents alarming levels of corruption, illegal logging and exports of forest products from Tanzania.

The Tanzanian Government reacted swiftly to the report, with the Speaker of Parliament giving approval for a discussion of its findings by Government Ministers at a meeting of the African Parliamentarians Network Against Corruption (APNAC) in Dodoma, Tanzania, in July 2007, and the Tanzanian Revenue Authority announcing it is sending a team of experts to "beneficiary" countries including China, India, United Arab Emirates and Singapore, to ask for their help in stopping illegal logging.

TRAFFIC's Simon Milledge, and lead author of the report, spoke at the meeting.

He commented: "It's gratifying to see the Tanzanian Government take the report's findings seriously, and to take action to stamp out corruption in the forestry sector.

"We hope it marks a turning point in Tanzania's forest fortunes."

Milledge pointed out the country was in the situation where the forestry sector was highly dependent upon donor funding, despite having the potential to be self-sufficient from timber revenues.

Annually, timber royalty losses amounted to USD58 million during 2004 and 2005. Trade losses are also significant: China imported ten times more timber from Tanzania than is documented by Tanzania's export records, suggesting a 90% loss of revenue from this source. Up to 96% of potential timber royalties were lost by central and district governments due to under-collection—entire District Council

budgets could have been increased several times over.

Uncontrolled timber harvesting in southern Tanzania grew rapidly from 2003, largely because of increasing overseas demand, especially from China. Driven by greed and profit, some operators broke laws, paid minimal wages and minimal prices for harvested logs—just 1% of their export value. Meanwhile, Tanzanian hardwoods commanded high prices internationally, compared to timber from West and Central Africa. The unsustainable harvesting has led to environmental degradation and the loss of commercially viable hardwoods in many areas.

"Although community-based forest management is widespread in Tanzania, rural communities unfortunately just aren't demanding enough accountability. Who's cutting their forests down, and where are the profits going?" asked Milledge.

More than half of the 28 logging companies studied had close links to senior forest or government officials. In some rural areas, the involvement of village leaders in the timber trade has led to an unfair distribution of profits, and at higher levels, there are many examples of self-dealing, nepotism and cronyism.

"The Tanzanian Government has tried to regulate the timber trade, through harvest and export bans, the establishment of forest surveillance units, and a review of licensing and harvesting procedures, but serious governance shortfalls have undermined these commendable

measures," said Milledge. "Whilst the situation has improved somewhat since 2006, the government still needs to do much more to tighten up its regulation of the industry and stamp out the corruption within it."

"It's not a question of stopping the logging and exportation of forest products, but of proper regulation of the timber industry and taking advantage of existing bilateral trade opportunities with countries such as China. Proper enforcement in the forestry sector will bring benefits for the whole nation."

The report details how forestry-related corruption and other factors affecting good governance are preventing Tanzania reaching the goals set out in the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (2005).

Forestry, governance and national development: Lessons learned from a logging boom in southern Tanzania was funded by the Royal Norwegian embassy in Tanzania and written jointly by TRAFFIC, the Government of Tanzania, and the Tanzanian Development Partners Group.



Village in southern Tanzania showing log piles and village chairman's house (arrowed)

Merbau—an opportunity for sustainable community forestry in Papua New Guinea?

By Pei-Sin Tong (tongps@myjaring.net) and Hin-Keong Chen (hkchen@pc.jaring.my)

This article is in part based on the results of a TRAFFIC study on the international trade in Merbau (*Intsia* spp.), funded by BfN, the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, and information provided by NGOs in Papua New Guinea, especially work carried out by the Foundation for People and Community Development on community forestry and certification. The full report of the TRAFFIC study will be published shortly.

Merbau is a highly valuable commercial timber species found in tropical South-east Asia and Papua New Guinea (PNG). In PNG, where Merbau is known locally as *kwila*, it is common and its commercial extractable timber volume is estimated at 26 million m³, or roughly 6% of the country's total potential timber production. Merbau stocks vary greatly between different areas in PNG. The highest densities occur in the northern regions of the country in Madang and East and West Sepik provinces. In the forests of Vanimo a density of 7–10 stems per hectare of trees 15 cm diameter at breast height (DBH) or more was reported by White (1976).

Merbau is potentially a valuable source of income for local communities in PNG, particularly since 97% of forests are community owned. Merbau commands the highest prices of any valuable timber species from PNG, with a Free-on-Board price of USD112 per m³ in January 2007 compared to USD66–92 for timber such as Malas (*Homatium foetidum*), Bintangor (*Calophyllum* spp.) and Taun (*Pometia* spp.). Merbau products comprised 6.4% to 10.9% of the total wood exported by PNG from 2002 to 2004.

Community-based timber production (CTP) underpins the development of small scale forest industries in PNG that complement the existing large scale forestry concessions. According to the Foundation for People and Community Development (FPCD),

local communities need equipment and training in the use of chainsaws, portable sawmills plus up-to-date information on timber-harvesting and forestry management skills to supplement their culturally sensitive indigenous forestry knowledge. Small-scale community logging is an attractive proposition compared to industrial-scale logging and land clearance or land conversion to farming. Additionally, local communities have the power and right to make decisions affecting their own people.

Can CTP enterprises be technically, economically, institutionally and ecologically sustainable? We believe CTP should be strongly supported, particularly given the success of a PNG local community forestry enterprise that was recently awarded a Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certificate for sustainable forest management.

TRAFFIC recommends that scientific research is needed on Merbau in PNG because forest inventories are incomplete or lacking. Understanding the structure and management of CTP enterprises will increase our knowledge of them and help with the development or revision of national forest policy and management planning which has to encompass the needs of CTP.

Some words of caution, however. The price of Merbau is steadily increasing, which is leading to over-harvesting and illegal exploitation. Merbau may soon no longer be a commercially viable

timber species as other look-alike or less well-known timber species are brought in as substitutes. These alternatives could reduce the risks of being highly dependent on Merbau, but the move away from Merbau could severely affect communities who rely heavily upon it for their income.

In the 1990s, attention focused on the threat to Merbau from illegal logging and international trade, with allegations of large quantities of Merbau being harvested illegally in Indonesia's Papua Province and in PNG. There is clearly an urgent need to strengthen the implementation of existing laws to control licensing and forest management—especially to regulate the indiscriminate harvest of this high quality timber species, whilst empowering local communities to take charge of their own forestry resources, in particular the management of high value timber species that can underpin their economic and livelihood development.

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TRAFFIC and SACEP signal intention to manage wildlife trade in South Asia

The South Asian Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with TRAFFIC, to enlist the wildlife trade network's assistance in building a regional network for ensuring the sustainability of legal wildlife trade and for tackling wildlife crime in South Asia.

The South Asian network will draw on experience from the highly successful ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN), an inter-governmental initiative which has brought 10 Southeast Asia governments together to combat wildlife crime. TRAFFIC is continuing to work with Wildlife Alliance (formerly known as WildAid), via a co-operative partnership with USAID, to provide technical assistance to government agencies that are implementing ASEAN-WEN.

"TRAFFIC was instrumental in helping establish the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network in Southeast Asia, and we're delighted to be able to call upon their assistance for building a similar network in South Asia," said Dr Arvind Boaz, Director General of SACEP.

South Asia becomes the latest region to announce the formation of a network for co-operation between member state authorities to manage wildlife trade and tackle wildlife crime: in June, the European Union (EU) unveiled an Action Plan to tackle wildlife crime within the EU and to offer support to countries outside the region.

Lost without TRACE: tracking down wildlife crime using forensics



Rob Ogden of TRACE and Steven Broad of TRAFFIC sign a Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations

TRACE (Technologies and Resources for Applied Conservation and Enforcement), a new non-profit organization has launched an initiative to promote the application of forensic science in combating wildlife crime, in collaboration with TRAFFIC.

Forensics can be used to identify materials when visual identification is impossible, for example in cooked, ground or processed products, such as traditional medicines. This makes forensics especially valuable for investigating the origin and identity of products, both legal and illegal, in wildlife trade.

"Forensics have a massive potential for tackling wildlife crime and in monitoring the legal wildlife trade," says Dr Rob Ogden, co-founder of TRACE.

But despite their potential, wildlife forensics are seldom used, largely because of a lack of awareness of the tests available, and a lack of capacity to carry them out, particularly in developing countries.

"Techniques such as DNA and stable isotope analysis are immensely powerful tools, but they are all too infrequently applied to tackling wildlife crime.

"TRACE aims to build sufficient political and financial support to enable us to create a worldwide network of expertise in wildlife forensics and link it to Customs and enforcement agencies who can make best use of it," says Ogden.

The first TRACE Wildlife DNA Forensics training course took place in March this year in Pretoria, South Africa. Fifteen delegates learned about biological sample collection, DNA extraction, species identification and how to present forensic evidence in court. The meeting ended with the formation of the Environmental Forensics Working Group of South Africa.

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Traditional Medicine in Viet Nam: an overview

by Thomas Osborn, TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, Greater Mekong Programme

Viet Nam has a long history of Traditional Medicine (TM) practices spanning thousands of years. Two, often interlinked, forms exist within the country: Thuoc Bac, or Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), is the dominant system in the north and uses materials native to China; and Thuoc Nam, or Traditional Vietnamese Medicine (TVM), that predominates in the south and uses Vietnamese materials.

In TM systems, the prevention of ailments and disease are considered as important as the cure; disease can be prevented by maintaining the body's natural balances, and through restoring energy levels in order to maintain a healthy life.

In Viet Nam, TCM is used chiefly for enhancing or strengthening health whilst TVM is used primarily as a cure. However, each type of TM has drawn extensively on the other to refine existing treatments and remedies and to develop new ones.

Traditional medicines in Viet Nam are made from animal, plant and mineral products. Plants are used in far more remedies (over 90%) than animals, and most animal-based medicines also include plants to neutralize unpleasant odours and increase their overall effect. All parts of a plant can be used. Similarly, many different animal parts are used, from whole bodies to specific organs.

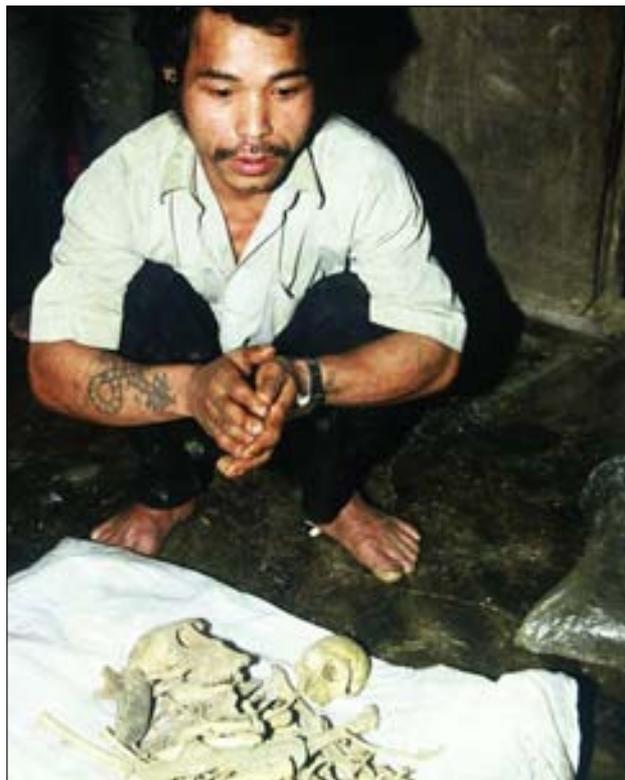
Of the more than 80 million people in Viet Nam, over 75% are estimated to use TM as their primary source of treatment for common health problems. This is perhaps unsurprising considering the prohibitive expense of western medicines, combined with poor access to hospitals or community health centres. Together with increasing demand from urban areas, exploitation of medicinal plants and animals has risen to pose a serious threat to some species in Viet Nam: around 70 species are listed as threatened on the The World Conservation Union

(IUCN) Red List. The current Viet Nam Red Data Book lists 359 animals of conservation concern, many of them traded and used for medicinal purposes, including Tiger *Panthera tigris*, rhinos *Rhinocerotidae* spp. and bears *Ursus* spp.

The impact of exploitation of wild medicinal plant species is less well documented, but may be equally severe, especially as over 90% of the 3900 plant species used in traditional medicine are wild harvested. The uncontrolled harvest of wild medicinal plants in Viet Nam, particularly on a commercial scale for processing and export by the pharmaceutical industry, along with habitat loss and degradation, are considered to be the primary causes for the

decline of 136 species, 18 of them classified as Critically Endangered by IUCN. Several other species have declined so much in the wild in Viet Nam they now have to be imported by the major pharmaceutical companies.

Regulation and testing (quality control) of the trade in medicinal plants and animals is poor. Current legislation is old and contains many gaps, and only applies to state-run companies and institutions. Within private industry there is no official regulation (either administration or enforcement) of activities. With such a complex structure, some of it "underground", planning to regulate this large private industry will be a huge challenge in the coming years.



Paco man with bones of primates and other animals he will use to make traditional medicines. A Luoi Valley, Thua Tien Hue Province, Vietnam (1997)

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