

THE TRAFFIC REPORT



From the Director's Desk

It is impossible to miss the heightened alarm being sounded over the acute and seemingly unstoppable rise in the poaching and trafficking of wildlife such as elephants and rhinos. But even as the world is experiencing this tragic and sometimes bewildering surge in wildlife crime, there has been a major mobilization of efforts in response to it--and that makes me hopeful that the tide will turn.

WWF and TRAFFIC responded by launching a global campaign called "Stop Wildlife Crime," and some of the outcomes from that dedicated call to action are highlighted in this edition. The conservation and enforcement communities are battling to regain control in ways that both help protect species and disrupt criminal networks. With champions at the highest levels of government and new resources and partnerships emerging, there is a way forward.

At CITES COP16 in Bangkok this past March, the theme of wildlife crime was pervasive and governments were in no mood for delays and excuses. It was heartening to see such a positive response to conservation and science priorities overcoming vested interests and politics--for example, member nations voted to list shark species that had been blocked in the past.

Our team in Mesoamerica has been busy supporting area governments as they develop ROAVIS, the Central American Wildlife Enforcement Network. This edition of TRAFFIC includes an update from the annual ROAVIS meeting, which was a successful demonstration of how wildlife enforcement networks can be important mechanisms for building collaborative solutions between nations.

And congratulations are due to Tanya Shadbolt and Ernie Cooper of TRAFFIC Canada for producing a definitive report on the trade and management of polar bears. It is a strong platform on which to base the fine-tuning of future policy and management responses to the changing environment faced by the species.

Thank you for reading our newsletter, and please forward it to colleagues and friends.

Crawford Allan
Regional Director
TRAFFIC North America

Raising the Issue of Wildlife Crime to the Highest Levels

In October 2012, WWF and TRAFFIC launched the Stop Wildlife Crime campaign, a year-long push to secure high-level commitments to turning the tide on the rampant illegal trafficking in species such as elephants, rhinos, and tigers. Following are some highlights from the campaign to date.

2012 Fuller Symposium on Conservation Crime

WWF and TRAFFIC brought together experts and innovators in fields related to wildlife crime at the 2012 Fuller Symposium on Conservation Crime, held at National Geographic Society in Washington, D.C., on November 14. The event drew over 300 participants per session and 1,350 live web broadcast viewers. Highlights included high-profile speakers such as Robert Hormats, the U.S. under secretary of state for economic growth, energy, and the environment. The opening presentation by TRAFFIC North America's regional director, Crawford Allan, set the theme for the event; it was based on a report that he and Anita Akella wrote for the symposium called Dismantling Wildlife Crime. [Video footage of the presentations is available here.](#) The executive summary of [Dismantling Wildlife Crime may be downloaded here.](#)

WWF-TRAFFIC Experts Workshop on Wildlife Crime

The Fuller Symposium was followed by a day-long Experts Workshop on Wildlife Crime which focused on the theme "Rethinking Conventional Responses: Integrated Approaches in the Fight Against Wildlife Crime." This workshop was organized by WWF and TRAFFIC North America, and convened over 100 experts from the wildlife conservation, development, forestry, finance, markets, defense, technology, media and marketing, and enforcement sectors for information-sharing and debate on key issues pertaining to wildlife crime. Participating experts sought to identify where integrated responses can leverage benefits to conservation and further effective policies in

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the areas of development, security, and governance. An outcome document has been produced which summarizes dialogue and lists urgent and actionable recommendations. [A summary is available for download here](#). The detailed document has been disseminated to participating experts and is available upon request by emailing Rachel.kramer@wwfus.org.

Hillary Clinton Diplomatic Event on Wildlife Trafficking

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton delivered an address on U.S. plans to help tackle wildlife trafficking internationally during a special diplomatic event at the U.S. Department of State on November 8, 2012. This was a massive boost for global efforts to elevate the issue of wildlife crime to the highest political levels. Secretary Clinton described a series of efforts and initiatives that the U.S. government will take forward, including an intelligence review examining the links between wildlife crime and security issues, particularly in Africa. Funding was announced for an IUCN and TRAFFIC project called Wildlife TRAPS, with \$1.5 million designated to address wildlife trafficking between Africa and Asia. As a panelist at the event, TRAFFIC North America's Crawford Allan talked about TRAFFIC's work in response to the alarming recent rise in rhino and elephant poaching. Emphasis was also placed on the role the United States can play to help convene and catalyze new responses to the crisis internationally.



CITES Marks 40 Years at COP16 in Bangkok

The 178 governments that are parties to CITES met in March on the 40th anniversary of the creation of the international wildlife trade treaty. At the end of two weeks of heated debate, side events, and media melee, the triennial conference had produced some strong and positive decisions. The decisions to list five shark species and manta rays sent a strong signal of hope that CITES can at last attempt to tackle the dramatic decline in sharks brought about by demand for their fins. Timber trade controls also were strengthened, with governments voting unanimously for more sustainable and legal trade in timber products. Wildlife crime was subject to detailed attention and a number of decisions were made to take on these problems and hold governments accountable where they have been failing. If some African and Asian states do not take measures to deal with ivory and rhino horn trade over the next year, the CITES Standing Committee will review the option of punitive measures against them. In a welcome move that followed some pressure from WWF and TRAFFIC's Stop Wildlife Crime campaign, Thailand's prime minister opened the meeting with the announcement that Thailand would reform its domestic ivory laws. Those laws contain loopholes that have made Thailand the world's second-largest black market for ivory. [Results of the meeting may be downloaded here](#).



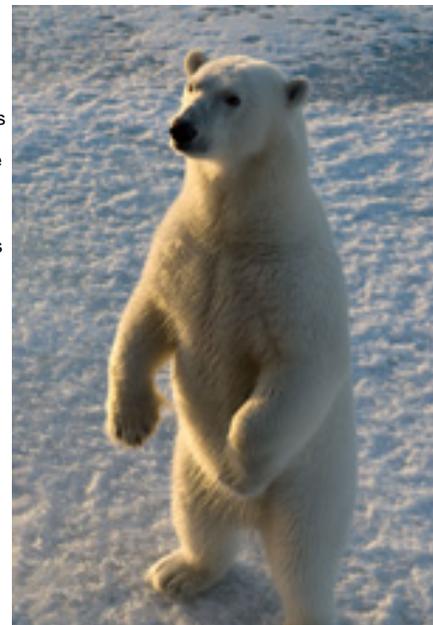
New TRAFFIC Report on Trade in Polar Bears

TRAFFIC has completed a comprehensive report on the international trade and management of polar bears. In *Icon on Ice: International Trade and Management of Polar Bears*, authors Tanya Shadbolt, Geoff York, and Ernest W. T. Cooper examine the most recent data available on the international trade and the management regimes for each range state. They also provide information on the conservation status of the species and recommendations for improving the conservation and management of the global polar bear population into the future.

According to the report, polar bears appear to be well-managed in most range states, and illegal hunting does not seem to be a concern. The biggest threat to polar bears is the effect of climate change on their habitat. And of course, changes to the Arctic ecosystem will affect not only polar bears, but also the livelihoods of Arctic communities.

The legal hunting of polar bears is part of an Arctic cultural identity that links to the environment and contributes to a traditional subsistence economy. The hunt provides food and clothing, as well as income made from the sale of polar bear parts and derivatives--and the legal international trade in polar bear parts and derivatives does not currently appear to be a significant threat to the species. Although the value of skins has increased in recent years, and demand for skins has increased in some countries (notably China), the total number of skins exported from 2005 to 2009 did not increase significantly.

Polar bears are subjected to threats that vary from region to region, in different ways and over differing time scales. More consistent reporting of trade data and improved analysis and monitoring of trade in the species will help ensure international trade does not become a significant threat in the future. Adaptive frameworks that rapidly assess new information will help ensure that harvest and trade will not detrimentally impact the conservation of the species. Successful management will result in a population that is healthy, stable, and resilient to threats. The [report is available for download here](#).



Second Annual ROAVIS Regional Meeting and Training Workshop

In September 2010, the Environmental Prosecutors Network of Central America and the Dominican Republic (DR) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with SICA (the Central American Integration System) to establish the Central American and DR Wildlife Enforcement Network (called ROAVIS, for its Spanish acronym). ROAVIS is a regional structure that aims to achieve effective and sustained wildlife law enforcement within and between the countries involved. Since that time the region's governments, with funding from the U.S. government, have worked together to build ROAVIS. The latest focal effort was the second annual ROAVIS meeting and training workshop, which took place in Managua, Nicaragua, on December 12-15, 2012.

The presidency of ROAVIS was then held by the Nicaraguan Ministry of Justice, which invited the participation of key agencies in each

country, including the police, customs, CITES management authorities, and prosecutors. The event was inaugurated by the general prosecutor and director of the Ministry of Justice, Sr. Julio Centeno; Ms. Christine Dawson, from the U.S. Department of State; and Sr. Adrian Reuter, from TRAFFIC North America-Mesoamerica. [During the meeting, the presidency of the Environmental Prosecutors Network (and consequently of ROAVIS) was handed over from Nicaragua, represented by Jose Ruben Gutierrez, to Costa Rica, headed by Sergio Valdelomar.]

The meeting heard updates since ROAVIS last met in El Salvador (September 2011), with some impressive results showing that ROAVIS has facilitated many of the activities that required multinational cooperation to succeed. This undoubtedly encourages those involved to continue working collaboratively toward ROAVIS objectives. The meeting was organized by the Ministry of Justice of Nicaragua, and coordinated by TRAFFIC in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Interior, with the support of the U.S. Department of State. On hand were experts from the CITES Secretariat, Interpol, the U.S. Department of Justice, the Central American Environmental Prosecutors Network, the Mexican CITES Scientific Authority (CONABIO), and representatives of the regional fisheries organization OSPESCA. They provided training on topics such as shark finning, coral trade, species identification, coordination of complex investigations, and wildlife law enforcement.

Participating countries took a number of agreements to continue working toward the efficiency, strengthening and empowerment of ROAVIS.

Contributions to the newsletter from TRAFFIC North America team: Adrian Reuter and Paola Mosig (TRAFFIC Mexico); Tanya Shadbolt (TRAFFIC Canada); Rachel Kramer and Crawford Allan (US). Editor: Linda Downing (US).

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