

Asian Wildlife Trade Bulletin

News from the TRAFFIC's Wildlife Trade Initiative
Issue 4, 1 October – 31 December 2007



South Asia Wildlife Trade Initiative (SAWTI) launched

TRAFFIC, in collaboration with South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), is building the foundation for SAWTI, aimed to enhance government action and collaboration on wildlife trade issues in the South Asia region, covering Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The Honorable Environment Minister of South Asian countries at the 10th Governing Council of SACEP decided to incorporate this specific programme for combating illegal trade in wildlife and its products as a response to the growing threat of poaching and illegal trade to wild species, both flora and fauna, in the region.

SAWTI is built on the 2004 Kathmandu

wildlife trade workshops, during which delegates from the participating countries identified priority actions to be taken at national and regional levels to mitigate illegal wildlife trade and to enhance wildlife trade regulations, in a region where trade is threatening the long-term survival of some of the world's rarest species, such as the Great Indian Rhinoceros, Tiger and Tibetan Antelope. This programme aims to follow along the lines of the ASEAN Wildlife Trade Initiative.

SAWTI will have its first regional workshop in Kathmandu, Nepal 31 January - 1 February 2008.

For more information, contact Dilpreet B Chhabra at dchhabra@wwfindia.net.



TRAFFIC and other organizations are working to build the foundation of the South Asia Wildlife Trade Initiative (SAWTI), aimed to enhance government action and collaboration on wildlife trade issues in the South Asia region. © Samir Sinha

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TRAFFIC
the wildlife trade monitoring network

On traffic.org

Indonesia tightens tortoise trade regulations

Tiger, Tiger: future not so bright

South Asia commits to regional co-operation in controlling wildlife trade

Turtle identification guide launched

Cross-border intelligence-sharing leads to major seizure in Thailand

ASEAN officials review cross-border co-operation in combating wildlife crime

Illegal wildlife trade flourishing on the Chinese-language internet

Illegal pet trade threatens freshwater turtles and tortoises—TRAFFIC

TRAFFIC launches traditional Chinese medicine textbook

Guide to Kalimantan's protected species launched

Has the yew tide turned?

Tri-nations meeting on CITES

Russian Salmon figures don't add up—TRAFFIC / WWF

How to separate the wood from the ramin trees

Wildlife conservation campaign launched in China

WWF Russia signs agreement with Russian Customs Academy, Vladivostok

WWF Russia and the Vladivostok branch of the Russian Customs Academy (VB RCA) recently signed a new Memorandum of Understanding in an effort to further strengthen wildlife conservation in the region. The agreement, which follows up on a similar agreement signed in 2001, promotes co-operation between the two organizations and aims to combat illegal wildlife trade across the Russian Federation's border.

The signing of the MOU in November 2007 in Vladivostok marks the establishment of a close partnership between WWF Russia, Amur Branch and VB RCA. This was the first time that such an agreement had been co-ordinated by TRAFFIC-Natalia Pervushina, programme officer for TRAFFIC in the Russian Far East oversaw both the signing and implementation.

The MOU calls for an overall co-operation on capacity building of Customs agency staff, including information exchanges, training workshops and collaboration on reports. A detailed implementation plan is expected to be signed in March 2008.

TRAFFIC and WWF will provide training support at the VB RCA Centre for Wildlife Protection, which serves as a wildlife protection education centre within the Customs Academy for students and Customs officers.

The Customs office also regularly calls in TRAFFIC/WWF experts for advice

when wildlife seizures occur along the Sino-Russian border. Since July 2007, TRAFFIC/WWF have participated in 11 independent expert evaluations of confiscated wildlife products, including the two largest wildlife seizures ever to take place in the region. The seizures took place in August 2007, and included 20 kg of wild ginseng, 480 bear paws, one set of Tiger bones and one Tiger skin. Both seizures took place in Khanka Lake in Primorsky province, one of the most vulnerable border points along the Sino-Russian border. All seized products were destined for China. The bear paw and Tiger seizures were further investigated by the Russian Government with assistance from TRAFFIC representatives from the Russian Federation and China.

These seizures indicate high levels of illegal wildlife trafficking in the Russian Far East and the need to enhance co-operation and information exchange between governments in the region. Recent collaborative efforts have included a workshop on CITES Enforcement in Northeast Asia, which was held in Harbin, China, on 16 – 19 October, 2007, where TRAFFIC facilitated discussions between representatives from the governments of China, Mongolia and the Russian Federation (see *Tri-nations meeting on CITES* for more information).

For more information, contact Natalia Pervushina at npervushina@wwfrfe.ru



Russian enforcement officers along the Sino-Russian border with 480 bear paws and a tiger skin seized in August 2007. © WWF Amur

TRAFFIC information leads to seizures in Gansu and Qinghai provinces, western China

Findings from recent market surveys conducted by China Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network members in western China were reported by TRAFFIC to national and local authorities last October-November as part of TRAFFIC's on-going efforts to aid the clamp down on illegal wildlife trade hotspots in China. As a result, local Forest Police in Lanzhou city, Gansu province, arrested a wildlife trade dealer and seized illegal elephant and other animal products. In addition, local forest police in Xining, Qinghai province arrested two dealers selling ivory and rhino horn products.

This marks the first time that government officials in China acted on information provided from an NGO to crack down on illegal wildlife trade.

In October-November 2007, the Network conducted market surveys in nine cities in Tibetan areas of Yunnan, Sichuan, Qinghai and Gansu provinces. TRAFFIC notified the China CITES Management Authority and local forest police about the survey results, resulting in the two seizures. In Gansu, a total of 90 ivory products were seized, weighing 38.27kg. Also in Gansu, six Saiga Antelope horns and one fox pelt were confiscated, and 12 suspects have been detained. The two dealers in Qinghai have been prosecuted.

Follow-up surveys in the curio markets and traditional Chinese medicine shops and traditional medicine shops in Lanzhou, Gansu province after the seizure found that ivory, Saiga horn and musk products were no longer available, with dealers saying that the local government was strictly prohibiting trade.

"With China's enforcement agencies stretched to the limit, the aim of the China Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network is helping enforcement officials by adding 'eyes and ears' on the lookout for illegal trade," said Xu Hongfa, Director of TRAFFIC's work in China. "This is a good example of how TRAFFIC's work to support the enforcement of laws against illegal wildlife trade can assist government action to combat wildlife crime."

Established in 2006, the Network is an expanding group of volunteers, ultimately to be located throughout China. The Network's goals are to provide information to enforcement officials so that government agencies can respond quickly to wildlife crime; an "early warning" system for emerging issues in China's wildlife trade; and to inform and test the measures enacted by China's policy makers.

For more information, contact Caroline Liou at caroline@wwfchina.org

Strengthening law enforcement to tackle the illegal trade in Asian big cats in western China

To help address the illegal trade in Tigers and other Asian big cats, particularly between China and South Asia, TRAFFIC



Frontline wildlife law enforcers visit the Customs office at the Hekou border crossing between China and Viet Nam to learn about area's seizure cases. © TRAFFIC East Asia

is working to strengthen enforcement actions in ethnic Tibetan regions of China (where there is demand for skins of Asian big cats for use adorning ceremonial clothing) through networking and capacity building. Over 60 frontline wildlife law enforcers from the Forest Police, Customs, industry and commerce and the CITES Management Authority participated in a training workshop held in Kunming, Yunnan province, on 20-24 November 2007. The event, organized by China's CITES Management Authority, with support from TRAFFIC and IFAW, involved participants from 10 provinces in western China (including Qinghai, Gansu, Yunnan, Sichuan, and the Tibet Autonomous Region – all provinces with substantial Tibetan populations) and South China, with Forest Police making up the majority of participants. The workshop was designed to address weaknesses in enforcement by Forest Police, with a focus on Tiger wildlife trade issues in Tibetan areas of China.

Participants learned about Customs enforcement experiences with CITES specimens (including treatment of seizure data), and visited the Customs office at the Hekou border crossing between China and Viet Nam, to learn about the many successful seizures by the Customs department there.

For more information, contact Caroline Liou at caroline@wwfchina.org

Transborder training programme to curb illegal wildlife trade in India and Nepal



A TRAFFIC/WWF workshop trains Forest Department and other enforcement agencies from India and Nepal on the legal and technical aspects of wildlife enforcement, such as the use of metal detectors to locate leg traps in the forest. © TRAFFIC India

TRAFFIC India along with WWF-India and the Uttar Pradesh State Forest Department organized a transborder training programme in Dudhwa Tiger Reserve on 13-15 December 2007. The main aim of the programme was to enhance the skills of the Forest Department and other enforcement agencies working to curb illegal wildlife trade and also foster closer co-operation amongst such agencies on both sides of the Indo-Nepal border.

The participants included officials from India and Nepal. From India, there were representatives from the Forest Departments, Customs, SSB (Seema Suraksha Bal), Police and the Special Task Force and from Nepal there were officials from the Army and the Wildlife Department. Training focused on the legal and technical aspects of wildlife enforcement, including the use of metal detectors to locate leg traps in the forest.

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China is the world's largest hardwood log importer, with 22% of its imports coming from Africa. Logs at Nanxun Timber Trade Port, Zhejiang, China © Liu Xueyan, TRAFFIC China

Reports on use of wildlife in Traditional Medicine in Cambodia and Vietnam to be launched

TRAFFIC will launch three reports on the use of wildlife in traditional medicine (TM) in Cambodia and Viet Nam in March 2008. The reports seek to help improve understanding of the use of wild plant and animal resources in traditional medicine and enhance management and regulation of traditional medicine networks to promote conservation and sustainability.

The first report, *An Overview of the Use of Wild Plants and Animals in Traditional Medicinal Systems in Cambodia*, is a preliminary examination of the use of Cambodia's wildlife in TM systems. It examines the use of animals and plants in Traditional Khmer Medicine (TKM) and briefly discusses the use of these resources to supply other TM systems, such as Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Traditional Vietnamese Medicine (TVM).

The second report, *A Preliminary Investigation into the Use and Trade of Medicinal Plants in Cambodia*, focuses on an often overlooked aspect of wildlife trade, but one that has enormous consequences for not only the biodiversity of the country but also the delivery of traditional healthcare practices.

The third report, *An Overview of the Use of Plants and Animals in Traditional Medicinal Systems in Viet Nam*, investigates the use of flora and fauna in traditional medicine in both northern and southern Viet Nam.

"Traditional Medicine systems in Cambodia and Viet Nam are important components of both national healthcare systems, and are often the only means of healthcare delivery for rural communities," said Thomas Osborn, TRAFFIC's Forest Trade Officer. "Understanding which animal and plant species and products are used and traded, and their underlying trade mechanisms, can provide a useful tool to further assess the sustainability of such trade, and provide an 'early warning' for species that are threatened by trade."

TRAFFIC conducted field studies for the reports from 2005 to 2007. The three reports will be released in two publications—one focusing on Cambodia and the other on Viet Nam.

For more information, contact Judith Le at jle@traffic.netnam.vn



TRAFFIC will launch new reports on the use of wildlife in Traditional Medicine in Cambodia and Vietnam in March 2008.

China and the global forest products trade: Trade of legal and sustainable wood in China

Illegal logging and the international trade in illegally logged timber is a major problem for many timber-producing countries in the developing world. Consumer countries contribute to these problems by importing timber and wood products without ensuring that they are legally sourced.

China is now the second largest timber consumer in the world and faces a widening imbalance between supply and demand. The rapid expansion of manufacturing for both domestic consumption and exports in a nation with very limited per capita forest resources is fuelling a significant rise in timber imports. Between 1997 and 2005, China's total forest product imports more than doubled in value and more than tripled in volume, from 40 million to 134 million cubic meters (round wood equivalent).

On 1-2 November, IUCN-The International Union for the Conservation of Nature, Chatham House and Forest Trends held a workshop in Beijing aimed at fostering a constructive discussion about the international trade of sustainable and legal forest products between producer and consumer countries. The workshop provided an opportunity for key Chinese stakeholders and regional partners to share research conclusions to help ensure that international and local organizations are familiar with each other's work and can work constructively to develop solutions that may be practical in China. More than 60 participants from forestry companies, the State Forest Administration, NGOs and the Chinese Forestry Academy took part in the workshop.

TRAFFIC focused its inputs to the workshop with a presentation on timber trade links between China and Africa, based on the TRAFFIC report *Forestry, governance and national development: Lessons learned from a logging boom in southern Tanzania*, which documents alarming levels of corruption, illegal logging and exports of forest products from Tanzania. The presentation highlighted China's huge influence on global timber markets, as the world's largest hardwood log importer, with 22% of its imports coming from Africa. TRAFFIC's presentation outlined unsustainable harvesting practices in Africa, and its causes and consequences, which have led to environmental degradation and the loss of commercially viable hardwoods in many areas. Recommendations based on the TRAFFIC report were also presented.

For more information on the workshop proceedings, see http://www.illegal-logging.info/item_single.php?item=event&item_id=126&approach_id=8

For more information, contact Caroline Liou at caroline@wwfchina.org



TRAFFIC India launches a new consumer awareness campaign with the release of the leaflet, 'Are you committing a crime? Think before you buy'. © TRAFFIC India

TRAFFIC India launches consumer awareness campaign

On 24 October 2007 during the 12 Kailash Sankhala Lecture held at WWF India Secretariat in New Delhi, Mike Pandey a renowned filmmaker and conservationist, launched a new TRAFFIC India consumer awareness campaign with the release of the leaflet, "Are you committing a crime? Think before you buy".

The leaflet is mainly targeted at sensitizing tourists/buyers about the illegal wildlife trade that has endangered India's wildlife. TRAFFIC India is hopeful that wide distribution of this leaflet will spread awareness about illegal wildlife trade that is threatening the survival of various species of flora and fauna in India.

"Since the leaflet is largely targeted at tourists, both domestic and international, travelling across India, TRAFFIC hopes to drive home the point that souvenirs derived from endangered wildlife species should not be treated as mementos for carrying home but rather a symbol of the wanton destruction of our natural habitat," said Mr. Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India.

The leaflet is available in both English and Hindi.

For more information, contact Dilpreet B Chhabra at dchhabra@wwfindia.net.

Staff news

Azrina Abdullah has been appointed Director of TRAFFIC Southeast Asia as of 1 December 2007, based in Kuala Lumpur where the TRAFFIC regional office is hosted by WWF Malaysia. Azrina has been working for TRAFFIC since June 2006, based in Bangkok, as project leader for TRAFFIC's team under the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network support programme.

Inggar Rahardjo joined TRAFFIC on 1 January 2008 as a Programme Officer, based in Jakarta. Inggar graduated from Bogor Agricultural University in 2006, majoring in Forest Resource Conservation, focusing on amphibians. She will be working on TSEA's projects on the pangolin trade (Indonesia component) and Sumatran elephants. She may be contacted at sopixie@yahoo.com.

James Compton, who formerly headed TRAFFIC's regional team in Southeast Asia, has been appointed Asia-Pacific Programme Co-ordinator. Working closely with existing regional directors and their teams, he will focus on consolidating the current momentum TRAFFIC and its partners have generated to address illegal and unsustainable wildlife trade from source to market.

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