

TRAFFIC POST

the wildlife trade monitoring network

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TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



TRAFFIC INDIA
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TRAFFIC
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IN FOCUS



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From Roland Melisch, Global Programme Co-ordinator on “The making of a truly South Asian Programme of TRAFFIC”



TRAFFIC took its first step towards “the making of a truly South Asian Programme” by organizing a goal-setting workshop in New Delhi, India on 6 - 7 December 2007. Representatives from South Asian countries such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and India participated in this meeting.

Roland Melisch, the Global Programme Co-ordinator, TRAFFIC International, who is also leading this initiative, talks to TRAFFIC India about the programme and the illegal wildlife trade scenario.

What, according to you, are the key issues in illegal wildlife trade in India?

India is the world's third-largest exporter of medicinal and aromatic plants. It has a growing consumer market for the world's timber resources and is the world's second-largest shark-catching nation, despite having little provision for safeguarding these Tigers of the seas. The current management schemes are apparently not providing ample incentives to manage these resources sustainably. There also seems to be a lack of adequate federal structures to combat organized wildlife crime in India. It is to be hoped that this will change with the establishment of the National Wildlife Crime Bureau.

What is the purpose of this initiative, “Towards a region: the making of a truly South Asian Regional Programme”?

In the past, TRAFFIC has mainly concentrated its efforts in India and on cross-border trade issues between Nepal and India. Whilst India will always remain a centre of focus of our work, it is time to establish a more coherent approach at a regional level, encompassing a bigger proportion of the eight countries comprising South Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. During a recent visit to Pakistan, I have received very sincere signals inviting TRAFFIC to operate in that country.

What do you plan to achieve through this?

Countries neighbouring each other in South Asia face almost similar challenges and have a lot of problems and opportunities in common. Therefore TRAFFIC firmly believes that improving networking, co-operation and co-ordination among countries in South Asia will help to control wildlife crime. Exchange of experience and knowledge will help to enhance sustainability levels of trade in wildlife that is legal and crack down on the wildlife crime gangs operating across borders.

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What, according to you, will be the priority for this programme?

There are certainly two imminent priorities for improving networking, cooperation and coordination in South Asia:

- a) The exchange of experiences with non-detriment findings for those species of wildlife that can legally be traded (will enhance the sustainability levels of legal trade)
- b) Better transnational co-operation to combat illegal trade effectively, maybe through a South Asian wildlife trade enforcement network but this will certainly be up to the governments to decide.

What do you think will be TRAFFIC India's role?

TRAFFIC India will certainly try to advise policy-makers on better biodiversity management schemes wherever needed in order to manage wildlife resources more effectively. They will also provide training and help build capacity of the enforcement and management agencies to curb illegal and unsustainable trade in wildlife that is flourishing in the main market hubs.

Is there any particular issue you would like to flag?

With my background in Asian otter ecology and conservation, I was puzzled to hear of and personally see the sheer amount of otter skins confiscated in the South Asian region, particularly in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nepal. These freshwater carnivores are already heavily threatened by wetland conversion and misuse of pesticides. I hope that improved implementation of national wildlife laws and better regional co-operation will at least help to minimize the threats posed by poaching and trade.

“Wildlife Quiz” organized to launch Wildlife Week celebrations



© TRAFFIC India

Students locked horns at a “Wildlife Quiz” jointly organized by the National Zoological Park, New Delhi, WWF-India and TRAFFIC India on 1 October, 2007. Over 20 schools from all across Delhi participated in the quiz competition that put their knowledge about nature and wildlife to the test. Spring Dales School, Dhaula Kuan was declared the winner while the team from Chinmaya Vidyalaya School, Vasant Vihar stood second. The winning team received a trophy and a

certificate from Shri S. Regupathy, Hon'ble Minister of State for Environment and Forests, Government of India at an awards ceremony organized on 3 October, 2007.

“The zoo is very happy to have welcomed our young guests during this competition as also at other events during the Wildlife Week” said Mr. D. N. Singh, Director, National Zoological Park, New Delhi. “We are hopeful that this quiz will encourage young adults to think about the future of our natural resources and become active participants in preserving them.”

The quiz was part of the awareness initiatives undertaken by TRAFFIC India in the year 2007 to sensitize young minds about illegal wildlife trade and its detrimental effect on our natural resources.

TRAFFIC ‘Alert’



Man held with Cobra venom

The police arrested a man, with 250 ml of Cobra snake venom worth INR 1.5 lakh on 19 August, 2007. Police said they had received a tip-off that a man from Gujarat with a large quantity of venom had come to the capital to sell it. They were also told that he was carrying it in a negligent manner, thereby endangering human life. Accordingly, a raid was conducted and the accused was arrested from Shakti Nagar Chowk, Roop Nagar in north Delhi. A bottle containing 250 ml of venom, worth INR 150 000 in international market was recovered.

On interrogation, Rathod revealed that he worked as a marketing agent for a detergent manufacturer in Gujarat, where he met a medicine dealer, who promised him a handsome margin if he obtained Cobra venom. Subsequently, he got in touch with another agent and procured the venom that was extracted from around 1000 snakes.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Such seizures indicate that there is an emerging illegal market for snake venom across the country. This is astonishing since the trade in snake venom is heavily regulated and has a very limited and niche market.

Snake venom is used to make anti-venom serum, the only cure for snake bites. The venom is extracted from mainly four snakes in India commonly known as the “Big Four”- cobra, krait, Russels Viper *Daboia russelii* and Saw scaled Viper *Echis carinatus*. The venom is injected into horses in increasing doses and then the blood is drawn and purified. This serum contains vital antibodies that help to combat invasion of venom. Romulus Whitaker in his book, “Snakeman” (1999) quoted “Venom is one of the most expensive natural resources on earth, five to a 1000 times more expensive than gold, depending on the species”.

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/rssarticleshow/msi-d-2296621_prtpage-1.cms
<http://www.deccanherald.com/Content/Aug212007/national2007082020383.asp>

Wildlife Crime Control Bureau takes shape



The newly constituted Wildlife Crime Control Bureau is in place. The Bureau was formed last year under the amendment of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 with a mission to curb illegal wildlife trade and to ensure better protection of wildlife in India. The Bureau now has a Joint Director, Mr. Ashok Pai, IFS and Deputy Director Mr. P. Subramaniam, IFS, who are working full time for the Bureau. It will soon open its office in Bikaji Cama Place, New Delhi.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests has also constituted an Advisory Committee to the Bureau, which includes representatives from various conservation organizations from all across the country. Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India, a member of the committee, attended the first two meetings that were held on 6 September 2007 and 5 December 2007.

Mr. Sinha adds, "It is important that the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau hits the ground running and makes a quick impact on addressing organized wildlife crime. We have offered to provide all possible support required to achieve these objectives."

TRAFFIC India launches its Consumer Awareness Campaign



On 24 October, 2007 during the 12th Kailash Sankhala Lecture held at WWF-India Secretariat in New Delhi, Mr. Mike Pandey a renowned filmmaker and conservationist, launched TRAFFIC India's "Consumer Awareness Campaign" with the release of the leaflet, "Are you committing a Crime? Think before you buy".

This communiqué is mainly targeted towards sensitizing tourists/buyers about the illegal wildlife trade that has endangered our wildlife.

TRAFFIC India is hopeful that wide distribution of this leaflet will spread awareness about the illegal wildlife trade that is threatening the survival of various species of flora and fauna in India.

"Since the leaflet is largely targeted at the tourists, both domestic and international, travelling across India, TRAFFIC India hopes to drive home the point that souvenirs derived from endangered species of wildlife should not be treated as mementos for carrying home but rather a symbol of the wanton destruction of our natural habitat." said Mr. Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India.

The leaflet is available in both English and Hindi. For copies of the leaflet please write to us at TRAFFIC India or download it from our website www.wwfindia.org/traffic



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TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Shahtoosh shawls seized

In one of the biggest hauls in recent history, a Central Bureau of Investigation team seized 57 shahtoosh shawls from three traders who were trying to sell them to a customer at an up market hotel in central Delhi in August 2007. The traders had brought the shawls from Kashmir to Delhi and had covertly advertised the products on the internet to attract foreign buyers.

Another seizure of shahtoosh shawls in Thailand, throws light on the international nature of the trade. A Bangkok luxury store owner, Mr Reyaz Ahmad Mir, an Indian national from Kashmir, pleaded guilty to charges of illegally importing and selling shahtoosh shawls. He was sentenced to two years probation and fined USD300. In this case, the shawls were worth atleast USD20 000.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/main.jhtml?xml=/earth/2007/08/23/eashah123.xml>
<http://www.worldwildlife.org/news/displayPR.cfm?prID=426>
<http://www.worldwildlife.org/news/displayPR.cfm?prID=426>

TRAFFIC India adds.....

This upsurge is alarming as it indicates that the traders are becoming bold. It implies greater threat for the Tibetan Antelope. A single shahtoosh, manufactured from the wool of the endangered Tibetan Antelope, or Chiru *Panthelops hodgsonii*, can fetch huge profits by the time it reaches affluent customers in Europe, Nepal or the United Arab Emirates.

The Tibetan Antelope has become a fashion victim. There have been reports confirming that there is unhindered supply of its wool for Kashmir's weavers who make these luxurious shawls. Perhaps three to five animals have to be killed to provide wool for one shawl. The very low penalty given to the trader found guilty of trading in shahtoosh shawls in Thailand demonstrates the challenges faced in curbing such organized international crimes. Unless punishment for such illegal wildlife trade is exemplary it will not deter others from following suit.

Trans-border training programme to curb illegal wildlife trade



TRAFFIC India along with WWF-India and the Uttar Pradesh State Forest Department organized a trans-border training programme in Dudhwa Tiger Reserve on 13, 14 and 15 December 2007. The main aim of the programme was to enhance the skills of the Forest Department and other enforcement agencies that are working to curb illegal wildlife trade and also foster closer cooperation amongst such agencies on both sides of the Indo Nepal border.



Participants learning to use "Deep Search Metal Detectors"

© TRAFFIC India

The participants included officials from India and Nepal. From India, there were representatives from the Forest Departments, Customs, SSB (Seema Suraksha Bal), Police and the Special Task Force and from Nepal there were officials from their Army and the Wildlife Department. Training was imparted on the legal and technical aspects of wildlife enforcement. The participants were also made aware of the use of technology to fight wildlife crime such as use of "Deep Search Metal Detectors" to locate leg traps in the forest.

South Asia Wildlife Trade Initiative (SAWTI) - a new regional collaborative effort



TRAFFIC International, in collaboration with South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), has launched the South Asia Wildlife Trade Initiative (SAWTI), aimed to enhance government action and collaboration on wildlife trade issues in the South Asia region, covering Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The Hon'ble Environment Minister^s of South Asian countries, at the 10th Governing Council of SACEP decided to incorporate this specific programme for combating illegal trade in wildlife and its products as a response to the growing threat of poaching and illegal trade to wild species, both flora and fauna in the region. The South Asia Wildlife Trade Initiative (SAWTI) is built on the 2004 Kathmandu wildlife trade workshops during which the delegates from the participating countries identified priority actions to be taken at national and regional levels to mitigate illegal wildlife trade and to enhance wildlife trade regulations, particularly CITES, in a region where trade is threatening the long-term survival of some of the world's rarest species, such as Great Indian Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis*, Tiger *Panthera tigris*, and Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsonii*. This programme will follow the lines of the ASEAN Wildlife Trade initiative.

SAWTI will have its first regional workshop in Kathmandu, Nepal 31 January - 1 February 2008. Mr. A.K. Mukerji, retired DG-Forests, Government of India, has been appointed as a full-time Senior Policy Advisor to co-ordinate the programme on behalf of TRAFFIC International. He will carry out his role from New Delhi in India.

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Ornamental fishes seized in Chennai

On 12 October, 2007, the Air Intelligence Unit of Customs seized about 150 ornamental fish that were being smuggled by a passenger from Kuala Lumpur. The passenger arrived by the Jet Airways flight to Chennai. After interrogation, the authorities found ornamental fishes such as Arowana, Red Flower Horn and Blue Parrot worth INR 3.75 lakh, in his two suitcases. On 16 October 2007, just a few days later, a similar seizure took place again in Chennai. Customs officials seized 191 ornamental fish, worth INR 3 lakh from two passengers who had arrived on a flight from Bangkok. The ornamental fishes of different varieties were found in their suitcases, packed in polythene covers filled with water. In both the cases, the passengers did not possess a licence to trade.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

It is interesting to note that Asian Arowana *Scleropages formosus*, one of the most expensive aquarium fishes in the world also commands a market in India. It is also commonly called the Asian Bonytongue or the Dragonfish and is declared as 'Endangered' by the 2006 IUCN Red List. The international trade in these fish is controlled under the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), under which it is placed in Appendix I, the most restrictive category. Captive-bred Asian Arowana can be traded if the specimen is tagged with a microchip. It must be at least be of second generation and the breeder must be registered with CITES.

The Financial Express reported that the global ornamental fish trade was estimated at USD 4 billion and was said to be a fast growing sector. Although India contributes a negligible amount to this trade, it has a lucrative market, as demand in exotic ornamental fishes is high. While the industry has accelerating economic activity, this growth needs to be monitored carefully to ensure that illegal trade in ornamental fishes does not adversely affect our precious marine ecosystem.

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TRAFFIC invites information for ongoing Leopard trade study



© Axel Gebauer

In the last few years there has been an upward swing in the number of Leopard *Panthera pardus* skins seized across the country. Despite the precarious conservation status of the Leopard, not much information is available on its illegal trade. In view of this TRAFFIC India has initiated a study to analyse the extent of the Leopard trade in India.

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To assess spatial distribution and extent of Leopard poaching across the landscapes in India.
2. Identify causative factors, key

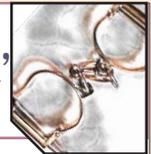
communities and other important players in Leopard trade.

3. Identify probable trade routes, mechanism of trade and other related information.

4. Evaluate existing strategies for combating Leopard trade and suggest ameliorative steps for the Forest Department and other enforcement agencies

Detailed information on dynamics of Leopard trade will help develop strategies for its conservation. **TRAFFIC India requests researchers, conservationists and others to come forward and share relevant data or findings related to Leopard poaching and trade in India.** Details can be sent at trafficind@wwfindia.net. Your support will be valuable for us.

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



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- <http://www.thehindu.com/2007/10/14/stories/2007101454090400.htm>
- <http://www.hindu.com/2007/10/17/stories/2007101761891400.htm>
- <http://www.financialexpress.com/news/Kerala-govt-plans-aqua-park-to-boost-ornamental-fish-trade/214533/>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_aronana

Thirty two otter skins seized, eight arrested

On 24 October 2007, officials of the State Wildlife Department apprehended eight persons in Panipat and confiscated 32 Indian otter skins from them. The suspects were intercepted near a hotel where they had allegedly come to sell the skins to unidentified buyers. A case has been registered and the wildlife officials are investigating to learn if the group are involved in illegal sale of other wild animal skins.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

There are three species of otters found in India - the Eurasian Otter *Aonyx cinerea*, Smooth-coated Otter *Lutra lutra* and Oriental Small-clawed Otter *Lutra perspicillata*. Eurasian Otter is listed under Schedule I and Smooth-coated Otter and Oriental Small-clawed Otter are listed under Schedule II Part II of the Wildlife Protection Act. This provides the species complete protection against hunting and trade. In addition, the Eurasian Otter is listed in Appendix I and the Smooth-coated and Small-clawed Otters are listed in Appendix II of CITES.

Despite the legal protection, the trade in otter skins continues. In fact, otter skins constitute the highest numbers in most multi species wildlife consignments that are apprehended. They are hunted for their highly prized pelts and smuggled out of India to the neighbouring territories, including Tibet and Nepal, where they are tailored into fur coats and garment trimmings. Most of the seizures of otter pelts have been in the states of Delhi, West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh.

- <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2007/20071025/haryana.htm#7>
- http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/India/Ten_leopard_skins_seized_from_smugglers_in_UP/rssarticleshow/2492049.cms

OUTPOST: Pangolin trade racket busted in China



The Xiamen Intermediate court of Fujian province in south-east China heard the biggest pangolin smuggling case ever on 6 November, 2007. The five accused have been charged with smuggling 68 000 kgs of Pangolin meat, 900 kg of pangolin scale, 2849 pangolins and 2600 geckos from Indonesia to Xiamen and then on to Guangzhou and Shantou in Guangdong province from September 2005 to May 2006. In just a period of eight months the amount of smuggling totalled an extraordinary sum of CNY 2938 million.



Processed pangolin scales for sale

© TRAFFIC

The case indicates the possibility of a well-organized nexus involving criminal gangs and foreign officers working together in a conspiracy to smuggle pangolins from Indonesia. Pangolins are considered endangered species and are included in Appendix-II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Till the year 2000, limited trade and transport of this species on the Appendix II list was allowed, at levels that were not deemed to affect the survival of wild populations.

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However, the high volume of mostly unregulated shipments of Southeast Asian pangolins to China, where the meat is considered a delicacy and the animal's scales are thought to have wide-ranging medicinal properties, brought about a total ban of trade in the species in the year 2000.

The court on Tuesday pronounced a death sentence, suspended for two years, to two of the five accused, immediately depriving them of any political rights and confiscating their personal property worth CNY1.5 million. Of the remaining three gang members, two men were sentenced to imprisonment for an unlimited period of time and their personal properties up to CNY1 million and CNY500 000, respectively confiscated. The last of the five accused was sentenced to imprisonment for 10 years with a penalty payment of CNY100 000.

"We are very concerned about the numbers of pangolins in trade," said Xu Hongfa from TRAFFIC's office in China, "The volumes of this little-known animal in trade are alarming and are not sustainable."

"We commend the Chinese Government for taking illegal wildlife trade seriously, evidenced by the number of significant seizures of species such as pangolins. However, as the trade continues to grow, so should the efforts of the law enforcement agencies", he said, adding that there was a likelihood that numbers of confiscated pangolins may only represent a fraction of the actual numbers circulating in trade.

Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India, adds, "There are two species of pangolins found in India- Indian Pangolin *Manis crassicaudata* found throughout India but rare in the north-east and Chinese Pangolins *Manis pentadactyla* found in north-east India excluding the high Himalayas. Trade in the species is banned in India and the international trade is prohibited under CITES. However poaching for trade continues to remain one of the potential threats to the species today. Pangolins are perceived to have medicinal properties and are smuggled to other countries for their use in traditional medicines. There are no concrete data on the proportion of this trade but given the overwhelming international demand in neighbouring countries, the threat to the species should be perceived as high. It is necessary to understand the status of the species in the country and take adequate steps to curb poaching and trade".
http://www.bangkokpost.com/News/14Nov2007_News19.php
<http://news.163.com/07/1107/05/3SM2O80K0001124f.html>

Three convicted for wildlife trafficking in the national capital

On 17 November 2007, a city court sentenced three foreigners- two Tibetans and one Nepali national- to five years of rigorous imprisonment for wildlife trafficking. The trio, Anand alias Tashi, Lobsang Phuntsok and the Nepalese citizen Jeet Bahadur were arrested on 6 April, 2007 with 45 Leopard skins and 15 otter skins. The seizure was made by the Delhi police from the old Tibetan Camp at Majnu ka Tilla on the information provided by the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI). Following the orders of the Supreme Court on a petition filed by the NGO, the investigation was then transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The accused are the first Tibetans in Exile to be convicted of a wildlife crime. Despite appealing four times in the higher courts the accused did not succeed in getting bail for the period of the trial. During the investigation, the accused confessed that they were working for a notorious wildlife trader from Nepal.

<http://www.hindu.com/2007/11/18/stories/2007111861400300.htm>

TRAFFIC India adds.....

This is probably one of the shortest trials under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. Hopefully such convictions will help set an example for other wildlife cases in India. It is also to be noted that wildlife offences in India have still not attracted the highest punishment prescribed, i.e. rigorous imprisonment of seven years, as against the five years awarded in this case.

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Dry orchids seized in Manas

On 6 November 2007, at least six tonnes of dry orchids were seized from Manas in Chirang district in Assam. No arrests were made since the culprits fled on seeing the Forest Officials. The dry *Dendrobium* orchids were stacked in nine bags on the bank of the Kuklong River. The 20-km stretch from Kuklong to Kanamakra is one of the richest orchid zones in the Bodoland area. Kuklong is only 30 kms from the Indo-Bhutan border. This has raised suspicions that the flowers were meant to be smuggled across the border to the Himalayan Kingdom.

This is probably the first time that dry orchids in such large quantities have been seized indicating that a well-organized trade of orchids in this area is prevalent.

<http://www.telegraphindia.com/1071109/asp/others/print.html>

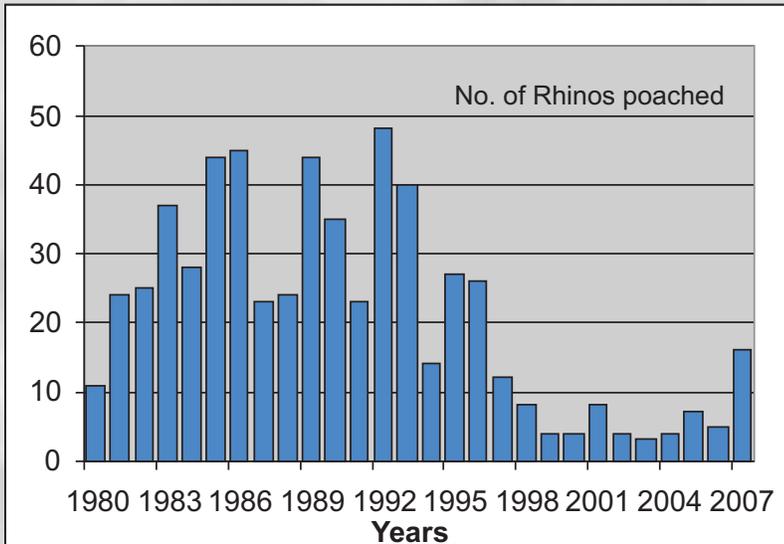
TRAFFIC India adds.....

The seizure of dried orchids in Assam comes as a rude shock. Orchids have always been a subject of fascination due to their unique and eye catching flowers. There are over 1600 species of orchids in India, of which the major varieties are found in north-east India. While live orchids and their plants have long been in trade, the seizure of dried orchids adds a new dimension to the trade. *Dendrobium* of the Orchidaceae family comes under the prohibited list of exports in India.

IN FOCUS:
Rhinos targeted - Kaziranga National Park



Kaziranga National Park in Assam has one of the most successful rhinoceros conservation histories in the world. Despite numerous problems, the Forest Department has been able to revive the population of the Great Indian Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* from a handful in the 1920s to about 1850 today. However this success has been threatened by the sudden spate of poaching in the year 2007. Official records indicate that 16 rhinos have been poached in Kaziranga National Park for their horns during this year.



Looking at the poaching status over the last two decades, it is clear that the poaching has gone down significantly. However, over the last three years there has been an upward swing in this trend. This can turn ugly and be very damaging for the species, given the circumstances and the history of poaching in the region. A similar state prevailed in Nepal in the year 2006 where a large number of Rhinos were poached in both Bardia and Chitwan National Park.

The Great Indian Rhinoceros is one of the five species of rhinos found in the world. It is poached for its horn which is used in traditional medicines in China, Taiwan,

South Korea and Japan. In Yemen, the horn is also carved into ceremonial dagger handles known as 'jambiyas'. The horns are usually traded as a single piece and can fetch 5-10 times the price of an African rhino horn. The major trade centres for this in India are Siliguri, in West Bengal, and Dimapur, in Nagaland from where the rhino horns are smuggled out to Nepal and Bhutan, and Myanmar, respectively. The contraband finally finds its way to south-east Asian countries.

Tariq Aziz, Associate Director, Species Conservation Programme, WWF-India said, "The poaching of rhinos in Assam is alarming and a cause of serious concern. Kaziranga may be able to absorb this loss but if a similar spurt of killings takes place in the neighbouring Pobitara or Orang it could be disastrous for the already struggling rhino populations in these areas."

Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India further added, "It is interesting to note the cyclic nature of the poaching trend between India and Nepal. In the year 2006, Nepal lost a large number of rhinos while India faced the brunt in the year 2007. The pattern of killings and the methods used is suggestive that the same nexus of poachers and traders is operating in both India and Nepal. Therefore, there is a need to undertake strong co-ordinated efforts by both countries to curb rhino poaching in this region."



© Earthcare Films

TRAFFIC India has committed its support to curb the rhino poaching in this region and is working with the Assam Forest Department on this.

HEADLINES

As you celebrated Diwali, thousands of owls were killed

By Arshad Durrani in New Delhi

AS YOU celebrated Diwali, the thousands of owls were killed and their carcasses were used to make fireworks. In the name of a religious festival, thousands of owls were killed and their carcasses were used to make fireworks. In the name of a religious festival, thousands of owls were killed and their carcasses were used to make fireworks.



Thousands of owls were killed and their carcasses were used to make fireworks.

DARK SECRETS

It takes up to 48 different operations to make a single firework. The process is highly secretive and involves the use of various chemicals and explosives. The industry is largely unregulated and operates in the shadows of the law.

Arrested poacher killed 35 tigers in a year

UP Gang Bust A Huge Success, Say Experts

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Lawrence, 53, was arrested on Tuesday after a 10-month hunt by forest guards. He is accused of killing 35 tigers in a year. The case is part of a larger effort to bust a poaching gang in the region.



A tiger in the forest, the target of poaching efforts.

Banned Shahtoosh back in business in the Valley

New Delhi, November 25



BANNED SHAHTOOSH has been back in business in the Valley. Despite a ban on the trade, traders are still selling the wool. The industry is thriving and has managed to evade the authorities.

CHILLING FACTS: Shahtoosh is made from the underfur of the Himalayan ibex. It is extremely soft and warm, making it a highly sought-after commodity. The trade is illegal but continues to flourish.

U.P. new nerve centre of illegal wildlife trade

State a haven for organised crime syndicates

Uttar Pradesh has emerged as a major hub for the illegal wildlife trade. Organized crime syndicates are active in the state, trafficking various species. The government is struggling to control the trade.

J&K destroys world's 'largest' fur stockpile

India's Jammu and Kashmir has destroyed the world's largest stockpile of fur. The stockpile, valued at millions of dollars, was hidden in a remote area. The government has successfully eliminated it.

Eighty five ducks illegally smuggled into city caught

Ducks were brought from Allahabad, Kolkata

Eighty-five ducks were illegally smuggled into the city from Allahabad and Kolkata. The ducks were found in a hidden location. The authorities have taken action against the smugglers.

975 star tortoises rescued, sent to Sanjay Gandhi park for care

Ninety-seven and a half thousand star tortoises have been rescued and sent to Sanjay Gandhi National Park for care. The tortoises were found in various parts of the country. The park is providing them with a safe environment.

Dead cobra in whisky bottle on display

Forest officials raid club on Residency Road

A dead cobra was found in a whisky bottle and is now on display. Forest officials raided a club on Residency Road where the bottle was found. The cobra was preserved for scientific study.

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TRAFFIC logo and text: 'the wildlife trade monitoring network is a joint programme of WWF and IUCN The World Conservation Union'