

TRAFFIC

NEWSLETTER

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TRAFFIC POST

NEWSLETTER ON WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA

India's
national
bird at risk
WILD CRY FEATURE.....

TRAFFIC Post

TRAFFIC Post is TRAFFIC's newsletter on wildlife trade in India. It started in September 2007 with a primary objective to create awareness about poaching and illegal wildlife trade in India.

Illegal wildlife trade is reportedly the fourth largest global illegal trade after narcotics, counterfeiting, and human trafficking. It has evolved itself into an organized activity threatening the future of many wildlife species.

TRAFFIC Post was born out of the need to reach out to various stakeholders including decision makers, enforcement officials, judiciary and consumers about the extent of illegal wildlife trade in India and the damaging effect it could be having on the endangered flora and fauna.

Since its inception, TRAFFIC Post has highlighted pressing issues related to illegal wildlife trade in India and globally, flagged early trends, and illuminated wildlife policies and laws. It has also focused on the status of legal trade in various medicinal plant and timber species that need sustainable management for ensuring ecological and economic success.

TRAFFIC Post comes out three times in the year and is available both online and in print. You can subscribe to it by writing to trafficind@wwfindia.net

All issues of TRAFFIC Post can be viewed at www.trafficindia.org; www.traffic.org

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From the Desk



On one hand we have good news of a 30% increase in the Tiger population in India, which is phenomenal. On the other, rhino poaching has returned with a vengeance since 2013, at least it seems that way.

**Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj,
Head of TRAFFIC's India Office**

On 20th June 2015, TRAFFIC concluded the fourth phase of the wildlife sniffer dog programme through which we trained 14 dog squads—the most in any single batch since the inception of the programme in 2008. These 14 dog squads have been deployed in the States of Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Assam, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Nine States in India now have between them 25 sniffer dog squads, which have joined the ranks of the anti-poaching and anti-trafficking personnel. States such as Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra now have multiple sniffer dog squads, some of which have performed outstandingly well.

Although trained to detect Tiger and Leopard parts and bear bile, following their deployment many dogs adapt and detect other wildlife species and their derivatives, including elephant ivory, various bird species, turtles and tortoises and snakes such as Red Sand Boas and pythons. They also detect weapons and ballistic materials and even help during the arrest and tracking of criminals.

TRAFFIC's sniffer dog programme has become a shining example for forest departments, tiger reserve officials and other wildlife law enforcement agencies to follow and deploy sniffer dog squads for patrolling and conducting search and seizure operations.

When we began the sniffer dog training programme in India, inspired by those conducted by TRAFFIC in Russia and the Europe, there was a well-founded optimism that the use of sniffer dogs would reach new heights among enforcement agencies as a modern tool to carry out wildlife investigations and crime prevention. After all, this was a tool that could easily fall into the low investment for high returns category in any anti-poaching and anti-trafficking strategy.



Six years down the line, and the programme is making only moderate progress despite TRAFFIC under-taking to bear most of the costs, at least up until deployment of the dogs. The States have to bear only the cost of dog food (barely INR8000 a month), the costs of health check ups, and the salaries of the handlers, who, in any case, are regular State government employees. These costs are not unmanageable if one considers the potential utility of fully trained sniffer dog.

Between them, following their gradual deployment since 2008, the sniffer dogs have led to detection and seizures in close to 130 wildlife cases. While this may not be a big number, there is clearly significant potential for further enhancement of wildlife crime enforcement in India through optimization of effort, resources and planning.

India is poised to become the most populous country in the world by 2022. This will add further pressure on wildlife resources and no doubt result in further illegal wildlife trade. Perhaps there will never be an adequate number of personnel engaged in protection of wildlife, largely because of the inadequacy of resources allocated to wildlife protection in India, so tools like sniffer dogs could go a long way in compensating for such inadequacies. We envision that in States in India where poaching and illegal trades are major issues, wildlife management programmes could adopt sniffer dogs as important elements of their anti-poaching and anti-trafficking strategies. However, few States have to date fully endorsed ownership of their sniffer dog programmes.

Dog detectors can cover large areas and detect wildlife products far quicker than their human counterparts. In South Africa's Kruger National Park, dogs are airlifted by helicopters to the interior of the park to detect signs of rhino poaching. They have detected several cases which have led to the arrest of poachers. Dogs can use their noses to follow an invisible scent path to find a person, while the presence of dogs helps instill a sense of fear in the minds of criminals.

Evidence obtained through the use of dogs can be significant in securing convictions, estimated to be enhanced by more than 35% through the use of trained sniffer dogs. The moot question is, given the wide range of situations in which trained dogs can be of assistance to enforcement agencies, why is this potential not fully exploited? It could simply be through a lack of documentation that could demonstrate to policy makers and lawenforcers the effective use of sniffer dogs as a tool in wildlife crime investigations.

TRAFFIC has pioneered training and deployment of wildlife sniffer dogs in India since 2007. Although, a slow starter, the programme was given a great boost in 2014 after State chief wildlife officers became convinced of the efficacy and significance of trained sniffer dogs in wildlife crime investigations. Seven States joined the programme, including several who had experimented with the use of dogs and those who wish to do so. In June 2015 14 new dog squads joined seven States.

However, there is a need for the official designation of funds towards a Standard Operating Procedure, the construction of kennels and adequate veterinary care is put in place to ensure that the initiative continues to bear fruit in the long-term.

Unfortunately, kennels to house the dogs have not been constructed, which may be a reflection of the low priority attached to sniffer dogs and an unwillingness to adopt newer tools and technologies in combating wildlife crime. Undoubtedly, sniffer dogs are reliable, cost effective, and efficient tools for controlling the menace of illegal wildlife trade. Their mere presence can act as a deterrent for smugglers and traffickers. Many developed countries, such as the USA, Russia, Australia and New Zealand are utilizing the services of detector dogs to counter the illegal import and export of prohibited and restricted items, thus safeguarding the economic and environmental security of the nation.

The world has changed much more rapidly in the last few decades, and so have the modus operandi used in wildlife crimes. Older methods of crime investigation may fall short of the requirements posed by the new challenges. Fortunately, there are new developments in science and technology and thankfully they are available at an affordable cost.

TRAFFIC has promoted the use of deep search metal detectors to locate long chains of snares in heavily forested habitats. Others have promoted the use of various new technologies, such as voice loggers, drones and digital encryption to track cybercrime in wildlife. Similarly, new advances in DNA barcoding and wildlife forensics make it possible to provide indisputable evidence to prove crimes. However, few have put these technologies to use, whereas the criminals themselves have gone high-tech.

An early adoption of new technologies may prove vital to keep us ready to meet the new challenges posed by the increasingly organized international wildlife crime syndicates. But to adapt to these changes, a change of mindset will be a significant prerequisite. We cannot afford to wait any longer.

01

TRAFFIC India Update

1. TRAFFIC's sniffer dogs pass out with flying colours in Bhopal, doubling India's wildlife sniffer dog strength
2. Digital campaign reaches out to 1.4 million people on illegal trade in non-charismatic lesser-known species
3. TRAFFIC organizes police training to combat wildlife crime in Odisha
4. TRAFFIC hosts regional planning workshop to curb Tiger poaching and trade
5. Experts meet in Chennai to discuss strategy for sustainable management of medicinal plant trade in India
6. Coming Soon- Publications

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ACT NOW:
DO NOT BECOME PART
OF THE PROBLEM



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TRAFFIC's sniffer dogs pass out with flying colours in Bhopal, doubling India's wildlife sniffer dog strength

Fourteen dogs and their 28 handlers passed out on 20th June 2015 at the 23rd Battalion of Special Armed Reserve Forces, located in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, to join wildlife protection and anti-poaching dog squads across India.

The passing out ceremony, including a magnificent display of skills by the 14 sniffer dogs and their 28 handlers, was organized to celebrate this important achievement by TRAFFIC and WWF-India in the presence of the chief guest, Mr Narendra Kumar, IFS, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest and Chief Wildlife Warden, Government of Madhya Pradesh and the guest of honour, Mr K.N. Tiwari, IPS, Additional Director General of Police, Special Armed Forces, Government of Madhya Pradesh.

This ceremony was also attended by senior representatives from all the seven States—Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand and Karnataka—to whom the newly trained dogs and handlers had been deployed.

The 14 dogs and their handlers joined 11 dogs and 22 handlers already trained and deployed across India under this programme, taking the total strength of TRAFFIC/WWF-India's wildlife sniffer dogs to 25. This programme was initiated in 2008 by TRAFFIC, which in India functions as a programme division of WWF-India.



The wildlife sniffer dog training programme is funded jointly by TRAFFIC and WWF and promotes the use of modern tools and technologies in fighting wildlife crimes.

Mr Narendra Kumar in his opening remarks congratulated TRAFFIC and WWF-India for their efforts in leading the sniffer dog programme in India. He emphasized the use of sniffer dogs as a highly effective tool for wildlife crime detection and prevention in India. He also congratulated the Dog Training Center in Bhopal for their continuous support for this programme. Mr Kumar has taken a keen long-term interest in the activities of sniffer dogs in detecting wildlife crimes in Madhya Pradesh.

Mr K.N. Tiwari said: "We are glad to see sniffer dogs' emerging role in curbing wildlife crime and illegal wildlife trade in India. We hope that many more State forest departments deploy sniffer dogs and use them in their wildlife law enforcement endeavours."

Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC in India said: "India has a huge forest cover and with only 25 trained sniffer dogs, pressure for protecting India's wildlife remains immense on these four legged creatures. It is TRAFFIC's vision that at least four to five dogs are deployed in each State in the next few years for boosting wildlife conservation and protection efforts."

Mr Ravi Singh, Secretary General and CEO, WWF-India, added: "India's wildlife is under grave danger from the ever increasing illegal wildlife trade. Poachers and traders are employing new tools and technologies to expand their illicit business and this is proving to be a major challenge for the forest department and other enforcement agencies".

More than 100 significant wildlife seizure cases have been cracked thanks to the deployment of TRAFFIC's sniffer dogs in recent years.

Even though the dogs are trained for sniffing out Tiger and Leopard parts and bear bile, the dogs are also detecting other wildlife contraband such as ivory, deer meat, live bird species, Red Sand Boa, Blackbuck, hare, python, rat snake, porcupine and even weapons. They have an increasingly significant role in wildlife crime investigation and prosecution.

TRAFFIC thanks the on-going partnership with the Dog Training Centre of the 23rd Battalion Special Armed Force, Madhya Pradesh Police Department based in Bhopal, for their continuous support in strengthening wildlife protection across the country. TRAFFIC is also grateful to its donors and supporters for the sniffer dog training programme from different regions of India and across the world. The long term aim is to strengthen the programme further to boost its impact on wildlife conservation in India.

DO YOU WANT TO BECOME A SNIFFER DOG PATRON?

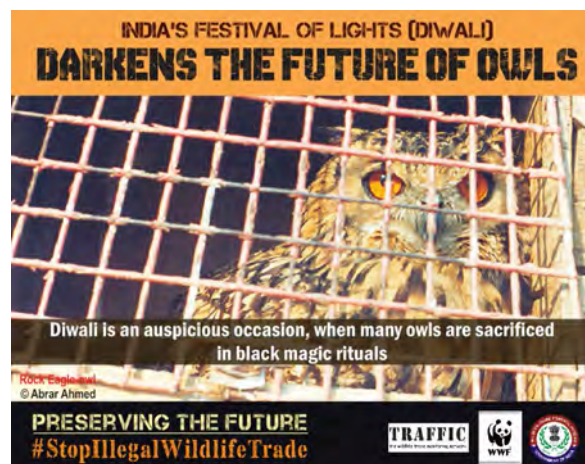
A fundraising campaign was launched in May 2015 by TRAFFIC and WWF-India to help raise funds for supporting the procurement, training and deployment of sniffer dogs in India. With a vision to train and provide at least four to five sniffer dogs to each State, the fundraising campaign was launched urging support from individuals, companies and various other organizations. To find out more about the campaign and how you can help, please visit

http://support.wwfindia.org/super_sniffer/index.php?source=SD-SM

Digital campaign reaches out to 1.4 million people on illegal trade in non-charismatic lesser-known species

A digital media campaign on illegal trade in lesser-known non-charismatic wildlife species—including pangolins, owls and mongooses—that ended in April 2015 reached out to nearly 1.4 million individuals on Facebook, Twitter and Google.

The campaign Preserving the Future: Stop Illegal Wildlife Trade was designed and jointly run by TRAFFIC, WWF-India and the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) and was launched in New Delhi on the social media platforms of TRAFFIC and WWF-India and as well as Google Adverts in February 2015.



The growing demand for wildlife from India that threatens the existence of the Tiger, elephant, rhino and various other flagship species has been well publicized. However, the illegal trade in non-charismatic species such as pangolins, monitor lizards, Tokay Gecko, turtles and tortoises, lorises, birds, corals, sea cucumbers and others has remained largely unreported. With little knowledge and understanding about the population status, numbers poached, illegal wildlife trade hubs and dynamics of these non-charismatic species, it is difficult to ascertain the impacts of illegal trade on their population status. TRAFFIC, WWF-India and the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) recognize this gap and launched the campaign to highlight the plight of these species and support action for their conservation.

The campaign was designed using a combination of stunning images, infographics, facts and figures regarding poaching and illegal trade, the impact of trade on species conservation, and finally recommendations on how people can help. Also included was a quiz encouraging the audience to respond and win attractive prizes.

On World Pangolin Day, 21st February, the Indonesian National Police, WCS (Wildlife Conservation Society), and TRAFFIC shared a video of one of the largest pangolin seizures ever in Indonesia that took place in 2008 when the Indonesian National Police Criminal Investigation Bureau raided the warehouse of a suspected illegal wildlife trader in the city of Palembang in South Sumatra and recovered more than 14 metric tonnes of Malayan Pangolins.

Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC in India said: "Every year in India, hundreds of pangolins, monitor lizards and tortoises are poached, an estimated 700 000 birds are illegally trapped, and several metric tonnes of sea cucumbers are caught, yet the levels of exploitation of these species are rarely reported. This large-scale plundering along with minimal information about their population status and poaching and smuggling trends place the future of these lesser-known species in serious jeopardy."

Mr Ravi Singh, Secretary General and CEO of WWF-India commented: "The campaign is an endeavour to fight wildlife crime against non-charismatic and lesser known species. In India, we are initiating actions to bring together various stakeholders including enforcement agencies and organizations to address this issue. The burgeoning illegal trade in wildlife species has the potential to impact the health and balance of our ecosystems seriously and it is important that this trade is curbed."

Pangolins are highly threatened by illegal international trade, yet their plight is little publicized in conservation or media circles. Other species, like monitor lizard, mongoose, Star Tortoises, Spiny-tailed Lizards, freshwater and marine turtles also need immediate

attention. Monitor lizards, especially the Bengal Monitor, were once commonly seen across the country but appear to have declined markedly, apparently after becoming a target of unabated poaching and illegal trade.

Mr SB Negi, Additional Director and the former Chief of the WCCB of India, added: "We are excited to have partnered with TRAFFIC and WWF-

India for this campaign. While it is significant to undertake enforcement actions for nipping this problem in the bud, it is equally important to garner the support of the general public. Such awareness initiatives help in reaching out to a large number of audiences who can be potential buyers for wildlife products. We are confident that as demand for illegal wildlife products decreases with the help of such campaigns, smuggling and illegal trade can be contained."

TRAFFIC and WWF-India have previously flagged their concern about these lesser known non-charismatic species, highlighting their plight periodically in their respective publications, TRAFFIC Post and PANDA magazine and elsewhere.



TRAFFIC organizes police training to combat wildlife crime in Odisha

Recognizing the importance of involving police officials for combating wildlife crimes and keeping in mind the strategic yet vulnerable geographic location and rich wildlife resources of Odisha State, TRAFFIC collaborated with the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) of Odisha Police to strengthen wildlife law enforcement in the State.

The wildlife law enforcement capacity building training workshop was organized specifically for police officials in April 2015 at the police headquarters in Cuttack in Odisha State. Over 60 police officials at various cutting edge levels from nearly 55 police stations located in the vicinity of Protected Areas in Odisha participated in the workshop.

Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC in India, provided an overview of illegal wildlife trade in India in the technical session of the workshop. He presented the latest information on wildlife crime hubs, species involved in trade, changes in demand and supply dynamics, identification of wildlife specimens in trade and various drivers of illegal wildlife trade and poaching.

He stressed the need to gear up police departments for fighting wildlife crime. He said that like many other States, Odisha is facing a severe threat from wildlife crime and it is crucial for the police to be well-versed with wildlife laws and the modern tools and techniques available to combat it, particularly in urban areas that serve as major collection and smuggling hubs for wildlife products.

Conducted by Tamil Nadu-based Special Task Force Expert trainers, participants also received an intensive field training session on identifying and dismantling traps set up for poaching. The participants learnt about identifying marine species through examining actual samples of marine and coastal wildlife. A special session using confiscated wildlife products was conducted by experts from the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) for identification of wildlife parts and derivatives commonly found in illegal wildlife trade. Field-based sessions on surveillance, seizures and interrogation and wildlife crime scene investigation were conducted by experts from the Wildlife Institute of India and Police Radio Training School, Indore.

The training workshop was inaugurated by the State's Director General of Police (DGP) Mr Sanjeev Marik, the most senior and highly experienced Indian Police Service Officer in Odisha. Mr Marik said: "Although the laws relating to wildlife and environmental crimes have been in place since the 1970s and 1980s, there is a lack of awareness and knowledge about such legislations among enforcement agencies, including the police. Further, a perception exists that the forest department is solely responsible for the implementation of wildlife laws. This needs to change." Mr Marik assured the full support of the police for fighting wildlife crime in the region.

Mr B K Sharma, Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), Odisha CID branch, who has been responsible for busting several serious wildlife crime cases during his long tenure with the Central Bureau of Investigations (CBI) in New Delhi, spoke about the growing menace of wildlife crime. He emphasized the need to consider wildlife preservation as a matter of national prestige and dignity and that wildlife crime has to be considered on a par with other severe felonies. "Wildlife crime has become highly organized and unless matching skills are developed by police officials it will be very hard to curtail," he said.

TRAFFIC's resource team included experts from various fields of law and enforcement. Interactive sessions were conducted on the use of intelligence collection and collation by TRAFFIC's core and domain experts, including Mr Varun Kapoor, a highly skilled IPS officer. A session on wildlife laws and the application of corroborative laws was conducted by a senior Supreme Court lawyer, Mr Saurabh Sharma. Sessions on species and specimen identification, DNA fingerprinting and wildlife forensics were led by Dr S P Goyal, former senior scientist at the Wildlife Institute of India (WII). An intelligence collection and investigations session was led by a senior officer from the WCCB, Mr Nishant Verma.

Police officials in Odisha demonstrated a keen interest in learning various techniques to curb wildlife crime and keenly participated in all the workshop sessions.

TRAFFIC hosts regional planning to curb Tiger poaching and trade

On 2nd-3rd July 2015, TRAFFIC hosted a planning workshop to formulate a trans-border strategy for combating poaching and illegal trafficking of Tiger and other species. The two-day workshop was held in New Delhi and was attended by TRAFFIC and WWF representatives from India, Nepal, China, Malaysia and Bhutan. A presentation on behalf of Bhutan was made by the Tiger Trade Programme Leader for TRAFFIC and WWF, Natalia Pervushina. A number of sessions were also attended by representatives from the WCCB, Government of India.

Poaching and trafficking of Tigers and their parts and derivatives is prohibited across all range countries. However, wild Tigers are still being killed to meet the demands for Tiger-related products in East Asia, primarily China, South Korea, Taiwan and Japan, and in western countries with large Oriental populations.

Tiger skins are used for making fur coats, jackets, handbags and also trophies in the Tibetan Autonomous Region, Japan, Hong Kong, South Korea and the Russian Federation. Almost every part of the Tiger's body, including the flesh, fat, bones, claws, bile, eyeballs, whiskers, nose, floating ribs, testes, penis etc are highly valuable for use in traditional Chinese medicines. Tiger bone plaster and wines are highly coveted in the illegal market. Live Tigers are also sourced for the circus, entertainment trade and illegal private zoos.

Poor levels of protection, the persistence of large markets and a lack of implementation of wildlife laws have put the Tiger and a wide range of wild flora and fauna in large parts of South Asia in peril.

TRAFFIC and WWF organized the workshop to develop a well co-ordinated strategy for combating poaching and trade in Tigers. The workshop aimed to improve communication between the various enforcement teams across the regional trade chain, identifying priorities for addressing trade along the India-Nepal-China (plus Bhutan) chain, identifying gaps in current national strategies, understanding the funding requirement for the implementation of this long term strategy as well as

identifying funding sources, and developing various indices to measure the impact of the strategy. A trans-border strategy roadmap was developed.



© Rohit Singh

Dr Shekhar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC's India Office said: "The meeting was very successful in bringing together the various partners that need to collaborate to curb poaching and illegal

trade of Tigers. The strategy developed at this important meeting is meant to support the national strategies of governments in the various Tiger range countries".

TRAFFIC and WWF offices in India, Nepal and China committed to increase information sharing and the dissemination of advanced tools and technology and to implement joint demand reduction campaigns. The regional offices understand the need for strengthening the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) which will stimulate cross border co-ordination and action between enforcement agencies in South Asia.

Experts meet in Chennai to discuss strategy for sustainable management of medicinal plant trade in India

The National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) conducted the fourth meeting of its Expert Committee on Medicinal Plants at their headquarters in Chennai on 10th July 2015. The meeting was attended by 19 medicinal plant experts from various organizations including Dr Paramjeet Singh, the Director of the Botanical Survey of India, and Dr Kinhal, Director of the Indian Institute of Forest Management. TRAFFIC was represented at the meeting by Shubhobroto Ghosh, Senior Programme Officer.

Medicinal and aromatic plants are useful resources, but like many other forms of biodiversity, they are threatened by overexploitation and unsustainable use. Despite a prominent history of medicinal plant use in India and owing to a growing demand, the industry has not been able to develop an ecological and socially responsible strategy. The Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India estimated the export value for herbals and final marketed dosage in 2011-12 belonging to the systems of Ayurveda, Homeopathy and Siddha at USD 348 million, showing an annual growth rate of 16.5%. The World Health Organization states that approximately 70–80 % of the global population relies on traditional herbal-based medicines to meet their primary health care needs.

During one such meeting in Chennai, there were extensive discussions on Section 38 of the Biological Diversity Act (2002) and Biodiversity Rules (2004) and the draft of the National Strategy for Management of Medicinal Plants. The Red Data Book of Threatened Indian Plants was also referred to in presentations to outline the listing of medicinal plants for conservation.

Participants spoke about the importance of notification of species under protection and stated that there were 44 endemic species of threatened medicinal plants in India. Several of these medicinal plants are those that fall under the purview of the Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT). The Conservation Assessment and Management Prioritisation process for listing threatened plants was also discussed.

Participants elaborated on the IUCN criteria for assessing threats to wild species of medicinal plants. Shubhobroto Ghosh from TRAFFIC mentioned that WWF, TRAFFIC and IUCN have developed the FairWild Standard for ensuring sustainability in trade in medicinal plants and this Standard has been internationally acknowledged.

A major point of debate was regarding the listing of 29 items in the negative list of the Director General of Foreign Trade since they included over 1000 species of varying taxonomic statuses. Indeed, the variance in taxonomy was a principal point of concern, since differences in taxonomy were allowing the trade in some species that have been listed for prohibition in trade. The original list was made in 1997 to 2002 and is in urgent need of review, according to the National Biodiversity Authority.

Proper documentation and use of knowledge regarding medicinal plants was cited as an important area of concern. The Zoological Survey of India and Botanical Survey of India were identified as the nodal repositories for such knowledge. Collection of information and collation of data were listed as principal components in more effective medicinal plant conservation in India. Traditional knowledge of tribal communities regarding medicinal plants was also worthy of preservation and respect, the gathering agreed.

"There are currently around 77 species of Indian medicinal plants listed in CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna) and 27 items under the negative list of the Director General of Foreign Trade that are prohibited for export and import ".



© Amit Kotia

The meeting discussed the initiative of the People's Biodiversity Registrar that saved knowledge gathered by tribal communities on medicinal plants and local wildlife. Participants also pointed out that there were legal discrepancies with regard to the listing of plant species in the Biological Diversity Act and also the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 (WPA1972). This was a point of contention in the amended version of the Jammu and Kashmir Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 that witnessed a decrease in the number of protected species after alignment with the mainstream Indian WPA1972.

Patents and the attempts by some multinational companies to skirt around the law and take advantage of India's biodiversity were also debated during the meeting. The issues related to trade in Red Sanders were debated alongside the potential impact of any legal sale in abetting illegal trade in the species.

The meeting concluded with Mrs Amarjeet Ahuja, IAS officer, the Chairperson of the Expert Committee on Medicinal Plants of the National Biodiversity Authority, said the meeting had been one of the most fruitful on medicinal plants that she had ever attended.

Dr Kinhal suggested that all concerned with medicinal plants should endeavour to follow certification schemes like FairWild to ensure better conservation and sustainable use of medicinal plant species that would save our precious biodiversity, whilst ensuring a livelihood for those living off these species in trade.

The NBA was established in 2003 to implement India's Biological Diversity Act (2002). The NBA is a Statutory, Autonomous Body that performs facilitative, regulatory and advisory functions for the Government of India on issues of conservation, sustainable use of biological resources and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of biological resources.

The FairWild Foundation, established in 2008, promotes the sustainable use of wild-collected plant ingredients, with a fair deal for all those involved throughout the supply chain. In India, TRAFFIC has been working in close collaboration with the Applied Environmental Research Foundation (AERF) for implementing the FairWild Standard and certification for *Terminalia chebula* and *Terminalia bellirica* in the central Western Ghats.

Coming Soon: Publications

THE WILD CHARTER: TRAFFIC is soon to launch the first issue of a quarterly wildlife policy and law bulletin - The Wild Charter. The bulletin will concentrate on policy and legal issues pertaining to wildlife conservation in India, which will also include special sections on domestic acts and international policies and laws including CITES. This bulletin will be circulated among lawmakers, the judiciary, government staff, as well of members of civil society including prominent conservation NGOs in the country and to others who interested in these issues. A special panel of experts has been convened to serve as advisors, which includes prominent environmental lawyers, former/serving members of the judiciary and forest department, many of whom have contributed to the first bulletin. The final version is expected for publication soon.



RED SANDERS: AN ECOLOGICAL BOON OR AN ENFORCEMENT BANE? This report on the illegal trade in Red Sanders *Terocarpus santalinus* in India is the first of its kind by TRAFFIC and aims to highlight the extent of the illegal trade, hotspots, major trade routes, associated legislations and policies, enforcement gaps and recommendations. The report is in the process of finalization and will be available in the public domain in the coming weeks.

Red Sanders has been exploited historically for a variety of uses in Japan and China, but is little known for its various uses elsewhere. Domestic trade of Red Sanders within India was recently revealed

when its large scale use as an ingredient in Ayurvedic (traditional) medicines was disclosed at a recent auction of confiscated wood conducted by the State of Andhra Pradesh. Nonetheless, its trade for Japanese musical instruments, as a beer colorant, and as a hardwood for making furniture and toys has long been known to the world. Several information gaps exist in India and concerning international markets, including the complete profiling of end usage, extent of demand and projection, legality frameworks in the destination countries, and smuggling modus operandi and use of transit countries.



02

Outpost

Superabundant 'Rice bird' loses ground to burgeoning appetites in East Asia

Superabundant 'Rice bird' loses ground to burgeoning appetites in East Asia

One of Eurasia's most abundant "rice bird" species, the Yellow-breasted Bunting *Emberiza aureola* has declined by 90% and has retracted its range by 5000 km since 1980. The sheer scale and speed of the loss has drawn comparisons with that of the Passenger Pigeon, once the commonest bird in North America, but now extinct.

Yellow-breasted Bunting has a very large breeding range stretching from Scandinavia to the Russian Far East. Yellow-breasted Buntings from across their breeding range migrate eastward to China (Glutz von Blotzheim & Bauer 1997) and winter in Southeast Asia. Both during migration and in winter, they congregate in large flocks in wet grasslands and rice fields, including at numerous stopover sites in China (Glutz von Blotzheim & Bauer 1997). During migration and on the wintering grounds, Yellow-breasted Buntings at the night-time roosts are trapped with nets for food.

These findings were published in a paper **"Global population collapse in a superabundant migratory bird and illegal trapping in China"** authored by Johannes Kamp, Steffen Oppel, Alexandr A. Ananin, Yurii A. Durnev, Sergey N. Gashev, Norbert Holzel, Alexandr L. Mishchenko, Jorma Pessa, Sergey M. Smirenski, Evgenii G. Strelnikov, Sami Timonen, Kolja Wolanska, and Simba Chan in the journal, *Conservation Biology*.

Kamp's research clearly indicates that unsustainable rates of hunting, principally in China, have contributed to a catastrophic loss of numbers and also in the areas in which the buntings can now be found. The Yellow-breasted Bunting has all but disappeared from Eastern Europe, European Russia, large parts of Western and Central Siberia and Japan.

Hunting of the species was banned in China in 1997. However, millions of Yellow-breasted Buntings and other songbirds were still being killed for food and sold on the black market as late as 2013.

Consumption of these birds has increased as a result of economic growth and prosperity in East Asia, with one estimate from 2001 of one million buntings being consumed in China's Guangdong province alone.

"The magnitude and speed of the Yellow-breasted Bunting's decline is unprecedented among birds distributed over such a large area, with the exception of the Passenger Pigeon, which went extinct in 1914 due to industrial-scale hunting," said Dr Johannes Kamp from the University of Münster, the lead author of the new research published in the journal *Conservation Biology*.



Currently, there is a lack of regulation, monitoring and enforcement efforts in bird markets, trade routes and collection sites by relevant authorities.

Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC in India added: "The Yellow-breasted Bunting is protected under Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act in India. The bird visits India during the winter and is largely restricted to Northeast India, West Bengal and regions of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. TRAFFIC suggests community awareness campaigns should be conducted in these areas in India to ensure that these beautiful songbirds are neither trapped nor disturbed".

"To reverse these declines we need to educate people better on the consequences of eating wildlife. We also need a better and more efficient reporting system for law enforcement," said Simba Chan, Senior Conservation Officer at BirdLife International.

Read more at
<http://www.traffic.org/home/2015/6/9/superabundant-rice-bird-decline-mirrors-that-of-passenger-pi.html>

Sources:

<http://www.traffic.org/home/2015/6/9/superabundant-rice-bird-decline-mirrors-that-of-passenger-pi.html> ;

"Global population collapse in a superabundant migratory bird and illegal trapping in China" authored by Johannes Kamp, Steffen Oppel, Alexandr A. Ananin, Yurii A. Durnev, Sergey N. Gashev, Norbert Holzel, Alexandr L. Mishchenko, Jorma Pessa, Sergey M. Smirenski, Evgenii G. Strelnikov, Sami Timonen, Kolja Wolanska, and Simba Chan, published in the journal, *Conservation Biology*.

03

CITES Update

CITES CoP17 to be held in South Africa in 2016

CITES CoP17 to be held in South Africa in 2016

The CITES Secretariat has announced that the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP17) will take place in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 24th September to 5th October 2016. Specific details about the strict deadlines for the submission of document for this meeting are given below:

1. The submission of draft resolutions and other documents for meetings of the Conference of the Parties should be communicated to the Secretariat at least 150 days before the meeting, i.e. by 27th April 2016.

2. Any Party proposing an amendment to Appendix I or II for consideration at CoP17 should submit the text of the proposed amendment to the Secretariat at least 150 days before the meeting, i.e. by 27th April 2016. The amendment proposals should be based on the criteria adopted in Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP16).

3. However, if a Party intends to submit a proposal to amend Appendix I or II that concerns a species or a population of a species that occurs partly or totally outside of the territory under its jurisdiction, and if it does not intend to consult the other range States before the submission of its proposal, the Party, in accordance with Resolution Conf. 8.21 (Rev. CoP16) on Consultation with range States on proposals to amend Appendices I and II, should submit its proposal to the Secretariat at least 330 days before the meeting, i.e. by 30th October 2015.

The Secretariat reminds Parties that as a general rule, documents submitted for consideration should not exceed 12 pages in length and has decided that any draft resolution or decision that has budgetary or workload implications for the Secretariat or permanent committees must contain a budget for the work involved and an indication of the source of funding. Moreover, the Standing Committee has agreed that the Secretariat should ask any Party that submits a document longer than 12 pages to provide it in the three working languages of the Convention.



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In order to avoid problems of communication, the Secretariat has stressed the following in relation to the submission of documents:

- a) Documents must be submitted by either: the national Management Authority of the Convention, as has been designated and authorized to communicate with other Parties and with the Secretariat (the main Management Authority if there are several); or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

- b) Documents and amendment proposals submitted by any other authority will not be accepted.

- c) The Secretariat will formally register documents as having been received for the meeting only when it receives an original signed letter with the documents, specifying what has been submitted, and sent by the deadlines specified above (for which the postmark serves as proof). Parties wishing to submit documents electronically are invited to contact the Secretariat.

- d) In cases where two or more Parties are jointly submitting an amendment proposal or a working document, a signed letter of submission before the deadline is required from each of the Parties concerned in order for their names to be recorded as proponents. For more information, please visit

https://cites.org/eng/news/pr/cites_cop17_venue_dates_south_africa_2016

04

TRAFFIC Alert

Pangolin racket busted along Indo-Nepal border

Ramdev biggest buyer of Red Sanders in India

Four arrested in Tamil Nadu for smuggling Sea Cucumbers

Indian airport officials seize 700 tortoises in just two months



1

Pangolin racket busted along Indo-Nepal border

In May 2015, Madhya Pradesh forest officials arrested a Kolkata-based businessman, who is reportedly part of a global racket involved in smuggling Indian pangolins to China and Viet Nam, where their blood, meat and scales are sold to traditional medical practitioners at a premium. The accused is believed to have masterminded the killing of hundreds of pangolins and smuggled them to Asian countries from Madhya Pradesh and other parts of the country. Nine of his local conduits were arrested in the State's Chhindwara district in September last year. At least 47 kg of pangolin scales known as '*chuan shan jia*' in Chinese were seized. The businessman was arrested by the State Forest Department's Special Task Force (STF) in Kolkata.

TRAFFIC adds.....

Pangolins, also called scaly anteaters, are toothless animals and have large keratin scales covering their skin. They are the only known mammal with this adaptation. Of the eight species found worldwide (four each in Asia and Africa), two are known from India—the Indian Pangolin *Manis crassicaudata* and the Chinese Pangolin *Manis pentadactyla*. TRAFFIC analysed seizure reports from the past five years (2009-2013) in India and found that around 3350 pangolins were poached in the country. However, this may only be a conservative estimate as a large part of this trade presumably remains undetected. With virtually no information available on their population status or current levels of illegal utilization, the conservation status of pangolins remains unclear and could be alarming.

In India, pangolins are captured for some local trade as well as to meet the demand from international markets in China and Southeast Asia. Pangolin meat is considered a delicacy among several communities and is consumed as a "tonic food" because of its alleged medicinal properties. Their scales are also used for making traditional medicines. Pangolins are also traded and smuggled alive. Pangolin scales are used as an ingredient in traditional Asian medicines that are believed to help breast feeding women lactate and cure ailments ranging from asthma and psoriasis to cancer, although there is a lack of evidence suggesting they are effective.

TRAFFIC has been focusing on these species as some of the lesser known species in illegal wildlife trade. TRAFFIC has conducted a widespread campaign on social media to raise awareness on the plight of this species in India. The campaign Preserving the Future: Stop Illegal Wildlife Trade was jointly run by TRAFFIC, WWF-India and the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB). The threat has also been publicized through publications such as the TRAFFIC Bulletin and TRAFFIC Post. TRAFFIC continues to highlight the need for more data on the population status and illegal trade in pangolins and also for greater enforcement activities to protect these species in the wild in India. The Chinese Pangolin and the Indian Pangolin are listed in Appendix II of CITES and at the 11th meeting of CITES, an annotation was added for zero export quotas. TRAFFIC has been part of discussions that have proposed upscaling the status of this species to Appendix I for greater protection.

Sources: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bhopal/MP-forest-officials-crack-Indo-China-Pangolin-smuggling-racket/articleshow/47137053.cms>;
<http://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2014/04/opinion/sutter-change-the-list-pangolin-trafficking/>;
<http://www.traffic.org/home/2015/5/6/preserving-the-future-digital-campaign-illuminates-illegal-t.html>
<http://www.traffic.org/bulletin/>

2

Ramdev biggest buyer of Red Sanders in India

Baba Ramdev, a spiritual leader known for his contributions in yoga, Ayurveda, politics and agriculture, has emerged as the biggest buyer of the much-sought after Red Sanders in the country. In the recent auction in April 2015, conducted by the Andhra Pradesh government, Ramdev's Patanjali Yogpeeth in Hardwar, bought 706 tonnes of Red Sanders. In a seller's market dominated by the Chinese, Ramdev seems to be a major domestic buyer of the prized wood.

TRAFFIC adds.....

Red Sanders *Pterocarpus santalinus* is an endemic timber tree species found in the districts of Chittoor, Cuddapah, Anantpur Kurnool, Prakasam, and Nellore in the State of Andhra Pradesh and in Chegalpettu district of Tamil Nadu with sporadic occurrences in Karnataka and Kerala. Domestic trade of Red Sanders was little known until recently when its large-scale use as an ingredient of Ayurvedic (traditional) medicines was revealed after Baba Ramdev bought a significant quantity in the recent auction of confiscated wood conducted by the State of Andhra Pradesh. Nonetheless, its trade for Japanese musical instruments, as a beer colorant, and as a hardwood for making furniture and toys has been long known to the world.

In India, the trade in Red Sanders is regulated through various legal mechanisms such as the Andhra Pradesh Preservation of Private Forest Rules, 1978, the Andhra Pradesh Sandal Wood and Red Sanders Wood Transit Rules (1969), Andhra Pradesh Red Sanders wood possession rules, 1989 and Tamil Nadu Timber Transit Rules, 1968. The Supreme Court has also issued a directive to the Central Government to include Red Sanders in Schedule VI of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 that currently protects only six species of plants in India. Red Sanders is currently listed in Appendix II in CITES. Export from India was prohibited by the CITES Secretariat in June 2010, who cited irregularities in the certification of products being exported and India's failure to conduct a non-detriment finding (NDF) (a study to ascertain conservation status of the species and the impact of trade on it). Therefore, no export of unfinished Red Sanders wood is allowed. Recently, in 2014, the Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) permitted the State of Andhra Pradesh to export 8584 metric tonnes of confiscated Red Sanders logs.

The fact that there are so many contours involved in this trade has led TRAFFIC to investigate the enforcement and conservation aspects of the Red Sanders trade in India. A clear and comprehensive national level policy and corresponding laws with foresight will be essential for a sound and sustainable regime for Red Sanders- a species that shed red of all kinds at this crucial juncture.

TRAFFIC has compiled a report on the illegal trade in Red Sanders that will shortly be available in the public domain.

Sources: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/20-red-sanders-smugglers-shot-dead-in-chittoor-encounter/article7076614.ece>; <http://www.firstpost.com/india/heres-why-ramdev-indias-biggest-buyer-of-red-sander-had-to-shell-out-rs-207-cr-for-endangered-wood-2200326.html>; <http://www.deccanchronicle.com/150412/nation-current-affairs/article/andhra-pradesh-auctions-hinder-red-sanders-trade>; <http://www.newindianexpress.com/thesundaystandard/Chinese-Timber-Mafia-Gets-a-New-Red-Sanders-Route/2014/01/12/article1995456.ece>
TRAFFIC's unpublished report on illegal trade in Red Sanders titled "Red Sanders: An ecological boon or an enforcement bane?"

3

Four arrested in Tamil Nadu for smuggling Sea Cucumbers

On 10th May 2015, the Coastal Security Group (marine police) arrested four people in Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu, on charges of smuggling Sea Cucumbers. The police seized 360 kg of endangered species from the smugglers. Investigations revealed that the gang had processed the Sea Cucumbers by boiling them in hot water and stocking them in 11 barrels and hiding them on the seashore. The gang members confessed that they were planning to transport the processed Sea Cucumbers to Rameswaram from where they were to be smuggled to Malaysia. The arrested were handed over to Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park officials for further investigation.

TRAFFIC adds.....

This is not the first time that Sea Cucumbers *Holothurians spp.* have been seized in this region. About two metric tonnes of Sea Cucumbers were seized in Tamil Nadu in April 2014 and there have been other seizures. According to WCCB, Seahorses and Sea Cucumbers are poached by local individuals, particularly fishermen who are funded by larger groups. International networks then ferry the animals on flights to China and Southeast Asia.

In 2014, at least 5770 kg of Sea Cucumbers were seized in India and 2015 (till May), 6225 kg of Sea Cucumbers were seized. These figures have been taken from an illegal wildlife trade database that TRAFFIC maintains within its division in India.

The poaching and illegal trade of Sea Cucumbers and other marine species has risen steeply because of a high demand, primarily as a delicacy and as an ingredient of Oriental medicines in China and Southeast Asia. The extent of poaching is such that many of these species could have been wiped out in stretches of coastal waters, such as the Gulf of Kutch, Gulf of Mannar, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshwadeep, where they previously had a good population. This clearly is a warning sign for Indian marine biodiversity. Sea cucumbers are a scavenger species in the marine ecosystem that clean up water and allow corals to thrive.

Currently, Sea Cucumbers are listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 under which poaching and trade in the species is prohibited. Further, there are ongoing deliberations to consider listing Sea Cucumber species found in the South Asian region in CITES in order to increase their levels of protection.



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Sources: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/Four-arrested-in-Tamil-Nadu-for-smuggling-sea-cucumbers/articleshow/47223786.cms>; <http://www.ndtv.com/tamil-nadu-news/600-kilograms-of-sea-cucumber-seized-in-tamil-nadu-756307>; <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-2613989/How-Indias-coastal-waters-fast-base-easy-poaching-illegal-trading-marine-sp>

4 Indian airport officials seize 700 tortoises in just two months

Smuggling of wild animals and their body parts is once again adding to the worries at airports across India. According to airport officials, recent cases have shown the smuggling of wild animals gaining pace. Passengers are being arrested for trying to smuggle wildlife and their parts to various countries, including Malaysia. In the past two months, officials at various airports across India have foiled smuggling of more than 700 tortoises. Agencies deployed at the airports, including Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Kolkata, have been alerted regarding the increase in smuggling incidents. It is not only tortoises but also peacock parts and deer antlers that are being smuggled from India by air.

TRAFFIC adds.....

The illegal trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles for both food and pets has assumed enormous proportions in India. During 2014 and 2015, TRAFFIC records reveal that at least 1782 Star Tortoises were seized, including 460 hatchlings in 2014 in 10 incidents across India and in 2015 (up to April), 50 Star Tortoises were seized in two incidents. For the Black Spotted Pond Turtle in 2014 and 2015 (till June), there were nine incidents including 2100 live seizures and 14 dead. In 2015 alone, at least 1104 Black Spotted Turtles have been seized to date.



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For Soft-shelled Turtles, since 2014, 8112 animals have been seized in seven incidents, 2200 of them in a single case in 2015. TRAFFIC notes this alarming trend and is calling for greater efforts to find out more about the nature of the trade, especially that in the Black Spotted Pond Turtle. Black Spotted Pond Turtles are listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act and in Appendix I of CITES. Efforts are underway to develop a turtle identification guide in collaboration with other agencies and to develop new initiatives to stop the illegal trade in these reptiles.

Sources: www.traffic.org/species-reports/traffic_species_reptiles36.pdf;
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-3077312/Indian-airport-officials-seize-700-smuggled-tortoises-just-two-months.html>; http://zeenews.india.com/news/sci-tech/rare-asian-black-spotted-turtles-seized-in-bengal_1538953.html;
http://article.wn.com/view/2015/06/02/Turtle_smugglers_in_custody_till_June_15/



05

In Focus

Hunting tribes of Tamil Nadu: A special focus on “Narikuravars”

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Hunting tribes of Tamil Nadu: A special focus on “Narikuravars”

Covering 1 30 058 sq km of Southeast India, the State of Tamil Nadu is well-known for its rich biodiversity. The Tamils have a very close association with their natural resources and have cherished and used it for centuries. The State is also inhabited by many tribes. The livelihoods of these tribes vary considerably; some are engaged in activities such as cultivation and milk production, while others remain attached to hunting and ancient activities such as witchcraft and the occult. Kannada and Tamil are the dominant languages within the South Indian tribes.

Of the many tribes in Tamil Nadu, the Narikuravars are a nomadic tribal hunting community found throughout Tamil Nadu. *Nari* in Tamil means Jackal or Fox and *Kuravar* means hunters. In Tamil Nadu, they are also called “Kuruvikkarar” meaning bird catchers.

The Narikuravars are thought to have migrated around 400 years ago from northern India to the south and their language indicates a Gujarati origin. Their language is a unique mixture of Tamil, Telugu and Marathi and is known as Vagriboli.

In former times, the community was known for its hunting skills, especially of smaller mammals and birds. However, restrictions on hunting and the sale of forest produce forced the Narikuravars to take up other means of livelihood such as selling beads, baskets, herbs, medicines and fortune-telling. However, reports have indicated that the community has not completely weaned off its hunting past.

TRAFFIC, during its on-going illegal wildlife trade surveys in India, including Tamil Nadu, found that the Narikuravar still hunted many smaller and lesser known wildlife species. During surveys of nearly 900 Narikuravar in 100 settlements in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry over the past year, it was found that most of the mammals and birds hunted were protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act of India, 1972. The trapping or hunting was largely for food and money.

Species commonly targeted by the Narikuravar included: Black-naped Hare *Lepus nigricollis*, monitor lizards (*Varanus* sp.), Slender Loris (*Loris tardigradus* and *Loris lydekkerianus*), Indian Jackal *Canis aureus* indicus, civets (Viverridae), mongoose (Herpestidae), porcupines (Hystricidae), bats (Order Chiroptera), domestic cats, partridges and quails (Phasianidae), Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*, parrots (Psittacoidea), sparrow (Passeridae), munias (Estrildidae), junglefowls (Phasianidae) and many migratory birds.

Monitor lizards are trapped in large numbers and are sold for their meat, especially in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu. In one instance, at least 60 monitor lizards were observed dumped in a dry well with their legs tied ready for sale. The average price per kg for monitor lizard meat was reportedly around INR 500. Monitor lizard meat, along with the meat of the Black-naped Hare, was observed being sold to various highway motels and restaurants for sale and consumption as a delicacy.

Narikuravars are also extremely adept at hunting lorises, Rusty-spotted Cat *Prionailurus rubiginosus*, Giant Grizzled Squirrel *Ratufa macroura*, Jungle Cat *Felis chaus*, civets, foxes and Black-napped Hares. They have precise and extraordinary knowledge of animals' habitats, movements and life history. In Srirangam in a 6 km² forest area, Narikuravars hunt Crested Serpent Eagles *Spilornis cheela*, whose meat is considered a delicacy. They use *gulel** (undikol) for hunting Crested Serpent Eagles. Rusty Spotted Cats, foxes, jackals and jungle cats are also hunted for their meat, also considered a delicacy.

The Narikuravars use many hunting techniques but are commonly seen carrying single bore home-made rifles to hunt birds and animals, including endangered ones in Forests Reserves.

Interestingly, some of the Narikuravars said they are willing to give up hunting and poaching if they are able to get a suitable alternative livelihood.

Furthermore, the Narikuravars in some settlements often proclaim themselves as *Siddha** doctors or country physicians, prescribing oils and medicines made out of the fat and other body parts of monitor lizards, peacock fat, lorises and other protected wildlife. Their main selling point is the false claim that such body parts have aphrodisiac properties.

Narikuravar men and women also travel to festivals in Tamil Nadu and neighbouring States to sell oils made from endangered wildlife, Peacock feathers and jewelry made of beads. Narikuravars from Tamil Nadu were encountered in Thrishur Pooram and Sabarimala. Some Narikuravars were also found to be selling fake animal products such as fake Tiger skin and claws to tourists.

Younger Narikuravars appear to be abandoning hunting as a livelihood, partly owing to pressure from the forest department. Instead they are working as drivers or bead and necklace makers and sellers, or in Chennai as garbage collectors. Many interviewed Narikuravars want their children to be educated and follow a higher quality lifestyle.

Table: Body parts of various animals and birds traded and their uses, according to interviewed Narikuravars

Animal/Plant part and their uses		
Animal/bird	Body Part	Uses
Monitor lizard	Blood and flesh	Improving potency and body strength
Black-naped Hare	Blood	For hair growth
Black-naped Hare	Flesh	For improving body stamina
Loris	Live	For achieving what you desire
Jackal	Head, tail and paws	Hung at the entrance of the house to ward off evil spirits
Jackal	Teeth	Falsely sold as Tiger teeth. They are also worn on a string around the neck to bestow strength and potency
Peacock	Fat, dried and powdered legs	Oil for joint and muscle pain
Owl	Eyes	Black magic
Sparrow, Black-headed Munia and Scaly-breasted Munia	Flesh	Called "Sittukuruvilehiyam" and used for cure for impotence
Civet	Flesh	Eaten as a delicacy
Junglefowl	Feather and bones	Used for sport fishing and making hooks

TRAFFIC'S recommends the following actions:

1. Studies are needed to gain further insights into the Narikuruvar community to understand their demography, socioeconomic status and usage of natural resources. Alternatives to hunting protected wildlife also need to be explored, and the willingness to follow alternative livelihoods.
2. The government should encourage communities to desist from breaking the law by hunting protected wildlife and develop alternative livelihood options.
3. Develop new awareness campaigns for spreading awareness on conservation and social prohibition of hunting
4. Enforcement actions should be taken against persistent hunting and illegal wildlife trade offenders.
5. Regular monitoring of poaching levels should be undertaken.

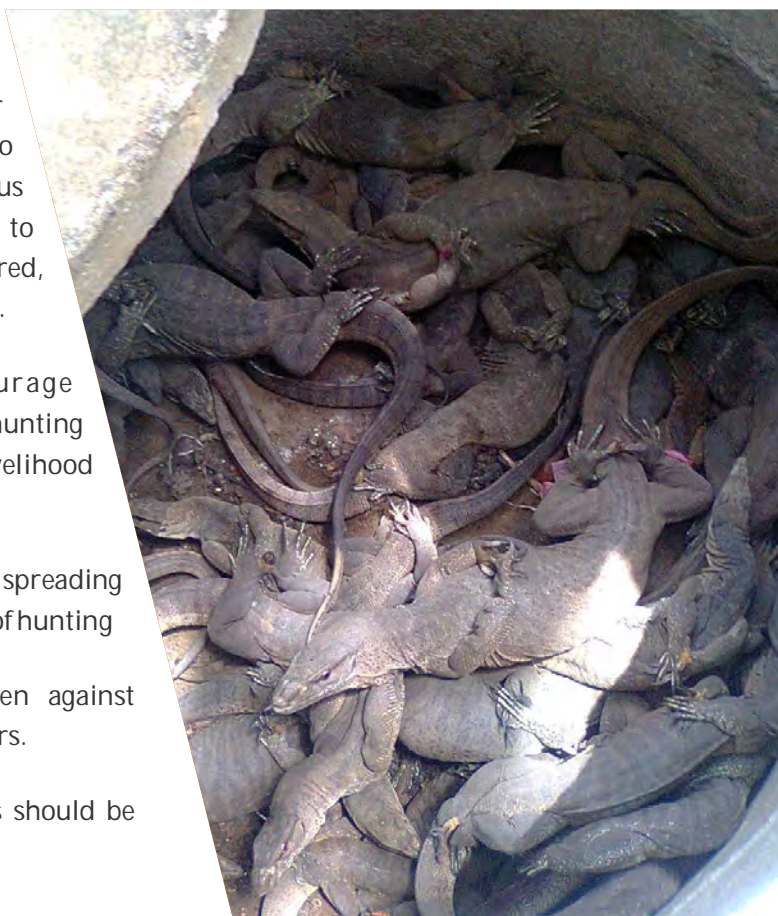
The information stated above is based on first hand observation during the on-going illegal wildlife trade surveys conducted periodically by TRAFFIC investigators in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry.

* *Gulel* in English means a slingshot

*Siddha refers to a system of traditional medicine originating in Tamil Nadu. Siddhars were spiritual bodies who possessed the eight supernatural powers.

Sources: Based on TRAFFIC's on-going and unpublished study of the Narikuruvar in Tamil Nadu

http://www.kalpavriksh.org/images/CCA/Directory/TN_StateChapter.pdf



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06

Wild Cry

'Tale' of peacock train feathers: India's national bird at risk

'Tale' of peacock train feathers: India's national bird at risk

The Indian Peafowl *Pavocristatus*, commonly referred to as the Peacock, is not just revered as India's national bird, it also holds a deeper significance in Hindu mythology. The Indian Peacock is considered a vahan (vehicle) of the God Kartikeya, son of Lord Shiva and Parvati and brother of the God Ganesha, and thus considered sacred (Ahmed 2008).

Peafowl are most notable for the male's extravagant display feathers, which are enormously long with an "eye" at the end (Ahmed 2008). Even though the Indian Peafowl is protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 of India, domestic trade in its naturally shed train (tail) feathers is allowed although all international trade is prohibited. Peacock tail feathers and handicrafts made from them are commonly seen in the markets in India and also on many websites. However, there have been growing concerns regarding the sourcing of peacock tail feathers, with some suspicion that all those available in markets are not naturally shed and that the current demand for peacock feathers may actually be leading to poaching of the species in the wild.

Distribution

The Indian Peafowl is a resident of India and is found across the country up to the elevations of 1800 m (rarely to 2000 m) including in the outer Himalayas and other hilly regions. It also occurs in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Nepal.

Legal Status

Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972- Schedule I

CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora): Not listed

IUCN Red List: Least Concern

Hunting, killing, poisoning, trapping or trading of a species protected under the Wildlife (Protection Act), 1972 is punishable in India. However, there is an exemption for domestic trade in peacock tail feathers and the articles made from them, as stated in Sec. 43 (3) a and Sec. 44 (1) of the Act. The exemption was made on the basis of the fact that the feathers used were naturally shed. Export of feathers or artifacts made from them have been banned under the Foreign Trade Policy since 1st October 1999.



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Population Status

There are limited data on the population status of the Indian Peafowl aside from a few surveys carried out in several protected areas in India.

Threats

Habitat loss and death by pesticide poisoning or to prevent crop depredation have been the main threats to the wild population of the Indian Peacock to date. However there are growing reports of poaching of Peacocks for their feathers and meat.

TRAFFIC, on behalf of the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India, conducted a short-term survey between October 2007 and January 2008, to study poaching and trade in the Indian Peafowl. The prime objective of the study was to assess the nature and volume of the trade in peacock feathers in Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat and the Agra region of Uttar Pradesh; to identify key players and drivers of the trade and the communities involved; to carry out market surveys to assess the potential source of peacock feathers (natural shedding or killed birds) entering into trade and to document available forensic techniques for distinguishing shed feathers from those of killed birds.

Agra was found to be the centre of trade in Peacock tail feathers in India and even had an entire locality given over to the trade, although Peacock feathers were found on sale in every location surveyed. The study found little evidence regarding poaching as a source of Peacock tail feathers, although it had reportedly been carried out to supply the trade in peacock meat and live birds.

With no estimated information on the population of the Indian Peafowl in India and with growing reports regarding poaching of the species for its train feathers, TRAFFIC with support from the Ministry of Environment and Forest decided to undertake a further all-India study on the peacock feather trade. The survey included 18 States covering 150 cities and 150 villages. The study found that Peacock feathers were largely collected from three States—Rajasthan, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu.

The start of the moult season begins towards the end of August and lasts for an average of eight weeks, ending in late October or early November. However in Tamil Nadu feather moult and collection was largely observed during November-December.



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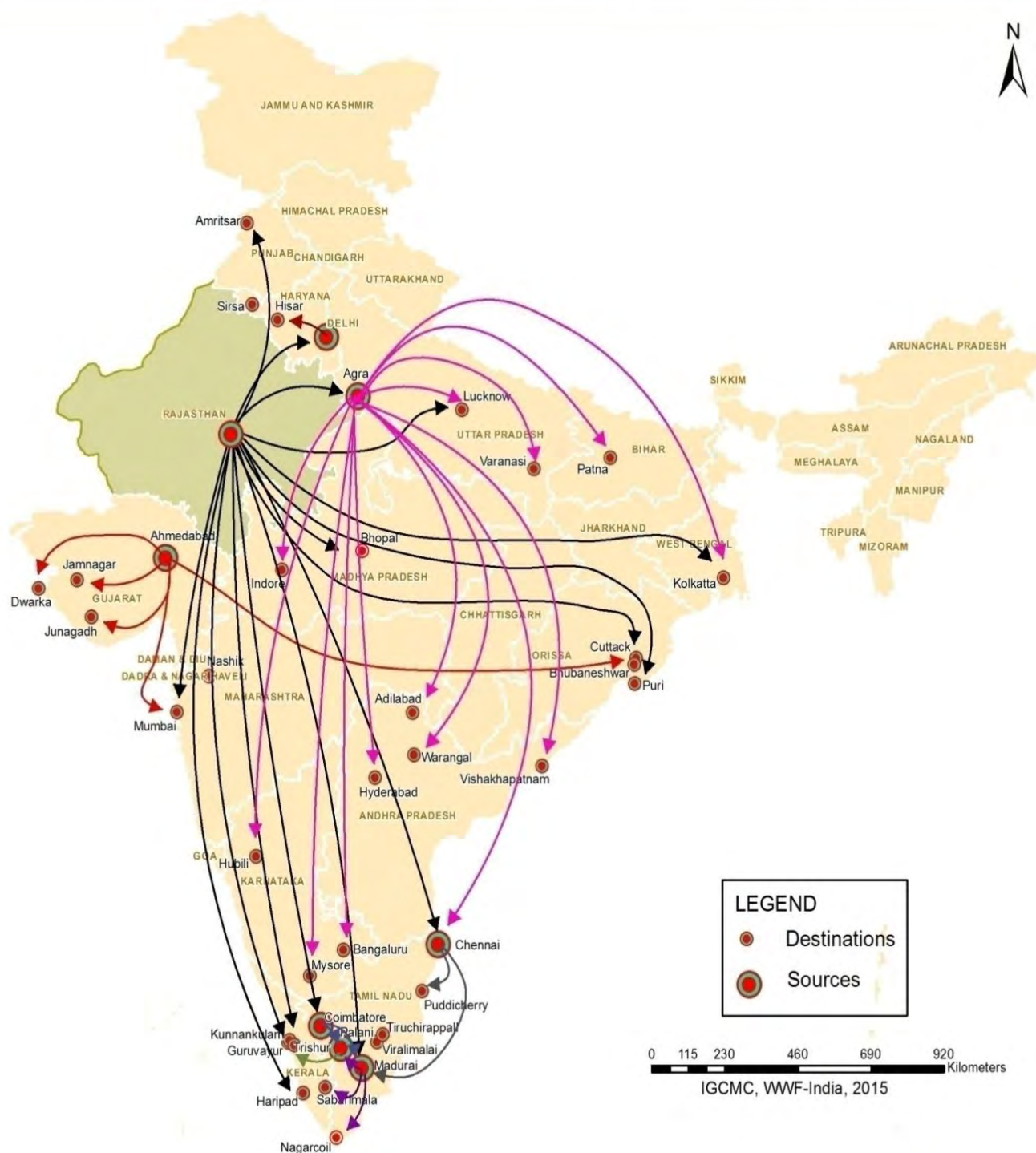
© Shaleen Attre/TRAFFIC

The study found that Peacock feathers are mostly used at festivals throughout India. Religious uses are one of the main drivers of the trade as shown in the table below.

State	Festival	Usage	Demand during the months
Andhra Pradesh	Ghusadi	Hats <i>3000 feathers are used to make a hat</i>	September
Andhra Pradesh	Janmashtami	Temple <i>puja</i> & household functions, fancy dress for children	August-September
Andhra Pradesh	Muharram	Blessing	October-November
Gujarat	Jain and Hindu temples	As a <i>jhadu</i> or broom for cleaning deities and the floor of the temple	Year-round
Gujarat	Kavant <i>Mela</i>	Dancing headgear for Rathwa tribe	February
Karnataka	Thai Pusam and Panguniuthiram	Kavadi <i>300 feathers per Kavadi: there are 3000 Kavadi</i>	January-February
Karnataka	Janmashtami	Temple <i>puja</i> & household function, fancy dress for children	August-September
Karnataka	Muharram	Blessing	October-November
Kerala	Thai Pusam and Panguniuthiram	Kavadi <i>300 feathers per Kavadi: there are approximately 17,000 Kavadi</i>	January-February
Kerala	Pooram	Alavattam <i>550 feathers per Alavattam: two Alavattam are used per elephant. 550 elephants are used</i>	April
Kerala	All festivals	Ambala Kavadi <i>For dancing during the festivals</i>	Festival time
Kerala	Janmashtami	Procession, temple <i>puja</i> & household function	August - September

State	Festival	Usage	Demand during the months
Kerala	Bhagavathy temples	Arjunan Nritham or Mayil Peeli Thookkam <i>Ritual art performed by men of Ezhava community</i>	Festival time
Odisha	Janmashtami	Procession, home use, <i>puja</i>	August - September
Rajasthan	Jain and Hindu Temples	<i>As a jhadu</i> or broom for cleaning deities and the floor of the temple	year-round
Rajasthan, Karna taka Andhra Pradesh, Delhi	Dargah	Broom used for blessing the devotees	year-round
Tamil Nadu	Janmashtami	Procession, temple <i>puja</i> & household function, fancy dress for children	August-September
Tamil Nadu	Thai Pusam	Kavadi <i>300 feathers per Kavadi; approximately 20 000 Kavadi</i>	January-February
Tamil Nadu	Panguniuthiram	Kavadi <i>300 feathers per Kavadi and there are 25 000 Kavadi</i>	March - April
Tamil Nadu and Kerala	Folk dance	Mayilattam <i>Folk dance, school functions, corporate functions</i>	Festival time
Uttar Pradesh	Janmashtami in Mathura and Vrindavan	Procession, temple <i>puja</i> & household function <i>Used for Krishna temples and as clothes for deities world-wide.</i>	August-September
Uttar Pradesh	Mayur Nritya	Dance where women wear wings made of peacock feathers and dance like a peacock	Festivals
Uttar Pradesh	Govardhan Puja	Brooms of peacock feathers used by devotees	November
West Bengal	Janmashtami	Procession, temple <i>puja</i> & household function	August-September

Peacock Feather Trade Route in India



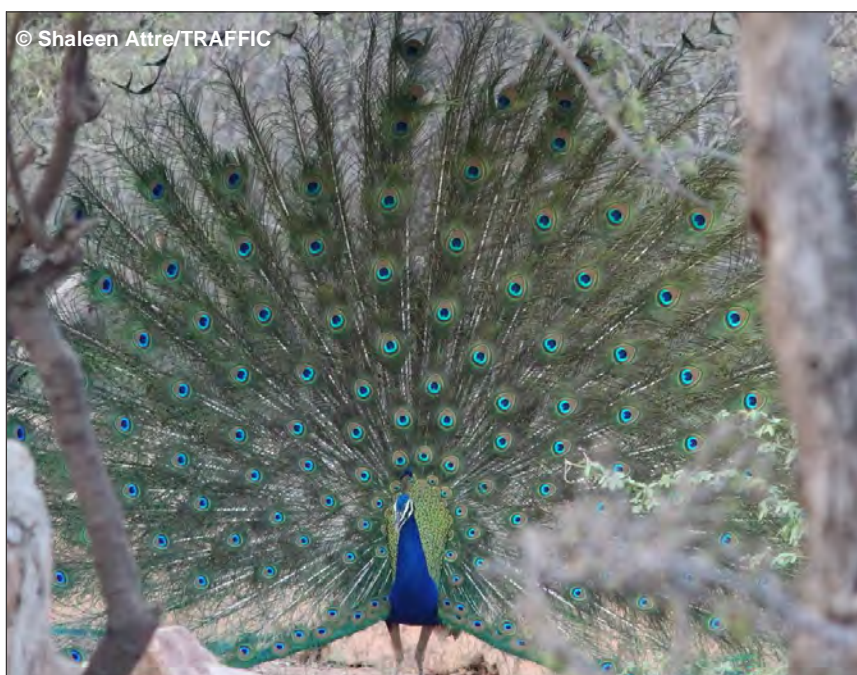
Besides the use of Peacock feathers for festivals and religious purposes, they are also used as medicine. Mayur Piccha Bhasma (Peacock feather ash) is commonly available throughout India (T. L. Devaraj 2004) and Mayileragathi Churnam / Nasika Choorna (Peacock feather ash) is available in Tamil Nadu and Kerala respectively (B. V. Subbarayappa 2001). These are different names for the same peacock feather medicine which are prescribed under Siddha, Ayurvedic and Unani to cure hiccups, vomiting and morning sickness (S. B. Vohora, S. Y. Khan 1979). Peacock feathers and other body parts have 22 applications mostly related to stomach complaints, body aches, small-pox, chicken-pox and whooping cough (Rajiv Kumar Sinha, Shweta Sinha 2001).

There is a significant demand for peafowl feathers in international markets. For example, in Malaysia and Singapore the feathers are carried as Kavadis by devotees at Thai Pusam and Panguniuthiram festivals. All such Peacock feathers are believed to be sourced from India (Chris Shepherd, *TRAFFIC in litt.*, 2007) (Ahmed 2008). Likewise, Peacock feathers have also been seized en route to Singapore, Dubai and Myanmar since 2005.

Dr Shekhar Kumar Niraj, Head of TRAFFIC in India, the lead author of the forthcoming report on trade in Peacock feathers in India said: "The data gathered by TRAFFIC indicate a lucrative market for Peacock tail feathers in India, but with limited information on the population status of the Indian Peafowl and the non-availability of robust information about the sourcing of Peacock feathers, the findings are currently inconclusive about the long term sustainability of the Peacock feather trade and its impact on the conservation of the species in the wild. However, the study has successfully identified the major trade hotspots and trade routes and given an insight into the dynamics of the trade, all of which is crucial to forming any future strategy for conservation of the species."

Watch out for the full report on www.trafficindia.org and www.traffic.org

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Signpost

Other significant news stories

Smugglers get wild ideas at airports

They prefer Kolkata for 'business'



By Ankur Sharma • New Delhi

IMPROVING on wild animals and their body parts has been a trend among smugglers in the north-east of India from various agencies as reports across India.

According to a recent report of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), the smuggling of wild animals has been on the rise in the north-east. The report also mentions that the smugglers are using the airports as a hub for their business. The report also mentions that the smugglers are using the airports as a hub for their business.

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Mail Today/12-05-2015

For poachers, a gecko rules over one-horned rhino in grey market

Rahul Karmakar



When three poachers were arrested in Assam's Karbi Anglong district last year, it was not what had been an open secret for years: the skin of a one-horned rhinoceros was in severe demand because of rampant smuggling in the traditional medicine trade in Southeast Asia and China.

But what wildlife experts didn't realise then was that the multi-million-dollar rhino poaching business was just the tip of the iceberg. The arrest of a big rhino poacher in November 2014 revealed that more money was being made in the grey market for the skins of other animals, such as tiger, leopard, barking deer, musk, pangolin, civet cat, and porcupine, deer horns and manakin.

Most of these animals are highly sought in the clandestine international market for their use in traditional medicine for perceived curative and aphrodisiac properties. A large trade in rhino horn is also reported from Bangladesh, much of the illegal trade in wildlife in Myanmar and beyond in demand in China.

Rhinoceros poaching has been on the rise in the Karbi Anglong district. The poachers are using the airports as a hub for their business. The poachers are using the airports as a hub for their business.

Hindustan Times/05-06-2015

30 rhino poachers shot in N-E last year

WILDLIFE MONITORING Other animals still bear the brunt, 32 tigers, 116 leopards poached in 2014 across country

Chetan Chakrabarti



NEW DELHI: The government has been dealing with wildlife poachers with an iron fist for the past year with 30 poachers being gunned down in the Northeast alone. The number has risen as the data released by the central government indicates that the highest number of poachers were killed in the Karbi Anglong district of Assam.

"The number shows one determination to eliminate wildlife poachers in the Northeast," said an official of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. "The number shows one determination to eliminate wildlife poachers in the Northeast."

The number shows one determination to eliminate wildlife poachers in the Northeast. The number shows one determination to eliminate wildlife poachers in the Northeast.

Hindustan Times/12-06-2015

TECH TO TRAP POACHERS

Smartphones and mobile apps

Launched in Vietnam, Witsapi is an app to help law enforcement officers identify, handle and report illegally trafficked wildlife. It provides photos and information on critically endangered species that are often trafficked through Asia. In India, the forest department launched an app, Hejle, for rangers to use smartphones to track tiger movements, as well as to note through instant photo messaging important landscape features such as water levels, forest fires and suspicious human activity. US, Canada, and Kenya have developed a similar tool for African elephants.

Acoustic traps

Using networks of recycled cell phones fitted with solar panels and antennas that act as sensors, Rainforest Connection is tracking illegal logging in Borneo. The phones, mounted in waterproof cases, record and transmit sounds associated with illegal activity, such as plane or truck engines, chainsaws, explosions, and gunfire, to a cloud-based server for analysis. The devices make it possible to catch illegal loggers in the act of cutting trees.

Software kits

A free spatial monitoring and reporting tool (SMART) is used in 120 conservation areas in 27 countries. It integrates data from ranger patrols, analyses local poaching trends, and measures progress in law enforcement to help rangers improve their effectiveness in combating wildlife crime. It captures knowledge of indigenous trackers and incorporates it to better understand local ecologies.

Sunday Times of India/12-07-2015

STF nabs notorious tiger poacher in Bijnore

CAUGHT FINALLY The accused is also involved in sandalwood smuggling in Uttarakhand. Besides he was in touch with poachers, smugglers in South India



SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

- The accused poacher told STF (STF) Arvind Chatterjee that he was involved in tiger poaching and was also in contact with the smugglers in Delhi, Mysore and other states.
- The police team then nabbed forest guard Gopal, a close associate of the fugitive.
- That catch gave the STF valuable information and the team finally arrested Suresh of Chitwan district.
- We hope to collect information about the network of poachers in UP and neighbouring states from Suresh.

STF OFFICE

The STF had nabbed an FBI agent Suresh in Durgam Chattri police station on September 7, 2014. Later, the WCCB team arrested Suresh along with his brother and nephew in Bijnore. The STF team nabbed 17 poachers and recovered tiger skins from their possession.

The accused poacher told Chatterjee that he was involved in tiger poaching and was also in contact with the smugglers in Delhi, Mysore and other states.

Hindustan Times/01-06-2015

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#StopIllegalWildlifeTrade

TRAFFIC
the wildlife trade monitoring network

is a strategic alliance of

