

TRAFFIC POST

the wildlife trade monitoring network

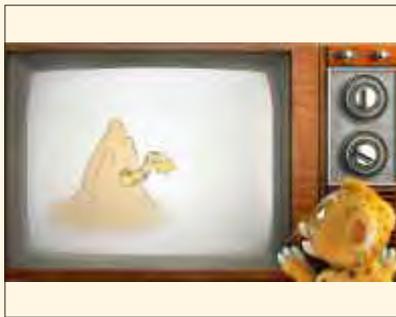
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TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



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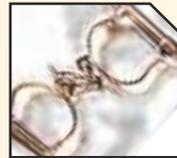
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WILD CRY

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

Tokay not okay! New threat emerges from illegal wildlife trade

Going wise over sustainable use of wild plants: TRAFFIC at CBD CoP11



By Anastasiya Timoshyna, Medicinal Plants Programme Leader, TRAFFIC

The eleventh meeting of the Conference of Parties (CoP11) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) took place in Hyderabad, India in October 2012. During the two weeks of the CoP, TRAFFIC conducted a number of side-events on the topic of sustainable use of wild medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs), with support of WWF Japan, as well as engaging on main agenda items.



© Anastasiya Timoshyna

TRAFFIC's side-events brought together the perspectives of wild MAP producers, NGOs, business, governments and academia, promoting discussion on how tools such as the FairWild Standard (www.fairwild.org) – a set of best practice guidelines for sustainable and equitable trade in wild plant resources - can help shape trade relations between producers and the wider market, and support countries' delivery of their commitments under CBD. The involvement of multiple stakeholders, including private sector, in plant conservation is critical. Over 50,000 MAP species are used globally for health, food and cosmetics, providing an important source of income for rural communities and national economies. At the same time, one-fifth of MAP species are threatened due to over-harvesting and land conversion.

One of the CBD CoP11 side-events was organized by TRAFFIC together with Botanical Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), IUCN Medicinal Plants Specialist Group (MPSG), and CONABIO, while another welcomed speakers from the FairWild Foundation, the UK-company Pukka Herbs Ltd., the Government of Madhya Pradesh, India, and the Savandurga Village Forest Committee, Karnataka, India. This event attracted over 40 participants in lively discussions on effective policy-making for sustainable use of wild plants.

TRAFFIC also contributed to the launch of the Biodiversity and Community Health Initiative, supported by the Government of India, UNDP, UNEP and others, drawing attention to the importance of conservation and sustainable use of medicinal plants to ensure their stable supply for health needs, as well as ensuring local livelihoods, and highlighting the FairWild Standard.

Within the official CBD CoP agenda, the decision related to the Global Strategy on Plant Conservation (GSPC) was adopted, approving a new toolkit for GSPC's implementation, elaborating how to achieve the targets of the strategy and laying out guidelines for monitoring progress. The toolkit will help Parties to deliver and report on progress with the GSPC's implementation, particularly for Targets 12 and 11. TRAFFIC welcomed this decision, which aims to help governments and organizations achieve delivery of the GSPC through the new toolkit.

The FairWild Standard is part of the new toolkit for implementation of the GSPC (www.plants2020.net) as a means of best practice for the delivery of Target 12 and contribution to the delivery of Aichi Target 4. TRAFFIC is also contributing to the implementation of the Strategy as a member of the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation (GPPC) (<http://www.plants2020.net/gppc/>). The FairWild Standard was developed with the involvement of TRAFFIC, IUCN, and WWF and is now maintained by the FairWild Foundation (see above and below for more details). A week prior to CBD CoP11, TRAFFIC delivered a lecture on the FairWild Standard to participants of the International Training on Medicinal Plants Conservation organized by the Institute of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine (IAIM-FLRHT) in Bangalore, India.

For more information, see www.fairwild.org

For more on TRAFFIC and CBD, see www.traffic.org/cbd

Following are the links for CBD CoP11 events relevant to sustainable use and conservation of wild plants published by TRAFFIC: <http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/10/22/focus-on-sustainable-use-of-biodiversity-at-cbd-cop11.html>; <http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/10/11/links-between-biodiversity-and-community-health-examined.html>; <http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/10/15/sustainability-of-wild-flora-use-and-livelihoodsframing-the.html>; <http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/10/18/are-you-fairwild.html>

WANTED Alive: Asian Big Cats—TRAFFIC India's campaign update



TRAFFIC India's poster campaign on the four Asian big cats—Tiger, Leopard, Snow Leopard and Clouded Leopard—all of them threatened by illegal trade in their body parts, has received tremendous response across India.

The main highway connecting Delhi to Noida had two billboards, one each on Tiger and Leopard. Twelve metro stations in Delhi feature at least one of the four species. Mumbai airport also has huge billboards featuring the campaign across terminals. A TRAFFIC film on illegal wildlife trade also plays at all the eight digital screens at Mumbai airport.

Over 1000 sets of campaign posters have successfully been distributed to schools, colleges, enforcement agencies, forest departments, Customs, media outlets, embassies, transit points, supporters, partner organizations etc.

TRAFFIC's campaign underlines the need to protect Asian big cats in the wild. Tiger, Leopard, Snow Leopard and Clouded Leopard are found in a variety of habitats across India but are being killed for their body parts which are smuggled through porous borders to clandestine international markets.

The Snow Leopard from the Himalayan mountains and the high altitude cold deserts to the north is hunted for its fur.

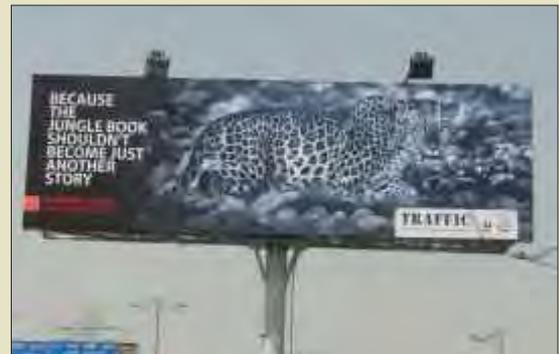
The little known Clouded Leopard inhabits the dense jungles of north-eastern India and is largely hunted for its beautiful coat, patterned with cloud-like markings. There is also trade in its bones for medicines, meat for exotic dishes and live animals for the pet trade. Its canines and claws are used for decorative purposes.

The Tiger is the largest cat species in the world that is threatened by illegal trade in its bones and skins. The bones are valued in traditional East Asian medicines, and the skin used by wealthy individuals to decorate their houses, tents or as clothes. TRAFFIC estimates that body parts of nearly 500 Tigers have been recovered from illegal traders in India during the period 2000-2011. Many more Tigers may have been killed and smuggled undetected.

The future of the Leopard is equally precarious. Although found all across India, Leopards are being poached in large numbers. Besides the skin that is used for decorative purposes, its body parts are used as a substitute for Tiger parts in traditional East Asian medicines.

Khalid Pasha, Associate Director and Interim Head of TRAFFIC in India adds, "We are overwhelmed by the response that this campaign has received across India. We are hopeful that the campaign will raise awareness about the issues related to trade in Asian big cats and help garner support for their conservation".

TRAFFIC acknowledges the support given by WWF-UK and TIMES OOH.



© TIMES OOH

Border security forces receive training on wildlife law enforcement



© Rashid Reza

Map not to scale

TRAFFIC, in association with SSB (Sashastra Seema Bal), organized wildlife law enforcement training workshops for officials stationed at the Indian borders in Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. The workshops took place at Gorakhpur on 12 and 13 July 2012; Purnea on 27 and 28 August 2012; Pilibhit on 14 and 15 September 2012; Pithoragarh on 17 and 18 September 2012; Ranidanga on 5 and 6 October 2012 and Jalpaiguri on 7 and 8 October 2012.

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SSB is responsible for guarding the 1751-km Indo-Nepal border along the States of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Sikkim and the stretch of the Indo-Bhutan border along the States of Sikkim, North Bengal, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. These areas remain highly exposed for illegal wildlife trafficking.

The main aim of the workshops was to sensitize the officials to various aspects of illegal wildlife trade, including wildlife law enforcement. Specialized training was also given on identifying wildlife contraband, use of forensics as a tool, and inspecting wildlife crime scenes.

These workshops are part of TRAFFIC's efforts to sensitize law enforcement agencies in illegal trade vulnerable areas.

New animation to highlight illegal wildlife trade



TRAFFIC, with support from Krayon Pictures, has brought out a new 15-second film on illegal wildlife trade.

The film features a playful Leopard cub chasing a butterfly when it accidentally puts on the TV. The cub is mesmerized looking at a wriggling snake and is further startled by a gunshot that transforms the snake into a handbag. Similarly, a Tiger is shown to turn into a rug and an elephant into ivory figurines.



"The animation is a new medium for TRAFFIC in India to spread awareness on issues related to illegal wildlife trade. It helps grab attention with its superb animated characters. We are extremely thankful to Krayon Pictures, co-producer of the Delhi Safari, India's first stereoscopic 3D animation feature film, for its efforts in putting this together" said Khalid Pasha, Associate Director & Interim Head of TRAFFIC in India.

To view the film, please visit <http://www.youtube.com/trafficnetwork>

Notorious wildlife dealer caught red-handed in India



A much-wanted, notorious illegal wildlife trader and poacher was caught red-handed carrying a Tiger skin and skeleton, two live turtles, ivory and some poaching equipment in Haryana, India.

The arrest was made on 1 August 2012 in Gurgaon, during a joint operation undertaken by Wildlife SOS, CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation), NTCA (National Tiger Conservation Authority), WCCB (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) and Haryana Forest Department with assistance from the Haryana Police.

TRAFFIC/WWF-India facilitated co-ordination among various agencies, along with Wildlife SOS, for effective action. This is not the first time the suspect has been apprehended. He was previously arrested in 2009 in Gurgaon for possessing a Tiger skin and skeleton but was released on bail and could not be traced thereafter. He was being sought in connection with a number of other cases as well.

Khalid Pasha, Associate Director and Interim Head-TRAFFIC in India, said that the seizure and the arrest were a major blow to the illegal wildlife trade nexus prevailing in India. This operation also clearly indicated the effectiveness of multi-agency collaborative efforts to fight wildlife crime in India.

OUTPOST: IUCN World Conservation Congress held in Korea



The 2012 IUCN World Conservation Congress was held on Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, from 6 to 15 September. This Congress is the world's largest and most important conservation event—bringing together top professionals from all regions and the expertise to share knowledge on how our natural environment should be managed for the continued well-being of humanity and of all life on Earth.

With over 400 journalists covering the event, at least 500 events and more than 6000 daily participants—including more than 100 State members and major NGOs such as WWF, Conservation International and National Geographic, this Congress was the largest ever event for nature. The Congress theme “Nature +” captures the fundamental importance of nature and its inherent link to every aspect of our lives. Featured at the Congress, the World Leaders Dialogues were prime time high-level sessions, organized by the Korean Government and the President of IUCN. They featured exceptional, internationally recognized experts, politicians and CEOs in a series of five moderated public debates tackling the most strategic issues related to conservation and sustainable development themes: nature + biodiversity, nature + climate; nature + people; nature + economy; and nature + food. These provided enlightening strategic thinking to guide the implementation of pragmatic solutions for a sustainable future for our planet.

Since 1948, the IUCN World Conservation Congress has been held every 2 to 4 years in all corners of the world—currently, the Congress is structured in two parts: the Member's Assembly of all IUCN member organizations; and the Forum, open to all for debating major sustainable development issues, proposing solutions and facilitating the sharing of information and experiences. The Congress outlined the debate between utilitarian and moral positions to save biodiversity. TRAFFIC was represented at the Congress. To know more, please visit <http://www.iucnworldconservationcongress.org/>

OUTPOST: New campaign to tackle wildlife crime



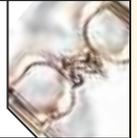
As poaching of African Elephants and rhinos has reached record levels, TRAFFIC and programme partner WWF have launched a joint global campaign calling on governments to combat illegal wildlife trade and reduce demand of products derived from these endangered species.



A TRAFFIC report into the rhino poaching crisis released in August 2012 documented how the numbers of rhinos illegally killed in South Africa rose from 13 animals in 2007 to 448 in 2011. The animals are poached for their horns, which are smuggled to supply consumer markets in Asia, principally in Viet Nam. Already in 2012, 339 rhinos have been killed by poachers in South Africa, with the projected total for the year expected to be more than 500 animals at the current rate.

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TRAFFIC Alert



Illegal snake venom racket busted in Maharashtra

The Maharashtra State wildlife wing has exposed a thriving illegal venom trade in the region. On 12 September 2012, 12 snake catchers were arrested for smuggling venom and 8 ml of cobra venom recovered. Forest officials also seized seven live cobras, a chameleon and a grass snake, besides six motorcycles and 14 mobile phones from the accused, who were all college students.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Besides the awe inspiring King Cobra *Ophiophagus hannah*, there are four species of cobra found in India. These include Spectacled Cobra *Naja naja*, Monocled Cobra *Naja kaouthia*, Andaman Cobra *Naja sagittifera* and Central Asian Cobra *Naja oxiana*. All of these are listed in Schedule II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 providing them complete theoretical protection against hunting and trade. They are further listed in Appendix II of CITES, which further regulates international trade in these species.

Snake venom in wildlife trade has been reported widely in South and South-east Asia but its prevalence in India remains under-appreciated. Of late, there have been media reports that there are rising instances of snake venom trade in India, including the use of snake venom for intoxication. TRAFFIC encourages urgent investigations and stronger enforcement efforts to check the growth of this trade. Greater research and attention is needed to tackle this trade before it brings irreplaceable damage to the species in the wild.

Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/Maharashtra/Illegal-venom-trade-exposed-12-held/Article1-929379.aspx>;
<http://gulfnnews.com/news/world/india/cobra-venom-drug-popular-on-delhi-party-scene-1.982082>;
<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/five-caught-with-rare-snakes/637394>;
<http://animal.discovery.com/tv/wild-recon/science-of-venom/indian-cobra-venom-cancer-killer.html>

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In June, a report by TRAFFIC and other organizations submitted to CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) revealed that 2011 was the worst year on record for large-scale seizures of elephant ivory. China and Thailand were identified as the biggest consumer markets for trafficked ivory.

“Governments are largely ignoring the crisis affecting our endangered species. Throughout our global campaign, countries will hear directly from their constituents that the people expect better from them. The time to act is now while we can still save rhinos, tigers and elephants,” said Lasse Gustavsson, Executive Director of Conservation for WWF-International.

“Illegal wildlife trade is one of the most lucrative international organized crimes, yet is not treated seriously by many governments,” said Sabri Zain, TRAFFIC’s Advocacy Director and co-leader of the WWF-TRAFFIC Illegal Wildlife Trade Campaign. He further added-

“The organized criminal syndicates behind the poaching are also destabilizing national security and putting the lives of park rangers at risk. It’s high time to end their activities once and for all.”

<http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/8/29/new-campaign-to-tackle-wildlife-crime.html>

TRAFFIC Alert



Rare primates seized in Delhi

In September 2012, the CISF (Central Industrial Security Force) officials at Delhi’s IGI Airport made a startling discovery while carrying out a body check on a transit passenger. Hidden between two layers of the male passenger’s undergarments was a small monkey. A search of the terminal revealed another of the same species abandoned in a dustbin. The primates, a species of the Slow Loris primate that is also found in India, were being smuggled from Bangkok to Dubai. “Three transit passengers, all residents of the UAE, had arrived in Delhi on a flight and were scheduled to fly to Dubai on a connecting flight. The monkeys that were recovered were six to seven inches long and weighed about 150 gms.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

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 them 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 CITES. The Slow Loris is listed in Appendix I of CITES and the Slender Loris is in Appendix II.

The animals are captured from the wild and have their teeth plucked out to make them more amenable. Whilst the scale of the trade appears quite extensive in South-east Asia, it has largely escaped public attention in India. In India, both the Slender Loris and the Slow Loris have been recorded in trade and TRAFFIC highlighted the plight of lorises in the last issue of TRAFFIC Post (Issue 15). To view the newsletter, please visit

http://www.wfindia.org/about_wwf/enablers/traffic/newsletter/

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CITES UPDATE: CITES initiatives to curb smuggling of elephant ivory and rhino horn



© WWF-Cannon / Bas Huisbrechts

The 62nd meeting of the Standing Committee of CITES adopted crucial measures to halt the escalation of ivory and rhino horn smuggling.

The decisions taken are ratcheting up pressure on a number of countries to be held accountable over their failure to deal with rampant poaching and illegal trade, but so far no sanctions or punitive measures have been agreed to.

African countries identified as the main sources of illegal ivory in trade, plus Asian and East African transit countries and the two countries with the largest illegal ivory consumer markets—China and Thailand—were given until the end of the year by the Standing Committee to provide written reports of the level of progress they have made in tackling the illicit trade.

Failure to do so could ultimately result in suspension of all trade in CITES-listed species with the concerned country.

Thailand had already been called upon to submit a report, and did so at this Standing Committee meeting. WWF and TRAFFIC expressed the view that the report was vague and non-committal, and joined others in calling for a time frame for implementing the legislative changes needed to close a gaping loophole that allows ivory from illegal sources to be laundered in the Thai marketplace.

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The country at the centre of the rising demand for illegal rhino horn—Viet Nam—was similarly instructed to report on the progress it had made in curbing rhino horn demand. In particular, Viet Nam will need to explain what measures have been initiated and implemented to prevent illegal import and trade in rhino horn, how the black market in rhino horn is being targeted in the country, and what is being done to discourage rhino horn use.

“Viet Nam is the principal driver of rhino horn trafficking and, as such, has an international obligation to curb the demand for horn, implement national trade controls and help end rhino poaching in Africa,” said Tom Milliken, TRAFFIC's rhino expert.

The Standing Committee also instructed CITES' Rhino Working Group to focus on actions needed to reduce demand for rhino horn and tasked it with developing a demand reduction strategy, taking into account the inputs from the experts' meeting convened by TRAFFIC and WWF in November last year on messaging to reduce consumer demand for Tigers and other endangered wildlife species.

The illegal trade in Tiger parts was also on the agenda of the Standing Committee, with TRAFFIC highlighting its work on reducing demand for Tiger products, while China reaffirmed its commitment to the ban on trade in Tiger parts, but made no firm statements about phasing out existing Tiger farms.

Read more at <http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/7/27/cites-bares-teeth-but-can-it-bite.html>

TRAFFIC Alert



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Source:

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-09-25/delhi/34081701_1_lorises-small-monkey-slender-loris;
<http://wildlifecrimeinindia.blogspot.in/2011/09/sle-nder-loris-seized-in-go.html>;
<http://www.hindu.com/2006/02/02/stories/2006020213320500.htm>;
<http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/4/3/loris-trade-not-so-slow.html>;
<http://www.internationalanimalrescue.org/projects/25/Saving+the+slow+loris.html>

Pangolin scales seized in Mizoram

More than 386 kg of pangolin scales were seized by the officials of Customs department from Tuirial Airfield village in Mizoram on 2 September 2012. Customs officials said that the scales were probably intended to be smuggled to Myanmar. The scales of pangolin, also known as 'scaly anteater', now a highly endangered species, are widely used in traditional medicines in East and South East Asia.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

There are two species of pangolins found in India—Indian Pangolin *Manis crassicaudata* and Chinese Pangolin *Manis pentadactyla*. While the Indian Pangolin is widespread within India, the Chinese Pangolin is confined to Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Tripura, Mizoram and northern part of West Bengal. Both the species are protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 of India.

It is perturbing to learn that large volumes of pangolin scales continue to be found in illegal trade. Although pangolins are traded locally throughout India (Mitra 1998), the main threat to their survival comes from the high demand from international markets in China and South-east Asia both for their flesh, which is considered a delicacy and a 'tonic food' for its alleged medicinal properties, and for their scales. Currently all international trade in Asian pangolin species is not permitted under CITES.

Until recently, it appears that most illegal pangolin trade was focused on South-east Asia, but there now appears to be a growing international trade from India too, with traders targeting areas as far as the interior peninsular region. (See TRAFFIC Post October 2010, http://assets.wwfindia.org/downloads/traffic_post_issue_10.pdf and <http://www.deccanchronicle.com/bengaluru/1000-pangolins-hunted-2-months-020>).

The above clearly implies that besides pangolins and their products being in demand in other countries, especially Myanmar, there is also an internal market for consumption. Pangolins are also important in trade in South-east Asia. TRAFFIC has compiled data on the state of this species in Indian trade and recommends stricter action to clamp down on smugglers. New trade connections between India and Myanmar may escalate the illegal trade in pangolins. IUCN has started a new Pangolin Specialist Group to highlight the plight of these species.

Source:<http://www.traffic.org/home/2010/10/28/seized-notebooks-give-unique-insight-into-scale-of-illicit-p.html>; <http://www.business-standard.com/generalnews/news/pangolin-scales-seized-in-mizoram/53362/>; <http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/species/?11100/IUCN-SSC-Pangolin-Specialist-Group-website-launched>; <http://pangolins.org/2011/11/30/pangolin-power-traffic-southeast-asia/>; <http://www.savepangolins.org/conservation/>; http://newswatch.nationalgeographic.com/2009/07/13/asian_pangolins_being_wiped_out/; Mitra, S. in litt., to TRAFFIC India, February 1999. Draft report to the CITES Animals Committee. 205 pp.

TRAFFIC Alert



Eighteen Rhino poachers arrested in Assam

In October 2012, a gang of 18 notorious Karbi poachers who were responsible for butchering at least six rhinos in Kaziranga National Park over the past three years was caught by the Assam police. Two forest employees were also held on suspicion that they were involved in killing the one-horned pachyderms. High calibre arms and ammunition including one AK-47 rifle, 37 rounds of ammunition, two .303 rifles and one gun were seized from them.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Reports continue to emanate from the media on extensive rhino poaching in Kaziranga National Park and other protected areas in Assam. The scenario seems to have taken a turn for the worse in the wake of the recent floods. Rhinos have been targeted by what appear to be new poaching syndicates that crudely hack off their horns whilst the animals are still alive. Recent reports say Kaziranga alone has lost 39 rhinos in the last 10 months. The current situation is alarming to say the least. TRAFFIC encourages stricter patrolling and greater collaboration among all enforcement agencies, both within the territory and with bordering countries to curb the ongoing rhino slaughter. TRAFFIC also recommends the documentation of existing rhino horn stockpiles and encourages efforts to eliminate the demand in rhino horn that results in the products being smuggled abroad.

Source:<http://www.thehindu.com/news/states/other-states/a-gang-of-18-rhino-poachers-nabbed-in-assam/article4002582.ece>;
<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/283172/39-rhinos-killed-10-months.html>;
<http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/at-kaziranga-hopes-dim-for-rhino-mutilated-by-poachers-273262>;
<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/vets-battle-to-save-maimed-rare-rhino/story-e6frg6so-1226483721112>;
http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/_news/2012/10/02/14183314-after-7-rhinos-slaughtered-india-races-to-protect-one-from-death?lite;
<http://www.rnw.nl/english/bulletin/poachers-target-rhinos-flood-hit-ne-india>

IN FOCUS:

Four Leopards poached every week, finds TRAFFIC's latest report on illegal trade in Leopard parts (Interview with Rashid Raza, the lead author of the report)



According to TRAFFIC's latest study "Illuminating the Blind Spot: A study on illegal trade in Leopard parts in India", on average at least four Leopards have been poached every week and their body parts traded through illegal wildlife trade channels in the last 10 years in India. The report was launched on 28 September 2012 by Dr Divyabhanusinh Chavda, President, WWF-India.

What is TRAFFIC's report 'Illuminating the Blind Spot' about?

TRAFFIC took up a study on illegal trade in Leopard skin, bones and other body parts with an aim;

- to provide indicators of the severity of the illegal trade in Leopard parts in India
- to detect illegal Leopard trade hotspots
- to identify regions where effective and enhanced enforcement measures could have a significant impact in curbing this trade.

The study compiles and analyses data for 10 years from 2001 to 2010. We enumerate only those Leopard deaths which are related to illegal trade. Many Leopards are killed due to Leopard-human conflict, we do not include these in our assessment.

Why "Blind spot" in the title?

Even though the media frequently reports on illegal trade and seizures of Leopard skins and other body parts, this subject has not received the proper attention that it deserves. The crime of illegal trade in Leopards seems to be a collective blind spot.



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What motivated TRAFFIC to take up this study?

Reports of Leopard poaching and illegal trade in Leopards in India are frequent. However, there was no systematic assessment regarding the magnitude of this trade and the prevailing trends. With no such strategy on which to base appropriate action, Leopard numbers could dwindle rapidly, just as happened in the case of the Tiger. TRAFFIC has been concerned about the future of Leopards in India and the impact the illegal trade could have on the species. It therefore initiated the study to highlight the magnitude of the trade, its hotspots, trends and to suggest remedial actions.

What is the population status of the Leopard in India?

Even though the Leopard is found all across India, there is no reliable estimate of its population. A review of literature regarding population densities in Asia indicates that although the species may have a wide geographical range, it is unlikely to occur in relatively high abundance.

What is the legal status of the species in India?

Leopard *Panthera pardus* is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The Act provides the species complete protection against hunting and trade. The Leopard is also listed in Appendix I of CITES, which prohibits its commercial international trade.

What are the main threats?

Illegal trade in Leopards' body parts, such as skins and bones, continues to be one of the major threats to the species in the wild. Besides illegal wildlife trade, conflict with humans and habitat degradation and loss are taking a toll on the species.



© Xu Ling/TRAFFIC

What drives illegal trade of Leopards in India?

The lucrative economic gains as a result of demand for skins and other body parts is the major driver of illegal trade of Leopards in India. Of the total seizure incidents recorded during the last 10-year period, almost 90% involved only skins. These are most likely smuggled to East and South-east Asian countries. In traditional Asian medicines, Leopard parts are sometimes prescribed as substitutes for Tiger body parts.

What are the key findings of the study in India?

1. Analysis of the 420 seizure incidents recorded during the 2001-2010 period revealed that body parts of at least 1127 Leopards were seized from the illegal trade. This averages out at recorded seizures of 2.2 Leopards every week.
2. TRAFFIC's study also estimates the undetected part of trade during this period. As per the analysis, the total estimated Leopards poached and in illegal trade in the decade

2001-2010 is around 2294. This gives an estimate of at least four Leopards poached and illegally traded every week for the past 10 years.

3. Delhi emerged as the most important hub for illegal trade in Leopard parts. It is followed by the bordering areas of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana. Uttarakhand emerges as a major source, in contrast to Delhi which seems to be a major collection centre.

What is the methodology of the study?

The chief sources of data on Leopard seizure incidents for the period 2001-2010 were media reports and Forest department seizure records. Other records of mortality either reported as natural or due to conflict with people were not included. All data were geo-referenced and brought into a geographic information system for visualization and further analysis. A simple mapping of seizure locations provides an approximate understanding of where the concentrations of illegal trade are likely to be.

It was possible to arrive at a minimum number of Leopards involved in each incident, based on the seizure records. For example, in cases of recovery of bones, 6 kg of bones is assumed to account for one individual, whereas five skins meant five Leopards. (See page 13 of the report for more details.)

For the undetected part of the trade, 'Mark-Recapture open population models' were used. This method is well known for its use in estimating animal populations when it is not possible to count all individuals.

What do you expect to be changed with this report?

1. Improved understanding of illegal trade in Leopards.
2. Strengthened Wildlife Law Enforcement
3. Ecological knowledge on Leopards should be gathered with a sense of urgency.

The report can be downloaded at <http://www.traffic.org/home/2012/9/28/four-leopards-a-week-enter-indias-illegal-wildlife-trade.html>



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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.)

Tokay not okay! New threat emerges from illegal wildlife trade



© Nick Hobgood

Tokay Gecko *Gekko gecko* is a large, brightly coloured, noisy gecko found in eastern India. The loud distinctive call of the species “To-kay”, gives the species its name. Calls may be uttered under distress, but more commonly heard are the territorial calls, produced with the aid of well-developed vocal cords.

The Tokay Gecko is the second largest gecko species, attaining lengths of about 11–20 inches (28–51 cm) for males, and 7–19 inches (18–48 cm) for females, with weights of 150–400g.

They have a bluish or greyish body with spots from light yellow to bright red. The male is more brightly colored than the female.

Tokay Geckos have a really strong bite for lizards of their size.

Distribution: In India, the species is found in Bihar, West Bengal, Assam and Tripura States. Internationally, it is found in Nepal, Bangladesh, throughout South-east Asia, from the Philippines to Indonesia, and in western New Guinea. Its native habitat is largely trees and cliffs, and it also frequently adapts to rural human habitations, roaming walls and ceilings at night in search of insect prey.

Status: Tokay Gecko like many other gecko species found in India is not protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. It is also not listed under CITES.

Mr Saurabh Sharma, Senior Advocate and an expert on wildlife laws says, “In cases where an animal is not covered in schedule I to IV of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 as in the case with Tokay Gecko, no cases can be booked under this Act. However, Tokay Gecko is found in India and therefore is a biological resource as defined under Section 2(c) of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002. A foreigner is required to obtain approval from the National Biodiversity Board (Section 3) and an Indian citizen needs to get similar approval from State Biodiversity Board (Section 7) to obtain a biological resource for commercial utilization.

Where a person obtains a biological resource for commercial utilization without such approval, in the case of a foreigner the punishment would be five years confinement, or a fine of INR 10 lakh, or both [Section 55(1)], while in the case of an Indian citizen the punishment would be three years or a fine of INR 5 lakh, or both [Section 55(2)]. Noticeably, any attempt or abetment to obtain a biological resource is also an offence, with the same punishment, so the provisions of the Act are very stringent. It is further important to point out that, as per Section 58, the offences in this Act are cognizable and non bailable i.e the enforcement agency can arrest the offender without a warrant and bail can be granted only by the Court.

The Complaint in this Act can be filed by any officer authorized under Section 61(a) of the Act. The MoEF by its notification dated 7 January 2009 has authorized forest officers not below the rank of Range Officers to file complaints under this Act for violations within their respective jurisdiction. Therefore, all forest officers with a rank of range officer and above can file a complaint under Section 61(a) of the Act in the case of seizures of Tokay Geckos within their jurisdictional area”.

Threats: Increasing urbanization is an important reason behind reduction of habitat and range. However, another sinister threat looms over the future of the species in the wild. TRAFFIC found that unwarranted claims of a potential cure for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) are behind a boom in the trade of Tokay Geckos.

The animals are popular in the global pet trade and have long been traded—both legally and illegally—for use in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) in the belief they can cure various maladies including diabetes, asthma, skin disease and cancer. In parts of Asia, Tokay wine or whisky is consumed to increase strength and energy.

Continued on page 11

Continued from page 10

Recently, however, the medicinal demand for Tokay Geckos has skyrocketed, with dozens of new websites in Malaysia, a major hub of the trade, dedicated to buying and selling Tokay Geckos. Messages have been circulating in online blogs, fora, newspaper articles, classified advertisements and amongst wildlife dealers in the region, extolling the consumption of Tokay Gecko tongue and internal organs as a cure for HIV and even cancer.

Tokay Geckos are not so popular in the pet trade. When a Tokay bites, it often won't let go for a few minutes, or even for up to an hour or more, and it is very difficult to remove without causing harm to the gecko.

Khalid Pasha, Associate Director and Interim Head of TRAFFIC in India said, "It is important that the Tokay Gecko be included in the Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972 so that it receives the necessary protection. It is evident that there is illicit trade in the species. There is an immediate need to sensitize various enforcement agencies, especially the State Forest departments, about the extent of the trade and legal provisions of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 which could help in bringing this illegal trade to a halt".

Seizures of Tokay Gecko from India in 2012

On 30 July 2012, Bishnupur District Divisional Forest Office, and Nambol police seized eight Tokay geckos in the Kamong area, Bishnupur District, Manipur. Another seizure involving this species was made in this location in the recent past, and on 10 October 2012, Manipur police seized a further 30 Tokay Geckos from two people during an operation in Thoubal district. It is reported that most of the specimens of this species caught in Manipur are taken to Thailand via Myanmar, for onward transportation to Malaysia and Indonesia. There were no arrests.

[http://sevensisterspost.com/tokay-geckos-seized-in-manipur/;](http://sevensisterspost.com/tokay-geckos-seized-in-manipur/)

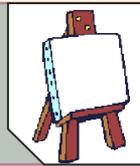
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/guwahati/30-tokay-geckos-seized-in-Manipur/articleshow/16759303.cms>

References: A photographic guide to snakes and other reptiles of India by Indraneil Das;
<http://www.traffic.org/home/2011/11/16/tokay-gecko-trade-boom-in-south-east-asia.html>



Tokay Geckos sold as a cure for lung ailments.
Hong Kong, China

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Shocking Amur Falcon Massacre in Nagaland

by Shashank Dalvi and Ramki Sreenivasan

This is a documentation of the shocking massacre of tens of thousands of migratory Amur falcons (*Falco amurensis*) in the remote state of Nagaland in India's northeast. We estimate that during the peak migration 12,000 – 14,000 birds are being hunted for consumption and commercial sale everyday. We further estimate that a mind-boggling 120,000 to 140,000 birds are being slaughtered in Nagaland every year during their passage through the state.

00:24

This is probably the single largest congregation of Amur falcons recorded anywhere in the world and it is tragic that they meet such a fate. Our team has alerted all appropriate authorities in Nagaland. Government officials we spoke to have committed to put an end to the slaughter and

TAKE ACTION

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Amurs lying in a hunter's home

About 12,000 to 14,000 birds are trapped everyday.

Document download

View more images of the Amur Falcon massacre

A hunter carrying amurs to Pangti village

Investigation by Conservation India into the massacre of Amur Falcons on their passage migration in Nagaland shocked India and the world. Read more at <http://www.conservationindia.org/campaigns/amur-massacre>

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