In 2008, TRAFFIC embarked on an important and first of its kind journey in India to help raise and train wildlife sniffer dog squads to strengthen anti-poaching and anti-trafficking measures of the forest departments and other enforcement agencies. Since then 56 wildlife sniffer dog squads (one dog squad consisting of one dog and two handlers) have been trained and over 200 wildlife related cases have been undertaken. Currently, 12 new dogs and their handlers are undergoing training at NTCD.

Super Sniffer On Three-Day Prowl Helps Bust Indian Bison Poaching Case

Karim, a newly trained wildlife sniffer dog under TRAFFIC’s programme in India, showed its skills and valour when it worked tirelessly for over three continuous days to solve a poaching case of an Indian Bison (Bos gaurus) in Buxa Tiger Reserve (BTR), West Bengal.

On a chilly day of January, in dews of North Bengal, field staff of West Bengal Forest Department received a tip-off regarding the suspected poaching of Indian Bison somewhere in the fog-enshrouded Pana range of Buxa Tiger Reserve located near Indo-Bhutan border. Local staff immediately leaped into action, but unfortunately there were no further leads into the precise location of the poaching site. The heightened alertness however led to foiling of a wild meat (suspected to be of Indian Bison) smuggling effort in a nearby area, though the carriers of the meat managed to slip away and no information about the origin of the meat was ascertained.

With incomplete information about poaching, a package of ‘suspected’ yet not confirmed Indian Bison meat and absolutely no clue about the identity of the offenders, the investigation in this case seemed at a dead end. Fortunately, the investigating team of Buxa Tiger Reserve was immediately joined by their new canine recruit and his handlers.

Karim, a wildlife sniffer dog, trained under TRAFFIC’s popular ‘Super Sniffer’ programme in India along with his equally enthusiastic handlers Johny Sharma and Subendhu Bikas Roy got to work as soon as they were pressed into action. After sniffing at the package of recovered meat, Karim started tracking towards the source of the meat along the long and tortuous forest roads. After tracking deep inside the forest, covering many ravines and hillocks, he finally led the investigating team to the exact poaching spot where they found the carcass of an Indian Bison poached for meat. Karim didn’t just stop here and by picking smell from the articles belonging to the poachers, recovered from the poaching site, he further led his team to their hideouts and to the houses of the meat sellers. This operation, which extended over three days, finally ended up with recovery of a country-made gun, a Wild Boar (Sus scrofa) tooth and other weapons and ammunitions used for poaching from the offenders’ hideouts, thus providing valuable evidence for the investigating team to prove the offence in a court of law.

TRAFFIC applauds the efforts of the young dog, Karim and his handlers and wishes them good luck for many more such operations.

Indian Bison (Bos gaurus) commonly known as the Gaur, is protected under the Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Poaching, trade or any other form of exploitation of the species or its parts and derivatives is prohibited in India.

About TRAFFIC’s Wildlife Sniffer Dog Training Programme in India

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