

TRAFFIC POST

the wildlife trade monitoring network

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TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



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WILD CRY

Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.

Selling SEASHELLS off the sea: Curio trade in seashells in India

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'WANTED ALIVE': New awareness campaign to curb trade in Asian big cats



With Asia's big cats increasingly under threat in the wild, TRAFFIC launched a new public service advertisement campaign in May 2012 reminding people that these felines were "Wanted Alive" in their natural habitat!

Campaign posters feature the four Asian big cats—Tiger, Leopard, Snow Leopard and Clouded Leopard—all of them threatened by illegal trade in their body parts.

Large banners have been put up at the DND Flyway in Delhi, at airports, metro stations, and other strategic locations across the country. TIMES OOH has provided generous support for the campaign by offering hoarding sites and digital screens to TRAFFIC for display across India.



A strong message carried by the campaign implores readers to do their part to ensure that these four species continue to survive in the wild. Besides existing markets, new emerging ones, such as those in Myanmar, are aggravating the situation. The threat was highlighted at the recently concluded Global Tiger Recovery Programme Stocktaking meeting in New Delhi, 15–17 May 2012, which was attended by senior government officials from all 13 Tiger range countries.



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Mr MKS Pasha, Associate Director and Interim Head of TRAFFIC in India stated, "Preserving our wildlife should be a concern for everyone. Protecting species, means protecting their forests and other habitats, and that also means securing the water quality in our rivers and other water sources. Wanted Alive is TRAFFIC's message to the public on conservation of Asian big cats. Inherent respect for our wildernesses will go a long way in helping secure our natural treasures."

Mr Ravi Singh, Secretary General & CEO of WWF-India added, "Poaching has become the single largest threat to these cats in the wild. WWF-India and TRAFFIC have worked tirelessly to highlight the gravity of this threat, recently at the Global Tiger Recovery Programme Stocktaking meeting. People across India need to recognize the importance of the Tiger to our country's image, and help stop those who would plunder our national treasure for their greed."

Mr Sunder Hemrajani, MD, Times OOH said, "Times OOH wholeheartedly supports the cause of protection of wildlife undertaken by TRAFFIC and WWF-India. It is important for people to understand their role in wildlife conservation. Our various premium properties offer such an opportunity to educate as they reach out to a large audience that can pioneer this change. We are happy to promote and be a part of this cause."

The campaign was designed by Crossbow Designs with support from WWF-India and WWF-UK.

To download copies of the posters, please visit http://www.wfindia.org/about_wwf/enablers/traffic/?7340/Help-save-our-big-cats



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TRAFFIC adopts multi-agency approach to tackle wildlife crime in Arunachal Pradesh



TRAFFIC India and WWF-India, in collaboration with the Forest Department of Arunachal Pradesh, organized a two day workshop from 1–2 May 2012 in Itanagar on wildlife law enforcement and conservation.

Itanagar is the capital of the north-eastern Indian State of Arunachal Pradesh (AP), and lies on an important illegal wildlife trade route.

The meeting brought together a number of agencies whose co-operation is necessary for curbing wildlife crime, which poses a threat to AP's rich biodiversity. Over 70 officials from the forest department, police, civil administration and ITBP (Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force) participated in the two day workshop.

The meeting was inaugurated by Shri Nabam Tuki, Hon. Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh; Shri Yeshe Tsering, Chief Secretary, Government of Arunachal Pradesh; Shri B. S. Sajwan, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Principal Secretary Environment and Forests (PCCF), Arunachal Pradesh; and Shri J. L. Singh, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife & Biodiversity).

Shri Nabam Tuki said that the meeting was a step forward for securing the future of wildlife in the region. Shri J. L. Singh noted the need to protect Namdhapa National Park given the pressure on the forests and wildlife from poaching and illegal trade activities. He also said that it was imperative to sensitize and gain the support of local communities for conservation and protection measures. Shri Singh also spoke of the success of TRAFFIC's sniffer dog training programme in India and noted Arunachal Pradesh would also benefit from the use of sniffer dogs.

Shri MKS Pasha, Interim Head of TRAFFIC in India, commented on the high level of bushmeat consumption by local communities in Arunachal Pradesh compared to most other States, and suggested that education, awareness and advocacy among and with the local communities would be the key to reducing it in the long run. He went on to introduce new tools and techniques that are available for fighting wildlife crime in India.

Resource material distributed at the meeting included a printed compendium, and CDs, books, posters etc. pertaining to wildlife law and enforcement issues, among them copies of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Criminal Procedure Code manual and a CD containing parliamentary questions 2004-2010 relating to wildlife issues.

For more information, please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/5/8/multiagency-approach-to-tackling-wildlife-crime-in-arunachal.html>

Tiger range countries meet in Delhi to review efforts on doubling the number of wild Tigers



Alleged Tiger leg bones and feet with claws for sale as medicines in China in 2006

The requirement for “urgent and elevated action needed to halt poaching” was a common concern among the Tiger range countries that met in New Delhi India, 15–17 May, for the first time since the Tiger Summit in November 2010, to review efforts on doubling the number of wild Tigers by 2022 (Tx2).

At the “Tiger Summit” in St. Petersburg, hosted by the Government of Russia and the World Bank, the 13 Tiger range governments and partners committed to this. They presented the Global Tiger Recovery Program (GTRP), which charts the way towards meeting this goal.

During the May meeting, TRAFFIC presented new figures from its latest research into the rising number of Tiger part seizures taking place in Asia. With 53 seizures on average occurring each year, levels remain high. The analysis identified persistent Tiger trade hot-spots such as Kathmandu, Hanoi and the Russia/Northeast China border.

Poaching of Tigers, to feed consumer demand for their body parts and products, is now the main factor counteracting efforts made by governments, donors and other partners working towards the 2022 goal. Nearly all Tiger range countries spoke of the poaching problem and efforts that they were taking on the ground to tackle this. It is essential that a Tiger trade monitoring system be established so that information is available to assist enforcement efforts in the field where it is most needed. Countries also considered new approaches to reduce consumer demand for Tiger derivatives.

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“We are pleased that the approaches we recommended on demand reduction are being considered to support implementation of the GTRP,” said Sabri Zain, Director of Advocacy and Campaigns for TRAFFIC. “It is critical that we implement new approaches to changing consumer behaviour if we are to stamp out poaching successfully in the long run and therefore achieve TX2.”

In a sign indicating Tiger range countries are increasingly working together to save the Tiger across their borders, the meeting witnessed the signing of a bilateral agreement on trans-border co-operation between India and Nepal and another between India and Russia.

“This gathering of Tiger range countries shows that the momentum to save Tigers is indeed building, but the pressure on the species continues,” said Ravi Singh, Secretary-General and CEO, WWF-India.

“Co-ordinated anti-poaching measures across Tiger range countries are called for. These need to be scaled up and implemented urgently to achieve zero poaching.”

Read more at <http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/5/17/tiger-recovery-efforts-progressing-urgent-action-still-need.html>

South Asian countries prioritize efforts to combat illegal wildlife trade in South Asia



The First Regional Meeting of the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) took place in Sri Lanka, 3–6 June 2012, where officials from the countries devised operational plans to combat illegal trade affecting some of the region's most threatened wildlife species. The officials also worked on an updated work programme and discussed issues such as intelligence-gathering, information-sharing, capacity-building and law enforcement co-operation.

Launched last year, SAWEN comprises member countries Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The meeting was attended by over 30 wildlife and law enforcement officials from all eight South Asian countries. Participants also included experts from INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization's Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for the Asia-Pacific, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, World Bank, the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network, the Global Tiger Forum, the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), WWF and TRAFFIC.



© Dept of Wildlife Conservation, Sri Lanka

In an important effort to address source-to-market law enforcement co-operation, the CITES Management Authority of China also joined the meeting as an observer. China shares terrestrial borders with five South Asian countries, and is a major trade partner with the region.

Officially opening the meeting, Sri Lanka's Minister of Environment, the Hon. Anura Priyadarshana Yapa, expressed his country's keen interest and commitment in co-operating and networking with other regional partner organizations for combating illegal trade. "It is extremely necessary that all South Asian countries should get together and help each other prevent illegal trade of bio-resources across their respective country borders" he said.

According to the SAWEN Chief Enforcement Coordinator, Mr Krishna Prasad Acharya, the meeting identified a number of illegal trade priorities for enhancing regional co-operation, focused on species such as Asian big cats, elephants, freshwater turtles, falcons, rhinoceroses and marine turtles. "Wildlife trade routes and hubs for these species were carefully examined and mapped," he said.

James Compton, TRAFFIC Senior Programme Director for Asia, welcomed the progress being made by SAWEN: "The establishment of SAWEN last year was a very crucial, timely and much needed step forward to institutionalize the collaborative efforts of member countries in controlling wildlife crime in the region. It is gratifying to see that SAWEN countries are now well-placed to co-ordinate law enforcement operations that will stem illegal trade flows where it matters and produce tangible conservation victories on the ground".

TRAFFIC's work in supporting SAWEN, including the holding of the meeting, has been generously funded by the US Department of State. The Government of Sri Lanka is also acknowledged for its matching the funding contributions in hosting the meeting of SAWEN.

SSB to help combat illegal wildlife trade along the Indian borders



The border guarding force of India, SSB (Sashastra Seema Bal), has joined hands with TRAFFIC to help combat illegal wildlife trade along the Indo-Nepal and the Indo-Bhutan borders. TRAFFIC India will provide training to the SSB officials to strengthen their skills for fighting wildlife crime in the region.

Illegal wildlife trade operates at an international level and porous borders allow contraband to move across freely. It is therefore imperative to strengthen enforcement efforts at the borders in order to curb this trade. SSB guards the 1751-km-long Indo-Nepal border along the States of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Sikkim, and the Indo-Bhutan border alongside the States of Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. It recognizes the threat from illegal wildlife trade to India's wildlife reserves and has come forward to help curb the crime.

In terms of training, TRAFFIC will conduct at least six training workshops for SSB officials stationed along the borders. The training will provide them with an understanding of the dynamics of this illegal trade, various tools and techniques available to fight it, and intelligence involved. The training will be conducted by experts in the various fields of wildlife law enforcement in India. The first workshop will be held in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, in July 2012.

MKS Pasha, Associate Director and Interim Head of TRAFFIC in India, said, "We are very excited to work with such a prestigious border security force. Their experience in having managed the borders for a long time now will prove fruitful in combating wildlife crime. We are also thankful to UNODC- South Asia and WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) for their support".

"Besides providing training on wildlife law enforcement, the workshops also intend to sensitize the officials on various issues related to wildlife conservation. Preserving wildlife is a national security concern and we are glad that the SSB recognizes this and has shown interest in co-operating on this issue".

Experts meet in Bhutan to review status of trade in CITES-listed Asian Medicinal and Aromatic Plant Species



Represented by Bryony Morgan and Rashid Raza, TRAFFIC participated in a three-day meeting held 24–26 May 2012, in Thimphu, to review the status of trade in medicinal plants, its legality, sustainability and traceability. The meeting was organized by the Department of Forest and Park services, Royal Government of Bhutan in collaboration with the CITES Secretariat. WWF's Living Himalayas Network Initiative provided support to TRAFFIC India for this meeting.

TRAFFIC had helped identify seven species of Asian medicinal plant threatened by trade in its report "Review of the Status, Harvest, Trade and Management of Seven Asian CITES-listed Medicinal and Aromatic Plant Species". Of the seven species—*Cistanche deserticola*, *Dioscorea deltoidea*, *Nardostachys grandiflora*, *Picrorhiza kurrooa*, *Pterocarpus santalinus*, *Rauvolfia Serpentina* and *Taxus wallichiana*—three are found only at high altitudes in the Himalayas (*N. grandiflora*, *P. kurrooa* and *T. wallichiana*).

The Himalayas form a major part of the range of *D. deltoidea* and *R. serpentina*, while *C. deserticola* is endemic to China and *P. santalinus* is endemic to southern India.

The report was discussed in the 17th meeting of the CITES Plant committee held in Geneva, Switzerland, in April 2008. Trade in these seven species was reviewed again at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (Doha, 2010), and decisions were taken for regional co-ordinated action to improve their management. The workshop in Bhutan was held as a follow up to the decisions of CoP15 (reiterated in the 20th meeting of the Plants Committee in Dublin (Ireland), 22–30 March 2012, and aimed to examine the means for ensuring that international trade in selected Asian medicinal plant species was legal, sustainable and traceable; to initiate co-operation among range States, consumer Parties and relevant organizations; and to identify examples of good practice and any other relevant topics.

It was attended by 17 participants from range States: Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Indonesia participated to provide a perspective on sustainable trade in Agarwood. TRAFFIC participated as a non range state (x2) delegate. The range state delegates were represented by respective CITES Management Authorities and Scientific Authorities.

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© Rashid Raza

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The workshop was inaugurated by Lyonpo (Dr) Pema Gyamtsho, Honourable Minister for Agriculture and Forests, Bhutan.

Rashid Raza of TRAFFIC India said, "We presented a global synthesis of information on the status of population, harvest and trade of the seven species. TRAFFIC emphasized the central position of India in harvest and trade of six of the seven species under discussion (excluding *Cistanche deserticola* which occurs only in China). The recommendations of TRAFFIC's report on the seven species were outlined. The FairWild standards for harvest and trade of wild plants were introduced. The economic dependence of marginal communities on collection of medicinal plants was highlighted".

Lack of appropriate data in most countries regarding the status of the species was a common concern.

Rashid Raza further commented, "It is hoped that future meetings will make better use of ever-growing knowledge on the status of these plants in range countries, so that further actions can be based on good data."

TRAFFIC Alert



Rhino horn being traded on the net

An advertisement on the website <http://www.tootoo.com/s-ps/sell-rhino-horn-acstradingcompany-at-india-dot-com--p-3819306.html>, claims to be selling rhino horn and elephant tusks. The advertisement states "We organize legal rhino horns in India and you can export your rhino horn back to your country. We are worldwide suppliers of rhino horns. We sell our horns at affordable prices. We supply buyers with all shipping documents as we are worldwide suppliers of rhino horns. We are legally licensed suppliers. We render a safe and direct delivery services to the buyers address. Contact us with a command and get your rhino horns delivered to your address within 3 days. Rhino horns between 50-60cm (5-8kg)".

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Online trade in wildlife products has reached alarming proportions and although the authenticity of the products on offer is not known, the above advertisement is apparently an example of how endangered animal parts can be sold online. Whilst some studies and investigations have been undertaken to gauge the extent and implications of this commerce, there is much to be done to stem this trade. The latest online advertisements follow evidence that genuine "antique" trophy rhino horns were being bought at auctions in the UK and Europe and exported to the Far East. Enforcement authorities have been alerted to deal with this online advertisement in India.

Source:

<http://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/online-sale-of-rhino-horn-investigated-1.1238850>
<http://www.topix.com/forum/world/cameroon/TR15N23S3479Q1DRG>
<http://www.animalpeoplenews.org/amp/2012/04/13/rhino-horn-trafficking-bust-nets-pro-rodeo-champion-wade-steffen/>

OUTPOST: Sri Lanka seizes 1.5 tonnes of ivory



© Samantha Gunasekara / Sri Lanka Customs



Customs authorities in the port of Colombo, Sri Lanka, seized 1.5 tonnes of ivory on 29 May 2012, the largest-ever haul of ivory in the country.

Customs officials seized 359 ivory tusks hidden among logs in a container marked as plastic waste. The container had originated from Uganda and shipped from Kenya and was bound for Dubai.

According to the most recent analysis of the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) managed by TRAFFIC of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES), a number of countries in Southeast Asia have emerged as ports of call, but not end-use destinations, along the main Asian ivory trade routes to markets in Thailand and China. However, James Compton, TRAFFIC's Senior Programme Director for Asia in TRAFFIC, warned that this seizure in Sri Lanka raised concerns that illegal ivory traders were developing new routes through South Asia.

"As existing transit countries for African ivory such as Malaysia, the Philippines and Viet Nam increase their enforcement efforts, smugglers will adapt and seek other trans-shipping routes and substitute ports of call," he said.

Mr Samantha Gunasekara, Deputy Director of Sri Lanka Customs, warned of the need for further vigilance in the region. "Countries in the South Asia region should be vigilant and enhance their enforcement co-operation to address illicit ivory trade, so that none of these countries become prominent and problematic players in the future."

The seizure was made following a tip-off from the World Customs Organisation's Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific region (RILO-A/P), based in Seoul, South Korea. "This highlights the crucial role that intelligence-gathering and information-sharing plays in stemming illegal ivory trade," Mr Gunasekara said.

Read more at <http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/6/1/sri-lanka-seizes-15-tonnes-of-ivory.html>

CITES UPDATE:

Asian countries encouraged to use CITES e-permitting systems to strengthen the protection of CITES species



The rapid advances by some countries in the Asian Region in use of new electronic trade standards, has highlighted the need for establishment of secure-permitting systems to: reduce fraud; improve on meeting reporting obligations; enhance permit issuance and administration; and provide up-to-the-minute data to assist with CITES scientific assessments. Therefore, the development and use of CITES e-permitting systems, and their role in ensuring legal, sustainable and traceable international trade in CITES-listed species, was the main agenda of discussion at a meeting attended by representatives of Asian countries in Guangzhou, China from 9 to 11 May 2012.

The meeting was jointly organized by the CITES Secretariat and the Government of China and made possible through the generous financial support of China and the European Commission.

In his opening remarks, Secretary-General, Mr. John E. Scanlon, noted that, "A sustainable future is being discussed in the context of the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro in June of this year, often known as Rio+20. Sustainability is not achieved through one action but through the accumulation of multiple actions. Actions such as those being taken today - namely to put into place e-permitting systems for legal, sustainable and traceable trade in CITES listed species - help build the essential foundations for environmental sustainability and sustainable development. E-permitting systems offer us one of the tools we need to reach the future we want."

During the meeting, a representative of the WCO announced the successful conclusion of an initiative to include standards of the CITES e-permitting toolkit with the new version of the WCO Data Model, scheduled for release in October 2012. The meeting concluded by recommending a number of bilateral and regional projects that will assist Parties to plan and develop e-permitting systems, benefiting from lessons learned. Recommendations were also made to begin discussions on a project between Brazil, Namibia and China on using new e-permitting technologies to ensure legal, sustainable and traceable trade.

Read more at http://cites.org/eng/news/pr/2012/20120514_e-permitting-meet.php

TRAFFIC Alert



Mongoose hair brushes seized in Agra

In May 2012, hundreds of paint-brushes allegedly made from the hair of mongoose were seized from a shop in Agra. Upon receiving a tip-off, activists led by Gaurav Gupta from New Delhi, took the police along to swoop upon the stationers and traders, who were stocking and selling the prohibited paint brushes.

While three stationers were arrested in Kharar with around 100 brushes, another stationer was nabbed in Nawanshahr, from whom 450 mongoose hair brushes were recovered. Search for the supplier of the brushes is on.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

India has six species of mongoose—the Grey Mongoose *Herpestes edwardsii*, Small Indian Mongoose *Herpestes javanicus*, Ruddy Mongoose *Herpestes smithii*, Brown Mongoose *Herpestes brachyurus*, Crab-eating Mongoose *Herpestes urva* and Stripe-necked Mongoose *Herpestes vitticollis*—all of which are protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Of these, three species of mongoose are commonly recorded in wildlife trade in India—the Small Indian Mongoose, Striped-necked Mongoose and the Indian Grey Mongoose.

Until 2002, killing of mongooses for their hair to make paint brushes, meat for consumption and for taxidermy was extensive. However today, while the taxidermy trade in mongoose species is believed to have declined, numerous pieces of evidence indicate that mongooses continue to be killed for their hair. Many of these animals have disappeared from urban and semi-urban places. Increasingly they are facing threats in the wild too. The rising number of mongoose hair seizures indicates a crying need for greater alacrity in enforcement efforts to stem this trade.

Source:

<http://www.wildlifeextra.com/go/news/mongoose-hair.html#cr>
<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/ngo-cracks-whip-against-traders-selling-mongoose-hair-brushes/470344/>
<http://in.news.yahoo.com/mongoose-hair-brushes-seized-agra-080256833.html>

Clouded Leopard skins seized in Assam

In April 2012, skins of two endangered Clouded Leopards were seized and two people arrested near Manas Tiger Reserve in Assam. Following a tip-off, a team led by Bhuyanpara forest range officer Adhan Oza, raided a shop in Milan Bazar in Baksa district some 20 km from the reserve, leading to the recovery of the skins, which were six months old. *Continued on page 8*

TRAFFIC Alert



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TRAFFIC India adds.....

The Clouded Leopard *Neofelis nebulosa* is one of the most elusive big cat species in the wild. It inhabits the dense jungles of north-east India. Its beautiful coat is patterned with cloud-like markings, which gives it its name. It is a solitary animal and highly arboreal. It hunts as well as rests in trees.

IUCN estimates that there are fewer than 10 000 mature individuals surviving globally and has listed it as 'Vulnerable'. Illegal hunting for its beautiful coat is one of the major threats to the species today. There is also trade in the bones for medicines, meat for exotic dishes and live animals for the pet trade. Wild animals are likely to be the primary source, but there is also some illegal trade from captive-bred animals (Nowell, 2007). Its canines and claws are also used for decorative purposes.

Featured as an important part of TRAFFIC's new "Wanted Alive" campaign in India, the animal has been ear-marked for more in depth studies. Threats from illegal wildlife trade coupled with rapid destruction of its forest habitat and excessive hunting of its prey species has put the future of the Clouded Leopard in peril. It is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and in Appendix I of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

Source:

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-06-01/kolkata/31957920_1_leopards-neofelis-nebulosa
<http://www.wwf.org/?7322/Camera-traps-capture-exciting-animal-behaviour-across-India>
http://www.wwf.org/about_wwf/critical_regions/north_bank_landscape/news/4640/Clouded-Leopard
<http://www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/details/14519/0>

IN FOCUS:

Future of Indian lorises hangs upside down

Text and images by Abrar Ahmed, Consultant, TRAFFIC India



Large and round eyed, the lorises of India may be in peril from excessive illegal trade. Awareness and enforcement efforts required to protect the species seem to be lagging behind.

India is home to two species of loris—the Slow Loris *Nycticebus bengalensis* and the Slender Loris *Loris lydekerianus*. Both the species are listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 giving it full protection against hunting, trade or any other use. According to the IUCN Red List of Threatened species, the Slow Loris is listed as Vulnerable and the Slender Loris is listed as a species of Least Concern. International trade is further regulated under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The Slow Loris is listed in Appendix I of CITES and the Slender Loris is in Appendix II.

Ranking high on the cute-and-cuddly scale, these furry primates have long been in demand for the pet trade worldwide (<http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/4/3/loris-trade-not-so-slow.html>). Due to their small size, appearance, non-vocal behaviour, easy upkeep, availability, transportability and high profits, lorises have become one of the favourite trade commodities of wildlife traffickers and traders. This factor is considered a major reason for the decline of the species in the wild, including in India, where there is a growth in trade of exotic pet species. Exotic birds are a major attraction in most private collections, since there is no ban on the domestic trade and possession of exotic birds. A lot of large collections also include a number of small-sized exotic mammals such as Sugar Gliders *Petaurus breviceps*, marmosets (Family Callitrichidae) and bush babies (Family Galagidae). On many an occasion, traders con ignorant buyers into buying the Slow or Slender Loris and Giant Squirrel *Ratufa indica* on the pretext that these are exotic species.

Capturing of lorises has been taking place in India for many years. Lorises were exported worldwide from India along with birds until the blanket ban in 1990-91. After the ban, the trade of lorises became covert and the animals are not openly offered or displayed in India, unlike in many other Asian countries. The Slow Loris remains a common sight in wildlife markets of Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore (<http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/4/3/loris-trade-not-so-slow.html>).

Lorises have been used for a variety of purposes other than the pet trade. Prater (2005) in his book on Indian animals commented on the trade in Slender Loris, writing "As with lemurs in all countries, a wealth of superstitious beliefs centre round these animals. The eyes are said to be a potent love charm, and are also used as a cure for certain eye diseases. Hence the capture and sale of these animals, which are cruelly hawked about in the blinding glare of sunlight, to which by nature they are so ill-accustomed."

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Today, the Slow Loris continues to be poached and used for food in Meghalaya (Radhakrishna *et al.*, 2010) and Mizoram (Joydeep Bose, *pers. comm.*). In north-east India, the Slow Loris is hunted by the Angamis, Apatanis, Nishis and Mizos for bushmeat (Hilaluddin *et al.*, 2005). In South India, roadside astrologers use Slender Loris for taking out fortune cards (Ahmed, 2001). Tribals in Kerala suggested that keeping a Slender Loris could ward off evil spirits. Use in traditional medicine, is another reason for their trapping, and Indian animal traders also claim that the loris in India is not sold as a toy-pet but as a collector's item.

Unlike the case in most South Asian counties, where Slow Lorises have their teeth cut or pulled out when sold in the pet trade, in India most traders or keepers keep the lorises in cages or aviaries to protect themselves from being bitten.

Until a decade ago, Slow Lorises were regularly bought for sale at the famous Sonepur mela in Bihar, while the Slender Loris was a common mammal for sale at the Shivaji bird market in Bangalore (Ahmed, 2001). A minimum of 28 Slow Lorises were recorded during eight surveys undertaken by the author between 1994 and 2010, in 11 places, in four states, while no fewer than 22 Slender Lorises were recorded in six places in four south Indian states between 1994 and 2002.

Trade in the species is not casual but rather well organized. Tribal or village-level trappers go on collection trips almost thrice a week, but even a chance encounter by trappers is an opportunity for them to sell off the captured loris. A dead animal is not wasted, it is dried and its body parts sold for use in traditional medicine. Country-wide, trade is either carried out by individuals from the Mirshikar traders from Patna or from certain tribes from South India, such as the Narikorava or Hakkipikki. The Mirshikar do not especially go for collecting the Slow Loris themselves but have the best connection with North-east sub-dealers, who in turn collect the animal from village-level trappers in Assam, Meghalaya and Nagaland and bring them to the Mirshikar traders in Patna and Siliguri. Members of the tribals of north-east India, such as the Garo, Nishi and Karbi, bring lorises from time to time to village weekly markets. The Mirshikar traders of Patna or Burdwan deliver Slow Lorises to known dealers and keepers in any part of the country.

Narikorava and Hakkipikki at times live a nomadic life and are in search of wildlife in forest peripheries. The Pakshirajpuram (a tiny settlement of professional animal trappers) near Hosur on Nagarhole road is one of a primary collection centres from where lorises are then transported to Bangalore and Chennai markets. This is unlike the situation in earlier times when the animal markets at Benson Town in Bangalore and Moore Market in Chennai openly displayed and sold these animals.

In South India, the organized trade of Slender Lorises in Kerala is conducted by middlemen in Malayttur and Angamali, who may send their supply to Coimbatore, Alwaye and Madurai markets to meet specific demands. The collection is carried out by Kani tribals or city-based organized trappers. A few Slender Lorises are collected near Wyanad forest and the stock is sent to Trissur and Calicut dealers. Some Slender Lorises are also collected by travelling Narikoravas of Villipuram in Tamil Nadu, who at times sell their catch to Chennai and other South Indian animal traders.

The Pardi tribe of Central India, who sell a lot of wild animal products, also at times sell body parts of lorises. As far as international trade is concerned, reports have indicated that lorises are smuggled via Dhaka (Bangladesh) or Karachi (Pakistan) and there is a demand for these species mainly from Thailand.

Despite the legal protection lorises are given, sadly trade in these wild creatures continues. There is a need to strengthen wildlife law enforcement efforts to protect lorises, threatened as they are by illegal trade, and awareness campaigns to help dispel superstition and generate compassion for wildlife need to be conducted at various strategic locations across India.

Examples of media reports of loris seizures:

In June 2012, a Slow Loris was rescued from a location where it was kept as a pet in South Garo Hills, Shillong (<http://www.business-standard.com/generalnews/news/endangered-bengal-slow-loris-rescued/20248/>).

Two Slender Lorises were seized in Goa, on their way to Karnataka, in September 2011 (<http://wildlifecrimeinindia.blogspot.in/2011/09/slender-loris-seized-in-go.html>).

In March 2011, two Slow Lorises were rescued in Karbi Anglong from locals (<http://www.wildlifetrustofindia.org/pages/brief-updates.html>).

Five Slender Lorises were seized and two men arrested in Honnavar, in Uttara Kannada district, Karnataka, in February 2006 by officials of CID, Forest Cell (<http://www.hindu.com/2006/02/02/stories/2006020213320500.htm>).

Lorises have a slow and a silent movement. Once disturbed, they immediately freeze and remain immobile. At times, their choice of sleeping sites on exposed branches makes them a vulnerable target for trappers. As lorises are nocturnal, when they come to feed on lower branches, the trappers use powerful torches to blind the animals temporarily. To catch the animals, the trappers pull the branches down using poles with curved knives. Some reports have also been received that Slow Lorises are collected from tree cavities or crevices when trappers are on the look-out for bird chicks, such as those of mynas, parakeets and hornbills.

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WILD CRY

(Illegal wildlife trade threatens the future of many species in the wild. This section highlights the plight of one such species in trade.)

Selling SEASHELLS off the sea: Curio trade in seashells in India



We all have heard the familiar tongue twister "She sells seashells by the sea shore". Well, not just "she" but thousands of shops all along the coasts and tourist centres in India (and indeed the world) are selling seashells. In the curio trade, seashells are big business.

Many different kinds of marine invertebrate produce shells, an outer protective layer made of calcium carbonate (common chalk!), which protects the soft-bodied animals. Among these, shells produced by molluscs are the most common in curio trade. Molluscs (Phylum Mollusca) are a very large and diverse group of organisms. Shell-bearing molluscs of class Gastropoda (snails), Bivalvia (clams and oysters) and Scaphopoda (tusk shells) are most common. In addition, nautilus shells are also much sought after. (Nautilus is a common name for a very ancient group of organisms belonging to Class Cephalopoda of Phylum Mollusca which includes squids, octopuses and cuttlefish).

While empty seashells are often picked up by beach-combers, a very large majority of seashells which are offered for sale are collected alive (largely in bulk) and then killed and cleaned, specifically for the commercial trade. Though high-value shells like the chank or the Sacred Chank *Turbinella pyrum* are mainly hand-picked by skin diving, the majority of the shells entering the market are actually bycatches of bottom-trawl fishing operations. This not only removes these animals indiscriminately but also destroys the seabed habitat on which these bottom-dwellers live. This type of large-scale exploitation can have a strong negative impact on ecosystems.

Distribution: Mainland India, being peninsular in shape, has a long coastline (7500 km approx) on the eastern and western sides. It also has two major island groups. Seashells are found all across these areas, but the Gulf of Mannar has the largest commercial shell beds in India. The Lakshadweep Islands and the Andaman & Nicobar island groups are also important shell-collection areas.

Status: There are about 3500 marine molluscs found in India, of which nine are listed under the Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act (WLP), 1972 and 15 are listed in Schedule IV. This provides these species complete protection from collection, trade and any other kinds of use and exploitation. Of these 24 species, trade in three species (*Hippopus hippopus*, *Tridacna maxima* and *Tridacna squamosa*) is further regulated by CITES (See <http://www.wccb.gov.in/mollusca.pdf> for details and a pictorial identification guide)



Threats: Marine molluscs are traded as curios and artifacts. In India, the operculum of the shell is used to make incense sticks and 'mother of pearl' (the iridescent inner shell layer produced by some molluscs) is used as jewellery—a large part of the collection is sent to Bengal for making bangles. Shells are also used as a base for some ointments and other medicines. Live shelled organisms are collected and traded for the marine aquarium trade and there is also a huge demand for the popular Sacred Chank, *Turbinella pyrum*, known in India as the *shankha*. The chank is considered auspicious among Hindus and Buddhists. The rare form in which the whorls turn in a counterclockwise spiral (if viewed from the apex of the shell) are called Dakshinavrti or "right-whorled" and are highly priced. Harvest studies done by the Central Marine Fisheries Institute (CMFRI) have suggested reducing the harvest by at least 30% for the chank fisheries to be sustainable (Jagdis *et al* 2010).

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Despite the protection to many seashell species, there is little check on their collection and trade. Study done by the Wildlife Institute of India has established the Gulf of Mannar region as the main centre for collection, processing and trade. This study also found that the average size of shells in the trade has decreased, indicating over-harvest. Danushkodi, Rameswaram, Keelakarai and Tuticorin are the main collection centres in the Gulf of Mannar region. Locally, seashells are collected from chank divers. Shells are also collected from traditional and mechanized fishing ventures.

Marine ecologist Divya Karnad says, "Fishermen may harvest sea shells in the shallows during the monsoon, when the weather is bad for fishing on the west coast of India. The erstwhile pearl divers of Keelakarai in the Gulf of Mannar, turned to harvesting sea shells and even sea cucumbers, a protected species, after the pearl oyster fisheries became unproductive in the early to mid 1900s". Near shore, the shells are collected by skin divers and traditional fisher folks. Bottom trawler bycatch is a major contributor to seashell harvest Appukuttan and Ramadoss(2000), Chaudhary *et al* (2007).

The raw shells thus collected are chemically processed, flesh and operculum are removed, and polished shells are then transported to markets in India and abroad. The raw shell processing centres are largely situated in Kanyakumari and Rameshwaram. India is also a major importer of seashells, in particular from the Maldives, Philippines and East Africa (see Chaudhary *et al*. 2007 for details).

PROTECTED SPECIES OF SEASHELLS IN INDIA			
SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	WLPA SCHEDULE	CITES APPENDIX
<i>Cassis cornuta</i>	Horned Helmet	I	
<i>Charonia tritonis</i>	Trumpet Triton	I	
<i>Conus milne-edwardsi</i>	Glory of India	I	
<i>Cypraeacassis rufa</i>	Bull mouth helmet	I	
<i>Hippopus hippopus</i>	Fluted Giant clam/ Horse's Hoof	I	II
<i>Nautilus pompilius</i>	Chambered Nautilus	I	
<i>Tridacna maxima</i>	Elongate Giant Clam	I	II
<i>Tridacna squamosa</i>	Fluted Giant Clam	I	II
<i>Tudicla spirillus</i>	Spiral Tudicla	I	
<i>Cyprae limacina</i>	Limacina Cowrie	IV	
<i>Cypraea mappa</i>	Map Cowrie	IV	
<i>Cypraea talpa</i>	Mole Cowrie	IV	
<i>Pleuroploca trapezium/Fasciolaria trapezium</i>	Trapezium Conch	IV	
<i>Harpulina arausiaca</i>	Vexillate volute/Gold Banded Volute	IV	
<i>Lambis chiragra</i>	Chiragra Spider Conch	IV	
<i>Lambis chiragra arthritica</i>	Arthritic Spider Conch	IV	
<i>Lambis crocata</i>	Orange Spider Conch	IV	
<i>Lambis millepeda</i>	Milleped Spider Conch	IV	
<i>Lambis scropius</i>	Scorpio Conch	IV	
<i>Labis truncata</i>	Truncate Spider Conch	IV	
<i>Placuna placenta/Placenta placenta</i>	Windowpane Oyster	IV	
<i>Strombus plicatus siboldii</i>	Sibbald's Conch/Pigeon Conch	IV	
<i>Trochus niloticus</i>	Commercial Trochus/Top shell	IV	
<i>Turbo marmoratus</i>	Great Green Turban	IV	

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