

TRAFFIC and EAZA: *great potential for collaboration*

From 24–28 September 2013, more than 750 participants from 57 countries met in Edinburgh, Scotland, UK, at the annual conference of the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA). The conference was hosted by the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland. Established in 1992, EAZA's mission is to facilitate co-operation within the European zoo and aquarium community towards the goals of education, research and conservation. EAZA comprises 345 member institutions in 41 countries. More than 140 million people visit EAZA members each year—a number equivalent to approximately one in five European citizens.

TRAFFIC was invited to participate and to speak on illegal and unsustainable wildlife trade in the South-east Asian region in four of the Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) meetings, as one of the key roles of the TAGs is to stimulate, co-ordinate and support *in situ* conservation projects.

TRAFFIC spoke about the poorly understood trade in serows *Capricornis* spp. across South-east Asia, with a focus on Myanmar, and the need for greatly increased enforcement efforts and the need to reduce demand for these threatened species, whose meat is traded for consumption, and other body parts—including horns, oil and heads—for use in traditional medicines. Trade in serow species, though illegal, is rife in Myanmar. Over the past decade, serows have been available for sale in every market surveyed by TRAFFIC in that country, with the bulk of body parts observed being horns and heads. Many of these markets are situated on the Myanmar–Thai border, with dealers claiming that buyers come from Thailand, indicating a blatant disregard for both national legislation and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). All serow species native to Myanmar are listed in Appendix I of CITES.

TRAFFIC also provided in-depth knowledge on the trade in bear bile across East and South-east Asia and the impact this trade is having on wild bear populations. The presentation provided a brief overview of the regional trade, with a focus on the latest developments in Malaysia, following on from the recommendations outlined in the TRAFFIC investigation in 2011 into the Asian bear bile trade (Foley *et al.*, 2011). The Sun Bear *Helarctos malayanus* is the only bear species native to Malaysia and is under serious threat due to demand for paws and meat (Shepherd and Shepherd, 2010) and the gall bladder (Foley *et al.*, 2011). Once again, the need for long-term efforts to reduce demand for bear bile and increase enforcement action was highlighted, as well as a call to support an IUCN Recommendation calling for the closure of all illegal bear farms (IUCN, 2012). In addition to the illegal sourcing of bears locally, much of the bear bile available in Malaysia is manufactured in China and smuggled into the country, in violation of CITES and national legislation.

A case study on the trade in Short-beaked Echidnas *Tachyglossus aculeatus* was used by TRAFFIC to illustrate the issue of wild-caught animals being fraudulently declared as captive-bred to allow their illegal export from Indonesia. TRAFFIC underscored the need for due diligence on the part of zoos in acquiring specimens declared as being captive bred and commended the precautions taken by zoo associations in Australia, North America and Europe as well as by the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) to address this issue after the echidna trade was first highlighted in the *TRAFFIC Bulletin* in 2013 (Beastall and Shepherd, 2013). This case study also highlights the need to improve systems overall with regard to export of captive-bred specimens to eliminate the high levels of wild-caught species exported under the guise of being captive-bred.

The need for long-term strategic market monitoring of the bird trade in Indonesia was also highlighted by TRAFFIC during the meeting. Over-harvesting is pushing several species, including the Sumatran Laughingthrush *Garrulax bicolor* towards the brink of extirpation or extinction (Collar *et al.*, 2012; Shepherd, 2007, 2013). Such monitoring would help guide further research and conservation efforts, including longer-term demand-reduction strategies.

The combination of large visitor numbers, immense commitment from EAZA to address wildlife conservation issues, and TRAFFIC's expertise in researching, investigating and understanding wildlife trade and the related conservation threats, creates many exciting opportunities for future collaboration.

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