

# Asian Wildlife Trade Bulletin

News from TRAFFIC's Wildlife Trade Initiative  
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## TRAFFIC conducts trans-boundary market survey in Russia and China

Recent surveys by TRAFFIC of wildlife markets along both sides of the Russia-China border reveal a high level of illegal trade, even though most traders are aware of the law.

In March, several of the biggest wildlife and agricultural markets and pet shops were surveyed in Vladivostok as well as Ussuriisk, a town bordering China and having the highest concentration of Chinese citizens in Primorsky province. Preliminary results showed that most wildlife trade in Primorsky province is covert; however, caviar from endangered sturgeon species, one of the most popular tourist delicacies in the region, can be bought in the most popular tourist places, including Vladivostok Airport. The survey also found demand for traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) products (mainly musk and bear gall bladder) in Primorsky province's Chinese markets. This is especially true at Druzhba market, the largest Chinese market in Ussuriisk, where a high level of covert wildlife trade takes place.

In the Russian Far East, whether wildlife trade takes place openly or covertly in the markets is related to the level of law enforcement. Practically all Russian and Chinese traders interviewed were aware that wildlife trade without a special licence was illegal and that wildlife trade of endangered species is prohibited in Russia. The level of traders' awareness during the survey was high due to a widely publicized criminal case, which took place in Vladivostok at the end of March 2008. The case involved three Russian and three Chinese citizens who were accused of smuggling Tiger skins, Tiger bones and 480 bear paws. Around 80% of Chinese traders interviewed in Ussuriisk were aware of the case, which demonstrates the effectiveness of publicizing wildlife seizures.

On the Chinese side of the border, the survey continued in Harbin and Qiqihaer, where four wildlife and antique markets, five agricultural markets, three aquatic markets, one TCM raw material wholesale market and 10 TCM retail shops were



Products made from Hawksbill Turtle for sale at a curio market in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, China. © Xu Ling/TRAFFIC East Asia - China Programme

## CONTENTS

- 1 TRAFFIC conducts trans-boundary market survey in Russia and China
- 2 Amur-Heilong Ecoregion planning workshop held in Vladivostok
- 3 Vietnamese, Indonesian officials exchange approaches to halt illegal timber trade
- 4 NGOs work together to address illegal wildlife trade on the Chinese-language internet
- 5 Enforcement officers gear up to combat illegal ivory trade in China
- 6 TRAFFIC warns Chinese travellers against transporting ivory
- 7 Indo-Bhutan wildlife enforcement training workshop organized by TRAFFIC India

**TRAFFIC**  
the wildlife trade monitoring network

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Sustainable use of wild plants project launched in India

'Don't buy trouble' warns TRAFFIC India



Blood ivory: end consumers are as much partners in wildlife crime as those who deal in or hunt protected species of wildlife.

investigated. The survey revealed a high level of wildlife products being sold openly to the public, indicating a lower level of law enforcement of wildlife trade in China than in the Russian areas surveyed. Interviews of TCM traders found that at least 50% were engaged in illegal trade. The interviews revealed that most of the wildlife products in Harbin's wholesale market (Shankeshu), such as ginseng, bear gall bladder and deer antlers, come from Chinese breeding farms, which are legal sources. However, products from the wild, such as musk pods or antlers were also available. The survey showed a growing demand in Shankeshu TCM market for saiga horns and musk pods from Russia, whether legal or not. Surveys in wildlife and antique markets showed that some illegal ivory, hawksbill products, raptor specimens and other animal products were being sold. However, illegal wildlife products were not found being sold in agricultural and aquatic markets or TCM retail shops.

"The Russian Far East is one of the most problematic regions in the Russian Federation with respect to illegal hunting, collection and trade in wild animals

and plants," said Natalia Pervushina, TRAFFIC Europe Russia programme co-ordinator, "Most of the illegal wildlife trade in the region occurs along the Sino-Russian border where quite often both Russian and Chinese citizens are engaged in organized illegal wildlife procurement and transportation. Trans-boundary work on wildlife trade monitoring is essential for having a clear picture of what is happening with wildlife markets in the region."

This is the first joint market monitoring survey conducted by TRAFFIC's Russia and China programmes. "This survey has helped us further understand what is happening in markets in both China and Russia, enabling us to track the movement of wildlife products along the border," added Xu Ling, TRAFFIC East Asia programme officer, "We hope this successful trans-boundary collaboration will lead to more information exchanges and better law enforcement in China and Russia."

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## Amur-Heilong Ecoregion planning workshop held in Vladivostok

The Amur-Heilong Ecoregion Programme (AHEP) FY09–11 planning workshop was held 27–30 March 2008 in Vladivostok, Russia. Representatives from numerous TRAFFIC and WWF offices, as well as key partners participated. The aim of the workshop was to draft a three-year programme for AHEP for Russia, China and Mongolia. This involves incorporating country programmes into one coordinated ecoregional Conservation Action Plan. This includes a coordinated Amur Tiger and Leopard Restoration Programme for Chanbaishan Tiger Conservation Landscape; agreement on a new Programme Implementation Agreement with three-year commitments of implementing and donor offices and the drafting of a future communications strategy. The planning workshop ended with confirmation of financing for the AHEP for the coming three years with a total of over EUR 6 million.



Participants at the Amur-Heilong Ecoregion Programme (AHEP) planning workshop develop a coordinated multi-country conservation plan for Russia, China and Mongolia. © TRAFFIC

TRAFFIC has ambitious plans for support of the AHEP over the next three years. Planning during the AHEP workshop included Russia-China wildlife market surveys, trans-boundary workshops for customs officers and regular information exchanges between governments and partner organizations. A draft budget for the next three years was also presented at the workshop.

TRAFFIC's office in Russia also presented plans for a three-year collaboration between WWF Russia Far East and the Vladivostok Branch of the Russian Customs Academy. These Plans were first outlined through discussion of all partners in November 2007. The agreement will lead to improved wildlife conservation and control of wildlife trafficking across the Russian border. TRAFFIC will serve as the WWF representative for implementing this plan.

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## Vietnamese, Indonesian officials exchange approaches to halt illegal timber trade

Vietnamese wildlife trade enforcement officials have completed a timber trade study tour to the Republic of Indonesia from 7–10 January 2008.

During the visit, organized by TRAFFIC under the framework of the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) project, Vietnamese officials learned from the experiences of their Indonesian counterparts about combating timber smuggling from Indonesia to Viet Nam.

Participants included senior officials from the Viet Nam Forest Protection Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and General Customs Department of the Ministry of Finance. Staff from TRAFFIC's office in Hanoi facilitated this dialogue.

The Vietnamese delegation met with representatives from several Indonesian government and non-government organizations and visited trade-related industrial sites. Participants discussed forest management and timber trade



TRAFFIC is working to combat timber smuggling from Indonesia to Viet Nam © Thomas Osborn/TRAFFIC Southeast Asia – Greater Mekong Programme

issues and reviewed management concerns with Indonesia's decentralized forestry management framework.

The delegation also learned about Indonesian methods for managing legally exploited timber through documentation, monitoring and timber identification. This included reviewing strategies used by smugglers to negate these systems and outlining possible measures to prevent such activity.

"This study tour has provided a great opportunity to develop practical cooperation between the two countries in the fight against illegal timber trade," said Tom Osborn, TRAFFIC Greater Mekong Programme's Forest Trade Officer, "The next task is to build on the success of the study tour by implementing some of the ideas that resulted from discussions."

The tour identified the need for the Viet Nam Customs Department to hold regular training courses on anti-smuggling measures, as well as to better incorporate information technology into their management systems. The tour also provided several ideas for future collaboration between Indonesian and Vietnamese Forest Protection and Customs officials, including training courses on timber identification and the development of a focal point system for information exchange.

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## NGOs work together to address illegal wildlife trade on the Chinese-language internet

A workshop aimed at controlling illegal wildlife trade on the Chinese-language internet was held in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China in January 2008.

The workshop was organized by the China CITES Management Authority and Internet Information Security Monitoring Bureau of the Ministry of Public Security. The objective of the workshop was to discuss how to control the illegal trade of endangered species on the internet efficiently, including the illegal trade of ivory and rhino products, which has become a serious problem.

There were more than 30 participants, including numerous government agencies as well as representatives from China's three main auction websites. At the workshop, enforcement efforts by the CITES Management Authority as well as other government departments were reviewed, and experiences controlling illegal web trade were shared. In addition, TRAFFIC introduced its report on internet trade of endangered species on Chinese websites in mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, which was conducted from 2005 to 2006.

All participants agreed that the conservation of endangered species and enforcement requires cooperation between police, customs, forestry, and industry and commerce departments, together with collaboration of relevant websites.

During the workshop, the web companies present - Taobao, eBay and Tencent - expressed interest in training courses conducted by TRAFFIC to improve conservation awareness and identification capacity of company managers.

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## Enforcement officers gear up to combat illegal ivory trade in China

More than 30 enforcement officers and staff from China's police, Customs, market and industry and CITES Management Authorities departments gathered in Shanghai on 8 January 2008 to discuss how to work together more effectively to combat illegal ivory trade in China.

The Shanghai Ivory Trade Market Management Workshop was organized by the Shanghai Landscape Administration Bureau and East China Normal University. TRAFFIC, the only NGO represented at the workshop, gave presentations on recent market surveys of illegal ivory trade in China, as well as illegal ivory trade on the internet.

TRAFFIC's market survey, which had taken place in December 2006, and included ivory markets in Shanghai, found illegal ivory trade taking place in Shanghai's Curio, Flower and Bird market. In addition, a TRAFFIC survey of illegal wildlife trade taking place on the Chinese-language internet also revealed illegal ivory trade on various websites.

The Shanghai Wildlife Conservation and Management Division acted upon the survey results by sending an official to take part in TRAFFIC's second ivory market survey. Wei Li, the director of the Fair Trade Bureau of the State Administration of Industry and Commerce, suggested the establishment of a multi-departmental system and strengthening market monitoring to combat illegal ivory trade.

At the Shanghai meeting, participants agreed that all related departments should cooperate with each other to carry out an

enforcement campaign to combat illegal ivory trade in the near future. This could be followed by the development of a long-term cooperation system to eliminate all illegal ivory trade in Shanghai.

At the conclusion of the meeting, TRAFFIC was asked to compile workshop reports and related policies and regulations prohibiting the illegal ivory trade. These materials have been sent to all enforcement departments to aid future enforcement efforts.

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## TRAFFIC warns Chinese travellers against transporting ivory

Illicit trade in elephant ivory has steadily increased since the mid-1990s, with demand for ivory in China behind much of this trend.

This message is being brought to travellers through 5000 posters sent to Chinese embassies and consulates in 37 African countries, as well as these countries' embassies in Beijing.

TRAFFIC is advising travellers that transporting ivory across borders is illegal. This campaign mainly targets Chinese citizens traveling between key African countries and China, as well as Thailand and Myanmar.

According to incomplete statistics, there were a total of 85 ivory seizures published online from January 2007 to March 2008. Of the 85 seizures, 27 reports explicitly mention the means of transportation involved: 59% occurred at security checks at the airport, with all items hidden in luggage;



**严禁非法携带、邮寄、运输象牙及其制品出入境**

象被列入《濒危野生动植物种国际贸易公约》(简称《CITES公约》)附录I或附录II,象牙及其制品的贸易受到该公约和《中华人民共和国濒危野生动植物进出口管理条例》的管理,未经批准,严禁禁止非法运输、携带和进出口。

**Transporting and mailing ivory products across borders is illegal**

Elephants are listed in Appendix I/II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which places strict controls on international trade in elephant products. CITES and Chinese law strictly prohibit the transportation of all ivory products across borders without official documentation.

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The CITES Management Authority of the P.R.China  
Tel: 86-10-62279904 Fax: 86-10-62279904 Address: No. 19, Heping East Street, Beijing, China. Website: [www.cites.gov.cn](http://www.cites.gov.cn)  
中华人民共和国濒危物种进出口管理办公室 TRAFFIC (网址: [www.trafficchina.org](http://www.trafficchina.org)) 敬告  
Aid: Donor to The CITES Management Authority of the P.R.China and TRAFFIC

A TRAFFIC poster advises travelers that transporting ivory across borders is illegal.

33% were via courier or ordinary mail; and 4% by train or automobile. In addition, 20 reports explicitly mentioned the nationality of suspects involved: 80% were mainland Chinese and 20% were people from Hong Kong or other nationalities. In December 2007, there were three ivory seizures in Beijing Capital Airport; two suspects were from Congo and Cameroon.

The Global Elephant Trade and Information System shows that African countries such as Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and Nigeria, as well as China and Thailand in Asia, play important parts of this illegal trade. This trade is believed to be the principal driver of the illegal killing of elephants.

"Illegal ivory trade has caused large-scale damage to elephant populations. We hope these posters help drive home the point to Chinese travellers that transporting ivory across borders is contributing in a real way to the demise of wild elephant populations," said Xu Hongfa of TRAFFIC's China programme.

One example of the poster's impact comes from the Embassy of China in Tanzania, which has reinforced this key message to Chinese enterprises, experts, and overseas Chinese associations in Tanzania, asking Chinese citizens to comply with Chinese and Tanzanian laws and regulations regarding CITES. The TRAFFIC poster is displayed in the visa section of that embassy. It has also been used in the visa section of the Thai embassy in Beijing as well as the embassies of other countries.

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## Indo-Bhutan wildlife enforcement training workshop organized by TRAFFIC India

TRAFFIC India with support from WWF-India, Bodoland Territorial Council and the Assam Forest Department, organized an Indo-Bhutan wildlife enforcement training workshop at Manas Tiger Reserve from 7-9 January 2008. The main aim of the workshop was to enhance skills of the enforcement agencies working to curb illegal wildlife trade and to improve crossborder co-operation and co-ordination between the two countries on such issues.

Training was given on the legal and technical aspects of prosecuting wildlife cases and curbing illegal wildlife trade. This was done through a series of case studies, group discussions and presentations. Participants included officials from the Manas Tiger Reserve and the various Forest Divisions of Assam in India. From Bhutan, there were officials from the Forest Divisions, Royal Manas National Park, Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park and their Nature Conservation Division.

Such joint training programmes are an important means to strengthen regional co-operation and collaboration to fight the trans-national illegal wildlife trade in South Asia.

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