

# TRAFFIC

the wildlife trade monitoring network

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# POST

TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA

A large lizard, likely a monitor lizard, is perched on a tree trunk. The lizard has a greyish-brown body with a pattern of dark spots and stripes. It is looking towards the left of the frame. The tree trunk is thick and has a rough, cracked bark. The background is dark and out of focus.

**Monitoring the  
illegal trade in  
the threatened  
King of Lizards:  
Wild Cry  
feature.....**



## TRAFFIC Post



TRAFFIC Post is TRAFFIC's newsletter on wildlife trade in India. It was started in September 2007 with a primary aim to create awareness on rampant poaching and illegal wildlife trade in India and how it affects the endangered flora and fauna. Since then it has covered not only issues related to illegal wildlife trade but also highlighted policies and trends related to legitimate wildlife trade especially in timber and medicinal plants.

The newsletter began as a quarterly e-newsletter available only for online distribution. However after a few issues it was converted into a printed edition with three issues coming out every year. The response to the newsletter over the years has been overwhelming and the subscribers continue to increase with every issue.

Besides carrying updates on TRAFFIC's work in India in a given period, the newsletter focuses on the plight of various species in illegal wildlife trade. It also provides early warning through its various sections on illegal wildlife trade trends. The CITES section and the OUTPOST section especially is meant to keep its readers updated on global news related to wildlife trade.

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**Front cover:** Monitor lizard by  
Dr Rashid H. Raza



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## CITES UPDATE



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## IN FOCUS

### 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.

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**Monitoring the illegal trade in the threatened King of Lizards**

## Panna Forest Department brushes up on new techniques to fight wildlife crime



The Forest Department of Panna Tiger Reserve (PTR) in Madhya Pradesh, India, received two-days of intensive training to upgrade their skills and learn about modern techniques for improving law enforcement to combat wildlife crimes. The training workshop at the Reserve was organized jointly by TRAFFIC in India and PTR on 23-24 April 2013.

The workshop covered various aspects of anti-poaching initiatives, detecting illegal wildlife trade chains and implications for addressing trans-border trafficking, legal issues and ways to improve convictions and how to reduce poaching and illegal trade in specific groups of species including birds and turtles. Scientific tools and techniques available to fight wildlife crime across the region were also shared with officials attending.

The programme was inaugurated by Mr R Sreenivasa Murthy, IFS, CCF and Field Director of PTR, who emphasized the importance of conducting the workshop and how it would help enforcement officials sharpen their anti-poaching skills and thus strengthen conservation efforts in the region.

Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC in India noted how the workshop modules had been designed to help officials understand various aspects of illegal wildlife trade, the modus operandi of the poachers and traders, gather intelligence and deal with other legal aspects that would enable successful convictions for wildlife trafficking offences. Over 60 officials from various wildlife and forest divisions in Madhya Pradesh and the police attended. They included Mr V S Parihar IFS Deputy Field Director, Panna Tiger Reserve and Mr Tamrakar, Assistant Conservator of Forest, Panna Tiger Reserve.

## SAWEN gathers support at CITES CoP16



The Secretariat of the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) organized a side event during the CITES-Conference of Parties meeting (CoP16) in Bangkok, Thailand on 8 March 2013 to share regional experiences of SAWEN and its activities that are aimed at combating wildlife crime in the region; to enhance co-operation and collaboration among various enforcement and other related agencies; and to discuss with member countries the way forward for strengthening SAWEN.

SAWEN is a regional network of eight countries of South Asia, namely, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, with a mission to strengthen, promote and co-ordinate regional co-operation for curbing illegal wildlife trade that threatens the wild flora and fauna of South Asia.

TRAFFIC and WWF-Nepal helped the SAWEN Secretariat in organizing the event that brought together wildlife enforcement network representatives from Central Africa, Central America, North America, the European Union, South-East Asia, and South Asia. TRAFFIC was invited to share its experiences as an international NGO working to support several regional wildlife law enforcement initiatives.

More than 80 officials representing SAWEN member countries, governments, donor agencies, and NGOs from across the world participated.

Addressing delegates, Mr Bishwa Nath Oli, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, Government of Nepal said, "Nepal has been playing a constructive role in combating wildlife crime in the region. It is encouraging to see how SAWEN has evolved as an important platform for the countries in the region to act against wildlife crime."



© SAWEN Secretariat

*Continued on page 5*

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Mr Wan Ziming, Director of the CITES Management Authority of China said that China would be happy to be involved in SAWEN activities . “At this moment we need to have better co-operation and collaboration to combat wildlife crime in the region,” said Ziming.

Mr Keshav Varma from the World Bank noted that resources will be made available for SAWEN's future activities. He praised the work of SAWEN and expressed his full support for the future.

Mr James Compton from TRAFFIC congratulated the SAWEN Secretariat for its progress since its establishment two years ago. He said that TRAFFIC has provided support and played a pivotal role along with other partner agencies in institutionalizing SAWEN and will continue to support SAWEN to achieve its objectives.

The event was chaired by Mr Megh Bahadur Pandey, Director General of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) and Chief Enforcement Coordinator of SAWEN. He said “We are growing and our activities are expanding. We would like to thank the member countries, international community and various conservation partners for their support to date and we hope to receive continuous support in the future to curb wildlife crime in the region.”

Dr Maheswar Dhakal from SAWEN, Mr Diwakar Chapagain from WWF Nepal and Mr MKS Pasha from TRAFFIC made presentations on SAWEN's activities and on its development.

## GIZ initiative for marine conservation considers the plight of sharks in India



**G**IZ (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH*), the German agency for international development, organized a two-day workshop in New Delhi, in collaboration with the Indian Ministry of Environment and Forests on 13-14 May 2013 on 'Sustainable Management of Coastal and Marine Protected Areas in India'.

TRAFFIC was represented by Shubhobroto Ghosh, Senior Programme Officer and WWF-India represented by Vinod Malayilethu, Senior Coordinator of the Marine Conservation programme participated at this important meeting, which attempted to set priorities for marine and coastal conservation in India's coastal States in accordance with the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

“India and Germany have joined hands, because conserving biological diversity is a global task and an objective we can better achieve together to ensure the livelihoods of future generations,” said Mr Hem Pandey, Joint Secretary to the Indian Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF)”.

TRAFFIC and WWF-India emphasized the importance of regulating and monitoring shark catches in India. The country has been ranked second in the list of top-20 shark catchers worldwide.



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## Six more sniffer dogs join the ranks in India



© Dhruva Dutta/TRAFFIC

The anti-poaching squads of Bihar, Maharashtra and Uttarakhand received a boost with the addition of six new sniffer dogs trained for curbing illegal wildlife trade.

Poaching for illegal wildlife trade is one of the major threats to our precious flora and fauna, especially to the Asian big cat species. Issues such as lack of infrastructure, paucity of field staff, absence of adequate and actionable intelligence information, and poor co-ordination with other law enforcement agencies are the primary constraints towards effective wildlife law enforcement.

In 2008, TRAFFIC launched a sniffer dog training programme with support from forest departments and sniffer dog training centres. Seven dogs and their handlers were trained and later deployed by the Forest Departments of Haryana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand. Now, an additional six dogs have been added to the growing team, the third batch to be trained under this programme.

TRAFFIC partnered with the Dog Training Centre of the 23rd Battalion Special Armed Force, Madhya Pradesh Police Department based in Bhopal, for the training of the latest recruits. The six German Shepherds and their handlers received extensive training that began in June 2012. The passing out ceremony took place on 15 March 2013 at the Dog Training Centre in Bhopal when the dogs were handed over to their respective state forest departments.

Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj said, "TRAFFIC wishes good fortune to the new dogs and their trainers. Those dogs already deployed in the field have done the programme proud by regularly locating illegal wildlife products and we trust the new recruits will prove to be equally successful in their work. TRAFFIC's aim is to support more States in getting sniffer dogs though this programme, to add teeth to their anti-poaching and anti-wildlife crimes mechanisms".

To find out more about the programme, please visit [http://www.wwfindia.org/about\\_wwf/enablers/traffic/what\\_we\\_do/capacity\\_building/](http://www.wwfindia.org/about_wwf/enablers/traffic/what_we_do/capacity_building/)

## Stakeholders deliberate on measures to regulate medicinal plant trade in India and enhance livelihoods



Many wild medicinal plant species are under severe pressure due to over-harvesting leading to ecological imbalance and livelihood loss. The over-harvesting is partly a result of increasing domestic demand and liberalization of international trade regimes, with the subsequent inadequately regulated commercialization of the medicinal plants trade.

In order to maximize the benefits from commercialization of wild medicinal plant species, sustainable utilization of the resource through good collection practices in an important pre-requisite.

The Umbrella Programme on Natural Resource Management (UPNRM) of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) supported by GIZ and KFW, a German government-owned development bank, is dedicated towards promoting and funding sustainable natural resource management-based (NRM) livelihood projects which are community-oriented. UPNRM has been planned as a vehicle to design innovative and client driven loan and Public Private Partnership-based (PPP) NRM products. Therefore, under the aegis of UPNRM, NABARD in association with GIZ organized a national-level stakeholder consultation workshop on the theme of 'Improving quality, traceability and institutional arrangement for better livelihoods from wild medicinal plants based enterprises'.

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The workshop was conducted at Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh on 18-19 April 2013, and was attended by key players in the medicinal plant industry in India, cultivators, local traders, community representative and other stakeholders. The two-day workshop began with a visit to Chintapaka Village near Vishakhapatnam followed by a day-long conference to discuss some of the observations, challenges, and some possible solutions.

TRAFFIC's MKS Pasha shared his experiences of working with the medicinal plant sector for the last few years and provided an outline of the minimum standards, legal compliance, concept of 'mobile mandis' and the common minimum infrastructure required to ensure sustainable wild collection and utilization. He also spoke about the various roles that each of the stakeholders from harvester/collector, to trader, industry and government institutions had to play regarding quality, traceability along with their responsibilities along the chain of custody.

TRAFFIC recommended the development of a national-level consortium on medicinal plants with representatives from industry, traders, NGOs and banks responsible for enforcing a minimum standard for sustainable harvest of medicinal plants sourced from the wild. This recommendation was adopted by the workshop participants.

Dr A.K. Pandey of the Tropical Forest Research Institute and Mr Aravind of Himalaya Drug spoke about 'Quality issues in the medicinal plants sector' and highlighted issues surrounding quality requirements in the entire value chain of medicinal plants and provided some recommendations for action.

Dr Inkarsal of Assistant General Manager-NABARD gave an overview of the UPNRM programme, its organizational structure, guiding principles by which projects are ranked and selected, major areas of intervention and core/supplementary sectors of the projects.

Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC in India commented, "Interventions in practices employed by enterprises utilizing wild medicinal plants requires the implementation of best practice guidelines such as the FairWild Standard, balancing conservation and development needs and also understanding the market demand for high quality raw materials. Hence, engagement and synergy among the producers, buyers, regulatory bodies, and financial institutions is required for development and creating an environment of credible supply chains".

### **National consultation meeting on the legal framework for medicinal plants and associated traditional knowledge in India:**

The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) organized a national consultation on the Legal Framework for Medicinal Plants and Associated Traditional Knowledge in India on 9-10 May 2013 in Delhi. MKS Pasha from TRAFFIC in India spoke on Conservation and Management of Medicinal Plants: Challenges in Implementing Policies and Laws. The subsequent consultation with various stakeholders will help frame a national policy for the medicinal plant trade and conservation issues.

## TRAFFIC Alert



### **Three arrested for transporting bullfrogs in Goa**

In the early morning of 9 June 2013, range forest officers in Goa intercepted a car and arrested three people on suspicion of illegally transporting Indian Bullfrogs after 158 live and 51 dead Indian Bullfrogs were discovered in three sacks. All of the accused have been taken into custody and further investigations are in progress.

### **TRAFFIC in India adds.....**

It is not the first time that Indian Bullfrogs have been seized in Goa. They are among the many frog species illegally collected from the wild and exploited for food. Frogs' legs are a well known delicacy of French and Cantonese cuisine; they are also eaten in many other parts of the world.

Of the 216 species of frogs and toads representing six families presently known in India, the Indian Bullfrog *Hoplobatrachus tigerinus* is undoubtedly the most commonly known frog. In 1985, as a consequence of unsustainable exploitation for export, the Indian Bullfrog was listed in Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). In India, all freshwater frogs, including the Indian Bullfrog, are listed in Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. This provides it complete protection against poaching and trade in the country.

TRAFFIC has previously highlighted the plight of the Indian Bullfrog in illegal wildlife trade in India in the November 2011 of its newsletter, TRAFFIC Post, available at [http://assets.wfindia.org/wwf-web-1.bluegecko.net/downloads/traffic\\_post\\_nov\\_2011.pdf](http://assets.wfindia.org/wwf-web-1.bluegecko.net/downloads/traffic_post_nov_2011.pdf)

OUTPOST:  
**Royal family shows support to tackle illegal wildlife trade**



© WWF-UK / James Morgan

**H**is Royal Highness The Prince of Wales and the UK Government hosted a conference on 21 May 2013, calling for action at the highest level to end the illegal trade in wildlife—a trade that presents a grave threat not only to the world of nature, but also to national and regional security.

The Prince of Wales is President of WWF-UK and shares many of the same conservation interests including the desire to see an end to illegal wildlife trade.

The initiative aimed to highlight the issue at the international level. High-level representatives from some of the countries impacted by international wildlife crime activities attended the event, including Australia, Austria, Belgium, Botswana, Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, France, Gabon, Germany, Indonesia, Kenya, Nepal, Netherlands, Malaysia, Mozambique, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Uganda, USA and Viet Nam.

“The illegal wildlife trade threatens to overturn decades of conservation efforts, putting some iconic and ecologically important species at risk of extinction,” said David Nussbaum, Chief Executive of WWF-UK.

“This multi-billion Pound trade also fuels other types of crime and has a devastating impact on some of the poorest people on the planet.”

“With poaching and wildlife trafficking at record levels, we hope that this meeting will be the start of a ground-breaking initiative in the fight against this deadly and destructive trade.”

In South Africa a record 668 rhinos were killed by poachers last year, and close to 550 have died so far in 2013. Earlier this year, at least 26 elephants were massacred in a World Heritage Site in the Central African Republic after 17 individuals armed with Kalashnikov rifles entered the unique elephant habitat at Dzanga Bai, known locally as the “village of elephants”.

This meeting laid the groundwork for a meeting of the Heads of State to be held later in 2013, also to be hosted by the UK Government, where it is hoped that the governments will commit to actions that will reduce demand for endangered wildlife and related products in markets around the world; improve global enforcement and criminal justice against the organized syndicates engaged in this activity; and assist rural communities to find long-term, viable alternatives to the trade.

In summer 2012, WWF and TRAFFIC launched a global campaign to highlight illegal wildlife trade as a serious crime and to spur governments and international institutions to tackle it as such.

For more information, please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2013/5/21/royal-event-to-tackle-illegal-wildlife-trade.html>

**TRAFFIC Alert**



*Continued from page 7*

**Source:**

TRAFFIC Post Issue 13, November 2011  
 Rajalakshmi (2011) Increased Frog Leg demand Threatening Amphibians to Extinction, August 5, 2011. <http://indiasendangered.com/increased-frog-leg-demand-threatening-amphibians-to-extinction/>. Viewed 29/9/2011  
[http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-06-10/goa/39872096\\_1\\_bullfrogs-south-go-a-cotigao](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-06-10/goa/39872096_1_bullfrogs-south-go-a-cotigao)

**Poachers train sights on smaller animals**

Deep inside Indian forests small and big creatures are under threat from poachers as never before. Their vulnerability to wildlife syndicates is on the rise with government data showing an increasing threat not only to Tigers and rhinos but also to other animals such as pangolins, butterflies and crocodiles.

**TRAFFIC in India adds.....**

Far from the public glare reserved for charismatic species, many lesser known animals are falling victim to illegal wildlife trade. Such animals include hares, monitor lizards, scorpions, slow lorises and birds that are neglected because of the attention given to larger animals. Recent reports indicate there are high levels of trade in slow lorises and monitor lizards in South-East Asia. The scale of trade in these species in India is unrecorded and warrants further attention.

Pangolins, butterflies and many other species are accorded protection in India under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Moths and butterflies of eight families are included in Schedule II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and are also accorded protection under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002. The Act was enforced in 2008 during the case of two Czech nationals who were arrested in West Bengal for catching and smuggling butterflies and beetles without permission. They were found in possession of dozens of species of beetles, butterflies and other rare insects.

*Continued on page 9*

OUTPOST:  
Tokay Geckos mainly traded for traditional medicine, finds new study



© C. Gomes/TRAFFIC

A new TRAFFIC report finds that millions of Tokay Geckos are being harvested from the wild to supply the traditional medicine (TM) trade in East Asia. At the same time, the trade in Tokay Geckos for Novel Medicinal Claims (NMCs), including as a supposed cure for AIDS, has declined markedly.

The attractively patterned Tokay Gecko *Gekko gekko* is an adaptable lizard species found across much of Asia. In India, it is found in the states of Bihar, West Bengal, Assam and Tripura and is in high demand for use in traditional medicines to treat a range of ailments including

asthma, diabetes and skin disorders as well as for the international pet trade.

Since 2009, demand for Tokay Geckos in South-East Asia was reported to have sky-rocketed following rumours that extracts from the lizard could cure HIV/AIDS, a claim refuted by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Following such reports, TRAFFIC examined the Tokay Gecko trade in the region, including a case study in Peninsular Malaysia, the purported centre of demand in the NMC trade, but found that while such trade had been substantial, it has declined substantially. In contrast, the trade in Tokay Geckos for traditional medicines was found to be booming according to the new study jointly funded by WWF-Malaysia and Wildlife Reserves Singapore: “*The Trade in Tokay Geckos in South-East Asia: With a case study on Novel Medicinal Claims in Peninsular Malaysia.*”

Tokay Geckos are widely consumed in traditional medicine in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Viet Nam. In mainland China and Viet Nam, Tokay Geckos are reportedly bred in captivity, however; the supply does not meet demand and the industry relies predominantly on those caught from the wild. This has led to reported population declines in parts of the species’s range, notably in Thailand and Java, the primary source locations for Tokay Geckos in trade.

“More research is crucial to understanding the implications of the trade in Tokay Geckos on wild populations,” said Dr Chris R. Shepherd, Acting Director of TRAFFIC in South-East Asia.



© M. Auliyar/TRAFFIC

TRAFFIC Alert



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Pangolins are listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, of 1972 and Appendix II of CITES. Of late, there have been several important seizures of pangolins in India and also a recent case in Nepal where at least 45 pangolins were found dead.

TRAFFIC urges greater alacrity and research into addressing the illegal trade of some of these neglected species.

Source:

- <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/NewDelhi/poachers-train-sights-on-smaller-animals/Article1-1034936.aspx#sthash.KL9vdS4.dpuf>
- <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/over-21-persons-arrested-for-poaching-blacknaped-hares/article2424443.ece>
- [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/7609224.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7609224.stm)
- <http://www.darjeelingtimes.com/opinions/general/1677-illegal-trade-of-butterflies.html>
- <http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Police+seize+pangolin+scales&NewsID=379739>
- <http://www.livescience.com/37146-monitor-lizards-threatened-asia.html>
- <http://primatesnotpets.tumblr.com/post/30181705941/slow-loris-pet-trade-horror-story>
- <http://savepangolins.org/conservation/>
- [www.iucnscg.org/365\\_docs/attachments/protarea/17\\_C-f8ad64af.pdf](http://www.iucnscg.org/365_docs/attachments/protarea/17_C-f8ad64af.pdf)
- [http://www.wfindia.org/about\\_wwf/priority\\_species/gharial/](http://www.wfindia.org/about_wwf/priority_species/gharial/)

Man held with snakes on a plane in Chennai

On 18 April 2013, Customs officials at Chennai airport got a huge shock when they discovered a passenger arriving from Bangkok was carrying six live snakes with him. They included two endangered Reticulated Pythons, two Green Pythons and two Coral Snakes as well as six Sugar Gliders.

The man, who was arrested, afterwards told officers that pythons are reared as pets in Thailand and often sold as *Vasthu* animals to bring good luck. He was detained on suspicion after claiming the basket he was carrying contained rare herbal plants from Thailand. As there were no international quarantine certificates or clearance documents from the Union forest ministry, he was arrested and handed over to the wildlife wing, sources added. *Continued on page 10*

CITES UPDATE:

New initiative to curb Tiger trade rolls out at the CITES meeting



© TRAFFIC

A new international law enforcement initiative to stop poaching and illegal trade of Tigers and other Asian big cats was agreed by the member countries of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) at the 16th Conference of the Parties (CoP16) held in Bangkok, Thailand, in March 2013.

An agreement was reached to gather information on incidents of poaching and illegal trade in all Asian big cats since the

beginning of 2010 and to analyse the information for circulation to relevant enforcement agencies and range States.

The CITES members also agreed to monitor efforts to close down the illegal Tiger trade. Though some countries had asked for a situation appraisal to be carried out before the next full CITES meeting due in around three years time, it was agreed to accelerate the process and ensure the information was available by 2014. For more information, please visit

<http://www.traffic.org/home/2013/3/14/cites-turns-up-the-heat-on-tiger-smugglers.html>

CITES UPDATE:

CITES extends protection to several shark species at CoP16



During the 16th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES CoP16) recently held in Bangkok, Thailand, proposals to include shark species threatened by overharvesting for their fins and meat within CITES were accepted during the final plenary wrap up session of the conference. Likewise, the Manta Rays were also formally adopted into the CITES Appendices.

Global catches of sharks are in excess of 800,000 tonnes per year, and the fin trade alone is worth more than USD 480 million per year. These fishes are largely killed to feed the vast appetite for shark-fin soup in Asia. The populations of some of the shark species have declined by in excess of 90 per cent because of the excessive demand by the trade. The Oceanic Whitetip *Carcharhinus longimanus*, Scalloped Hammerhead Shark *Sphyrna lewini*, Great Hammerhead Shark *Sphyrna mokarran*, Smooth Hammerhead Shark *Sphyrna zigaena* and the Porbeagle Shark *Lamna nasusare* are now protected under CITES.

“This is a historic day for marine conservation,” said Glenn Sant, TRAFFIC’s Marine Programme Leader. “Shark populations in freefall have been thrown a lifeline today—CITES has finally listened to the scientists.”

*Continued on page 11*

TRAFFIC Alert



TRAFFIC in India adds.....

The penchant for keeping exotic pets appears to be growing in India. Two of the three species of snakes confiscated would certainly be destined to fulfill such a role. The Green Tree Python *Morelia viridis* is found in New Guinea, Indonesia and Australia. This species is listed in Appendix II of CITES. The coral snakes confiscated were Eastern Coral Snakes *Micrurus fulvius*, a species found in the United States and northeastern Mexico. The species is not listed in CITES.

The other snakes confiscated were Reticulated Pythons, *Python reticulatus*, a species found in India in the North East and in the Andaman and Nicobar islands. This snake is listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and is in Appendix II of CITES.

Sugar Gliders *Petaurus breviceps* are largely found in Australia; Indonesia and Papua New Guinea and are not listed in CITES.

Trade in protected Indian species is prohibited under India’s Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, while international trade is regulated under CITES. However, many species from other countries are being smuggled into India without adhering to CITES provisions, while their import may also need clearance under India’s EXIM policy.

Apparently, there is a lack of awareness regarding trade in exotic species among both enforcement officials and consumers. Reports have also indicated that many Indian species are falsely sold under the pretext of being exotic by unscrupulous traders, while greater attention and awareness is needed among Customs authorities to check the import and export of CITES listed animals to and from India.

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Following the failure by Japan to reopen the debate on Oceanic Whitetip, a similar attempt was made to reopen the debates for the hammerhead shark species, but this also failed. There was no attempt to reopen the debate on the Porbeagle Shark.



© Jürgen Freund / WWF-Canon

India noted its concern that the large coastal communities already facing the brunt of a drastic decline in fishery catches in Indian seas would be hard hit by the additional legal requirements following the listing of these shark species in CITES. China also expressed its concern over the difficulty in implementing trade regulations through CITES, citing concerns over identification of the shark species concerned, and called for assistance from other countries to help ensure enforcement of the new measures. China also asked for exporting countries to ensure that illegal products are not allowed to enter the market place.

For more information, please visit <http://www.traffic.org/home/2013/3/14/white-smoke-for-whitetip-and-other-sharks-at-cites.html>

## TRAFFIC Alert



Continued from page 10

**Source:**

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/130418/news-crime/article/man-held-snakes-plane-chennai>;  
[http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/accounts/Python\\_reticulatus/xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/20809606/25224243/name/science-1.pdf](http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/accounts/Python_reticulatus/xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/20809606/25224243/name/science-1.pdf)  
<http://www.cites.org/eng/resources/species.html>  
<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/64025/0>

### Two thousand softshell turtles rescued, released in Kolleru Lake in Andhra Pradesh

On 17 June 2013, in Andhra Pradesh, Range Officers rescued

about 2000 Indian Softshell Turtles packed into 75 gunny bags from wildlife traffickers who fled the scene and escaped. The turtles, which varied in size from 200 g to 2 kg, were later released.

#### TRAFFIC in India adds.....

The Indian or Ganges Softshell Turtle *Nilssonina gangetica* is a species of softshell turtle found in India, Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Of the 33 turtle species found in India, 24 are freshwater, five marine and four land-dwelling. Unsustainable hunting of turtles for consumption is impacting turtle populations in India, as well as the growing demand for turtle plastrons in China where they are used for making gelatin. The high income to be made from turtle plastrons has attracted many non-traditional hunters to the trade.

Illegal hunting takes place in almost all water bodies, ranging from irrigation canals to rivers and ponds. There is evidence that communities engaged in turtle hunting are having to travel large distances to capture turtles because of diminishing populations. The Indian Softshell Turtle is one of the three most preferred species in trade, the others being the Indian Flapshell Turtle *Lissemys punctata* and the Peacock Softshell Turtle *Nilssonina hurum*. All three are listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 that affords them complete protection against poaching and trade.

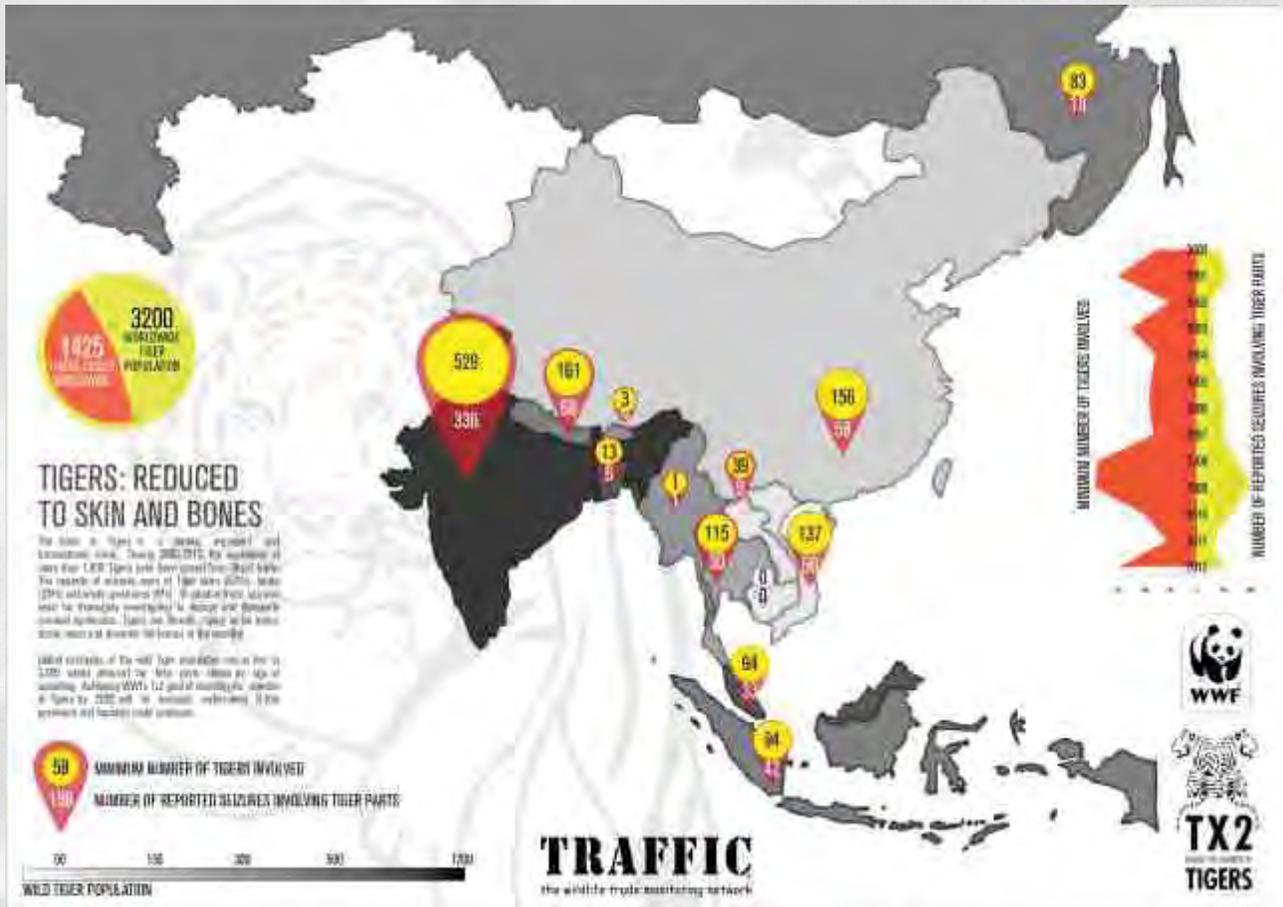
In the south-eastern coastal villages and towns of Tamil Nadu; and in central and northern West Bengal, turtles are heavily exploited for food and their blood is used as a health supplement. Such beliefs are governed by myths that have never been scientifically proven.

**Source:**

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/2000-turtles-rescued-released-in-kolleru-lake/article4826293.ece>

Citation for individual papers: MKS Pasha, Rahul Dutta and Samir Sinha 2009. Illegal Trade of Freshwater Horne Turtles & Tortoises in India. pp.115-119. In: Vasudevan, K (Ed.). Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises of India. ENVIS Bulletin: Wildlife and Protected Areas, Vol. 12(1). Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, India.

IN FOCUS:  
**Persistent Tiger trade; a growing menace endangering the future of the species**



**T**iger trade is thriving and has taken the form of an organized criminal operation threatening the very existence of the species in the wild. This is clearly evident from TRAFFIC's latest report that unveils the magnitude of this trade.

**Reduced to Skin and Bones Revisited** finds that parts of at least 1425 Tigers were seized across all but one of the 13 Tiger range countries (TRC) between 2000 and 2012. Only Cambodia recorded no seizures during the period.

The report, a joint effort by TRAFFIC and the WWF Tigers Alive Initiative, was released during the 16th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) held in Bangkok, Thailand in March 2013.

The report analyses seizure information collated directly from a number of TRC government agencies, non-governmental organizations and from publicly reported information.

Since 2000, there have been 654 seizures of Tiger parts and derivatives across the 12 TRCs accounting for at least 1425 Tigers seized during this period, averaging around two per week. It is anticipated only a fraction of illegal Tiger transactions are intercepted by law enforcement, so the scale of this criminal activity is likely to be much larger and doubtless poses a serious threat to the survival of Tigers in the wild.

Of the 13 TRCs—Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Thailand, and Viet Nam—only India has kept sufficiently detailed seizure records to allow meaningful analysis to identify the 'hotspots' where Tiger trade is taking place.

*Continued on page 13*

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Based on the information from India, five Tiger trade 'hotspot' locations were identified in the country. They included Delhi, while the other four hotspots were close to protected areas in different parts of the country (Uttar Pradesh, Central India, West Bengal (Sundarbans) and the southern India landscape of the Western Ghats).

Looking at recent seizures (2010-2012), the number of seizures in India as a proportion of total seizures across all countries shows a downward trend; 29% of total seizures compared to 58% for 2000-2009. Conversely, the proportion of seizures has increased for other TRC such as China, Malaysia, Nepal and Russia but is most notable for Viet Nam, rising from six percent to 14%. Indonesia, with a relatively small wild Tiger population and few known captive animals, disproportionately seized almost 20% (50) of all seizures across TRCs in the past three years (300), despite the actual number of seizures being relatively low, representing a serious and ongoing threat.



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Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC in India said, "As a significant Tiger bearing country, this latest analysis of Tigers in trade should be ringing alarm bells in India, who should consider reviewing its Tiger security management plans."

**Emerging Trend**

Since 2000, live Tigers consistently accounted for around two per cent of all seizures, however during 2009-2012 this increased to seven per cent. Since 2010, there have been 619 live Tigers seized and almost three quarters (74% / 45) of these were seized within the following three TRCs: Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam. Prior to this in 2008, Viet Nam made the largest ever single seizure of live Tigers, when 42 animals were found in the southern Vietnamese province of Binh Duong. The paucity of wild Tigers living in Thailand, Lao PDR and Viet Nam combined with the presence of Tiger breeding facilities within these three countries inevitably causes questions to be raised with respect to the source of Tigers in trade.



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**Serious and Organized Crime**

In October 2012, the United Nations Convention against Transboundary Organized Crime (UNTOC) recognized environmental crime, including illicit trafficking in wildlife, as a new form of transboundary organized crime in need of a greater response. Tiger seizure cases often conform to the UNTOC definition of organized crime, with an average of two suspects arrested per seizure (and one-tenth of cases involving three or more suspects) and sentences averaging 4.3 years handed down in prosecutions. There are some specific elements of serious and organized criminality identified in the seizure dataset, particularly within Russia and Nepal. Overwhelmingly, lack of information impedes a comprehensive assessment on the scale of organized crime driving the illegal tiger trade.

The report finds that 89% of seizures occur outside protected areas. "This clearly emphasizes the importance of anti-trafficking actions to disrupt trade chains and prevent incursions into Tiger habitat," said Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC in India.

"The benefits of such analysis to enhance law enforcement efforts to protect Tigers are obvious".

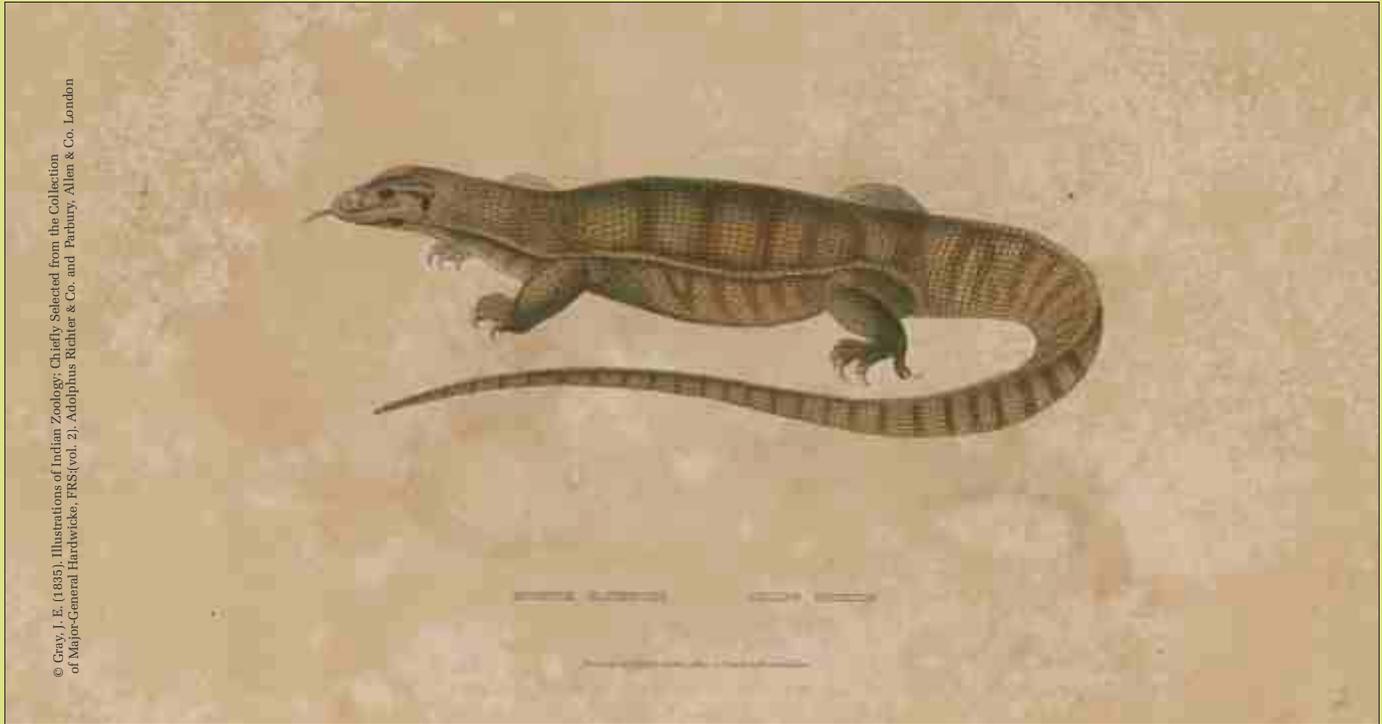
"Renewed impetus is needed to combat regional level illicit wildlife trade by enhancing collaboration between TRCs. To some extent this is already happening, with the establishment of transboundary wildlife enforcement networks such as ASEAN-WEN and SAWEN, including engagement by these regional bodies with China. These platforms have also encouraged the endorsement of bilateral Memoranda of Understanding that still need to be further contextualized into trans-border governmental action plans. However, more co-ordination and support is needed to enhance those networks which are already in place."

Sarah Stoner, TRAFFIC's Tiger Trade Data Specialist and author of the report said, "Looking ahead to 2022, one major goal of the 12-year Global Tiger Recovery Program (GTRP) adopted in 2010 by the TRCs is effectively to eliminate Tiger poaching and trade. The GTRP anticipates that Tiger seizures may increase initially as law enforcement effort is improved and scaled up, but by 2015 they should start to decline to the level that Tigers and Tiger products (parts and derivatives) are no longer evident in illegal trade. This report has found that seizures are generally on the increase in most TRCs, and only in India is there any indication, although still tentative, that extensive national crime-fighting and Tiger protection efforts may be starting to pay off through a reduction in illegal trade".

**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.)

## Monitoring the illegal trade in the threatened King of Lizards



© Gray, J. E. (1835). Illustrations of Indian Zoology, Chiefly Selected from the Collection of Major-General Hardwicke, FRS (vol. 2), Adolphus Richter & Co. and Parbury, Allen & Co. London

**M**onitor lizards belong to the genus *Varanus*. The common name 'Monitor' comes from Latin noun '*Monitio*' or a '*warner*' (Pianka *et al* 2004), the Scientific generic name *Varanus* derives from an Arabic word *Waran*, which means 'to monitor' (Pianka *et al* 2004). The name is inspired by the behaviour of several monitor species to stand on their hind legs to survey the surroundings.

### Distribution:

India is home to four species of monitor lizards—the Bengal Monitor *V. bengalensis*, Desert Monitor *V. griseus*, Yellow Monitor *V. flavescens*, and Water Monitor *V. salvator*.

The Bengal Monitor is the mostly widely distributed and well-known of the monitors in India, Auffenberg (1994) lists more than 20 local names for the species. In the north of the country, monitors are generally known as *Goh* or variations on this. Perhaps the most famous among the monitor lizards in India is the legendary pet Bengal Monitor of Shivaji's associate Tanaji Malusare. The legend is that Tanaji climbed the walls of the fort of Sinhgarh with the help of a rope tied to his pet monitor. The lizard crawled up the walls and held fast with its strong grip as Tanaji scaled behind it.

The Desert and Water Monitors live in the western and eastern part of the country respectively. Among the most elusive and threatened of the Indian monitors is the Yellow Monitor which inhabits the marshy areas of the Indus & Ganges floodplains.

### Status:

All the four Indian species of monitor lizards are listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The law bans poaching and trade in the species. International trade is further regulated under CITES with three species—Bengal Monitor, Desert Monitor and the Yellow Monitor—listed in Appendix I of the Convention, which prohibits their international commercial trade, and the Water Monitor listed in Appendix II, where trade is permitted with permits.

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### Threats:

Monitor lizards, especially the Bengal Monitor, were once commonly seen across the country but have been a target of unabated poaching and illegal trade. Poaching is driven by both domestic and international demand. In India, monitor lizards are caught and killed for their skins that are used in making drums. There is also demand for the meat of these lizards, as it is considered a delicacy and prepared in many homes and restaurants. The meat and the fat are also used in country medicine to treat a variety of diseases and they are also considered to have aphrodisiac properties.

Reports indicate that each year more than one thousand *ghumats* (a *ghumat* is a percussion instrument incorporating a monitor lizard membrane) are sold in parts of Goa ([http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-09-03/goa/33562712\\_1\\_lizard-ghumat-skin](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-09-03/goa/33562712_1_lizard-ghumat-skin)).

There have been many seizures of monitor lizards in trade. In 2004, the Thiruvananthapuram Forest Department seized 1600 musical instruments made using monitor lizard skins. The forest department also confiscated 669 lizard skins. In 2008, at least 80 monitor lizards were seized from a restaurant in Bangalore. In 2009, 11 monitor lizards were seized from a hotel near Dharmapuri in Tamil Nadu. In 2010, 40 monitor lizards were seized in New Delhi from someone intending to sell them for their meat. In May 2013, five adult monitor lizards were seized from a youth's house in Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu. Again, the lizards had been poached for their meat.

Internationally, there have been many significant seizures of monitor lizards, which are indicative of the global extent of this illegal trade. In 2011, Thailand Customs officers seized 1800 monitor lizard destined to be sold as food close to the country's border with Malaysia. According to a recent study, over 4 25 000 Water Monitors are killed annually for their skins in Indonesia alone (Koch et al 2013). This is based on Indonesia's export quotas from 2005-2011. However there are some gaps between the existing quotas and the volumes exported every year. The study thus finds the export allowances that are not based on sound information from population studies, meaning that current harvest levels may be unsustainable and could threaten the viability of the Indonesian species.

Monitor lizards are among the most sought-after reptile groups in the global pet trade ((Koch et al 2013). This is because of their large size, exquisite appearance and intelligence. The luxury goods market in the West is also driving the trade in the skins of monitor lizards. These are used to make products such as handbags, wallets, straps for watches, belts and so on.

There is a risk that rising demand for monitor lizards will lead to population declines in South-East Asia and animals will be increasingly sourced from the Indian subcontinent, in a situation analogous to that of pangolins.

Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC India said, "Seizure records indicate that most of the poaching of monitor lizards in India is undertaken to supply the domestic market with skin and meat. However, rising international demand for these animals means it may not be too long before organized poaching could begin from India to other countries. Awareness coupled with stronger enforcement actions are necessary to nip this problem in the bud."



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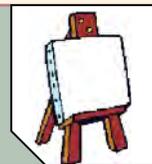
**TRAFFIC India acknowledges Dr Rashid Raza, Head- Conservation Science and Research, WWF-India for providing guidance and inputs for the above article.**

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