



Illegal Wildlife Trade in India

An Overview

Samir Sinha

Head

TRAFFIC-India

a joint programme of



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The World Conservation Union

Changing attitudes...

Wildlife as a resource

- Ashoka's rock edicts of 300 B.C. lay down laws for conservation
- Elephants probably amongst the first species whose importance was realised by royalty and rules made for its conservation
- Kautilya prescribed areas to be set aside for elephants from where elephants could be captured for the royal *philkhana*
- Elephants could only be captured by royalty

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Wildlife as a pest

- In the autumn of 1873, after our successful employment of Strychnine, Capt. Caulfield was appointed tiger slayer by the Madras Govt.
- In 1874, with the able support of the Collector Mr. A Wedderburn, 93 tigers and 32 panthers were destroyed...

RC Morris JBNHS (1929). 33:973

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Wildlife as a pest

Elephants considered pest and Madras Presidency offered rewards for their destruction in the 1860s

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Changing attitudes...

Wildlife as a pest

- 57 Tigers killed in Bengal Province in 1939, of which 31 were from the Sunderbans Div. comprising the Districts of 24 Parganas & Khulna
- Shooting is generally encouraged and a reward of Rs. 100/tiger is paid but sometimes the reward is raised to Rs. 150.

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Changing attitudes...

Wildlife as a Trophy

- Shikar was the privilege of the high and mighty
- Shooting used as a tool to oblige superiors
- Many of these erstwhile Hunting Grounds later became our first PAs



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Changing attitudes...

Finally....

- Ban on tiger hunting in most states of India in 1971
- Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972
- Project Tiger 1973
- Project Elephant 1992

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Changing attitudes...

Post Independence:

- Free for all
- Liberal issue of crop protection guns
- Conversion of large patches of grasslands and forest land for Agriculture
- Breakdown of strict hunting regulations in place in most Princely states.

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PRODUCERS

primary-level traders
harvesters

Conflict with wildlife

Subsistence

Income/employment

TRADERS

consolidators
exporter/importer
processors

Income/employment

Scale/process economies

Speculation

CONSUMERS

end users
retailers

Need/image/interest

Concern: health > environment

Income/employment

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Changing attitudes...

The laws have changed...

- But attitudes towards killing of wildlife largely remain the same
- And therein lies the challenge in curbing illegal wildlife crimes & trade

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Evolution of Conservation Laws in India

- The first Indian Forest Act enacted in 1865
- The Madras Wild Elephant Preservation Act enacted in 1873: This was the first wildlife legislation in Modern India
- Govt. of India enacted the Elephant Preservation Act 1879

Evolution of Conservation Laws in India

- The Indian Forest Law Act VII enacted in 1878
- The Indian Forest Act enacted in 1927
- The Wildlife (Protection) Act enacted in 1972

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Evolution of Conservation Laws in India

- The Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 extends to the whole of India except Jammu & Kashmir
- Various species classified in Schedules I to VI

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Evolution of Conservation Laws in India

- Species in Schedule VI are specified plants whose possession, collection, sale etc. is regulated Chapter III-A
- Species in Schedule V are Vermin which can be hunted freely
 - This includes
 - Common crow
 - Fruit bats
 - Mice
 - Rats

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Evolution of Conservation Laws in India

- Species in Schedule I can be hunted only in very special conditions if they are a threat to human life
- Species in Schedule II can be hunted if they are a threat to human life or property
- Trade of Species in Schedule I or Part II of Schedule II invites very stringent punishment

Evolution of Conservation Laws in India

- 3rd March 1973- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is signed
- 1st July 1975: CITES enters into force
- 18th October 1976- India joins the convention
- 1976- TRAFFIC established

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Evolution of Conservation Laws in India

- 1976- CITES bans trade in Asian ivory
- Asian Elephant Specialist Group of IUCN formed in 1976
- Asian Elephant transferred to Schedule I of The Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972
- punishment

Evolution of Conservation Laws in India

- 1986-Trade in Indian ivory banned by Govt. of India
- 1989-CITES brings about a ban on all international trade in Ivory
- 1991-Govt. of India bans the import, export, carving and sale of African Ivory

Evolution of Conservation Laws in India

- Launch of *Project Elephant* in Feb. 1992
- 1992 -Ivory traders plea dismissed by Delhi High Court, making the ban on ivory complete

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Extent of international trade in wildlife and its derivatives

- It is estimated that the annual value of non timber & non fish wildlife trade is about 15 Billion US\$

(Broad 2001)

- Interpol says the trade in illegal wildlife products could be worth some US\$12 billion a year.

- **ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE IS WORLD'S SECOND LARGEST ILLEGITIMATE BUSINESS AFTER NARCOTICS**

Roth & Merz (1997)

- However due to it's nature, very limited information about the scale of this Illegal trade

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The Wildlife Trade Scenario

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Wildlife wealth of India

- India ranks 6th among the 12 mega biodiversity countries of the world.
- 430 species of mammals
- 530 species of reptiles
- 207 species of amphibians
- 1228 species of birds

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Elephant



Legal Status:

WPA – Schedule – I

CITES – Appendix – I

IUCN – Endangered

Parts Traded: Ivory, meat

Used For: Carved Ivory articles, Jewelry,
Hankos (signature stamps used by
Japanese

Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta are major trade
hub

Reaches Europe, Middle east, Far east,
China and Myanmar



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Human Elephant Conflict

This has emerged as a major threat across most elephant habitats. This is sometimes used as a justification for illegal killing of elephants and such products may find their way into trade

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Asian Ivory trade routes



- Japan
- Myanmar
- China
- Thailand
- Hong Kong
- Middle-East

AIR
LAND
SEA

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Tiger



Legal Status:

WPA – Schedule – I

CITES – Appendix – I

IUCN – Endangered

Parts Traded: Virtually whole body

Used For: Skins for Fashion, other body parts for Traditional Chinese Medicine

Delhi is a major trade hub

Traded through porous Indo-Nepal Borders to reach TAR and Mainland China



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Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh

On 8.12.1999 sales tax inspectors inadvertently uncovered and seized

- 3 tiger skins, 50 leopard skins and 5 otter skins.
- The skins were meticulously packaged, numbered and concealed in a consignment of cloth in a truck bound for Siliguri, West Bengal.

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On 12.01.2000, police seized

- 4 tiger skins, 70 leopard skins, 18,000 leopard claws
- 150 kg of leopard and tiger bones
- 132 tiger claws, 2 leopard teeth and one dried leopard penis
- 221 blackbuck skins

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- This was followed by yet another police raid on 15.01.2000 in the nearby village of Eatgaon, which resulted in the seizure of 150 kgs of leopard and tiger bone.

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8th October, 2003

- Customs officers at a temporary checkpoint at Sansan, a small township at Angren County, southwest of Lhasa in the Tibet Autonomous Region found a truck carrying a consignment of 31 tiger skins, 581 leopard skins, 778 Eurasian otter skins and 2 lynx skins, as well as one fake tiger skin.
- Investigators found the Delhi edition of the daily newspaper, *The Times of India*, stuck to the backs of the skins. All three of the arrested traders had spent some time in a town just across the border from Ladakh.

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Seizure on 1st Feb. 2005 by Delhi Police

Raid on the basement of a warehouse in Patel Nagar
The haul consisted of:

- 39 leopard skins (including one snow leopard)
- 2 tiger skins
- 42 otter skins
- 3 kg of tiger claws
- 14 tiger canines,
- 10 tiger jaw bones,
- About 135 kg of porcupine quills,
- 60 kg of tiger and leopard paws,
- 20 small pieces of bone that appear to be tiger and leopard 'floating' clavicle bones.

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Four people were arrested, including the niece and another relative of the notorious wildlife trader Sansar Chand, and two employees at the warehouse.

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- On 2nd September 2005 the Royal Nepal Army seized five tiger skins, 36 leopard skins, 238 otter skins and 113 kilograms of tiger and leopard bones in the Rasuwa district of Nepal, bordering the Tibetan Autonomous Region. The goods were coming from Delhi and supposed to be sent to Tibet.
- On 10th August 2007 One Tiger skin & 2 Leopard skins seized in Nepal. The ten foot long tiger skin, which was soft and supple, was wrapped in sheets of the *Times of India*.

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4 December 2007

- Special Task Force of the Uttar Pradesh Police seized three tiger skins and three tiger skeletons in Allahabad
- Sixteen people were arrested, including wildlife trader *Shabeer Hasan Qureshi* who is an accused in at least four major wildlife cases. In particular, Qureshi is the prime accused in the January 2000 case in Khaga, UP, when four tiger skins, 70 leopard skins and a huge haul of other wildlife products were seized. Three other traders were arrested along with two tiger poachers and ten women couriers of the Baheliya community

STOP PRESS

15th April 2008

- Police recover 22 skins from the baggage of a retired Indian army soldier and a civilian accomplice on Monday in Pratapgarh, Uttar Pradesh
- Includes skins of eight tigers, eight leopards, three snow leopards and three pythons

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'Act now' to save

India's tigers: EU Parliament

- The European Parliament has called for a new strategy to prevent the tiger from becoming extinct.
- The organisation's India delegation is holding a "Tiger Day" at the European Parliament in Brussels.
- Wildlife activists blame poaching and urbanisation for the decline and say the authorities must do more.

2008

16th April



TRAFFIC INDIA

the wildlife trade



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Rhino



Legal Status:

WPA – Schedule – I

CITES – Appendix – I

IUCN – Endangered

Parts Traded: Horn

Used For: Used as traditional medicines, rings, dagger handles, lucky stone, as cutlery to detect poison

Traded through porous Indo-Nepal Borders and Northeastern borders to reach Thailand, Hong Kong, Taiwan via Myanmar, Thailand



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Leopard



Legal Status:

WPA – Schedule – I

CITES – Appendix – I

IUCN – Endangered

Parts Traded: Skins, Bones, other body parts as substitute to tiger parts

Delhi is a major trade hub

Traded through porous Indo-Nepal Borders to reach TAR and Mainland China



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October, 2003

- In October 2003, customs officers at a temporary checkpoint in the Tibet Autonomous Region found, to their horror, a truck carrying a consignment of 31 tiger skins, 581 leopard skins and 778 otter skins.
- These were being transported into the region. The haul, on the route to the Tibetan capital Lhasa, believed to be a major hub for this trade, was clearly coming from India.
- Investigators found the Delhi edition of the daily newspaper, *The Times of India*, stuck to the backs of the skins. All three of the arrested traders had spent some time in a town just across the border from Ladakh.

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The 2004 TRAFFIC-North America report on medicine markets in San Francisco found that:

- Shops continued to sell products made from wild animals.
- In the New York area, 41 per cent of the shops surveyed sold tiger bones and seven per cent sold rhino horn products (also banned).
- The report concluded that the Rhino and Tiger Product Labeling Act, passed in 1998 in the US to ban the trade in these products (and even their labeling), was having a nominal effect.

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6th August 2004

- A painting brush manufacturing unit at Janak Puri, N.Delhi raided
- about 11 kg mongoose hair, over a kg of handle-less brushes tips and over 2000 brushes, filled with the mammal's hair seized

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Mongoose



Legal Status:

WPA – Schedule – IV (all)

CITES – Appendix – III (all)

IUCN – Varied but not endangered!

Parts Traded: Hair

Used for making premium quality Paint brush and Shaving brush



Traded in high volume locally as well as exported throughout the world

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- Ordinarily, a mongoose produces 40 grams of hair from which only about 20 gram can be used. Mostly used in painting brushes, mongoose hair are also used in garments, hand-woven seats etc.
- For one kilo of mongoose hair about 50 mammals have to be killed. In this case, over 1,000 mammals might have been killed.
- In the international market mongoose' fine hair is sold at about Rs 12,000 a kg.
- The mammals are mostly killed during April and May when they come out of cover

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Otters



Legal Status:

WPA – Schedule – II Part II

CITES – Appendix – None

IUCN – Vulnerable (Indian Smooth-Coated Otter, Near Threatened (Rest))

Parts Traded: Skins



Used as trimmings in collars of garments and other fashion accessories

Usually forms part of bigger consignments of tiger and leopard parts

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Tibetan Antelope



Legal Status:

WPA – Schedule – I

CITES – Appendix – I

IUCN – Endangered

Parts Traded: Wool - Shahtoosh

Used for weaving shawls. Major demand for shawls are in Europe, USA, Japan. Also affluent Indians. A shift in markets to East Asian countries is being noticed recently.

Imported to India through porous Indo-Nepal Borders to the state of J&K.

Barter trade in Shahtoosh and Tiger Parts have often been mentioned.



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Reported seizures:

1999-2001: 6 cases- 52 shawls & 244 kg (wool)

- As many as three Chirus are gruesomely slaughtered to stitch together one Shahtoosh shawl.
- Less than 70,000 Chirus exist today
- Since the species is not reported to occur in India, should our concern be any less?



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Musk Deer



Legal Status:

WPA – Schedule – I

CITES – Appendix – I

IUCN – Endangered

Parts Traded: Musk pods

Used for making perfumes, soaps and oriental medicines

Traded through Delhi, Kolkata, Amritsar to Pakistan, Middle east, Hong Kong, Japan, Myanmar



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Bear



Legal Status:

WPA – Schedule – I (Brown Bear), II (Black Bear, Sloth Bear)

CITES – Appendix – I (Black Bear, Sloth Bear) II (Brown Bear)

IUCN – E (Black Bear), Vulnerable (Sloth Bear)

Parts Traded: Gall Bladders, Sloth Bears are used as performing animals in India and Pakistan

Gall bladders, Bile extracts and bile salts are traded through Delhi, Kolkata, Amritsar to Pakistan, Middle east, Hong Kong, Japan, Myanmar



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Medicinal Plants

Podophyllum, Kutki, Sarpgandha, Dioscorea, Jatamansi, Himalayan Yew etc.

Legal Status:

CITES Appendix – II

EXIM – Negative List. Export permitted for value added products only from the cultivated variety

Mostly collected as live plants, roots and leaves for commerce from the wild in North east, Western Himalayas and the Western Ghats

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Live Birds



Falcons: Peregrine, Laggar, Saker

Parakeets: Red Breasted, Roseringed, Alexandrine, Plum headed

Eurasian eagle, Great Pied Hornbill

Munias: Whitethroated, Red, Green, Blackheaded

Common Hill Myna

Around 250 native species are trapped and traded for Pet, Food, Release, Falconry, Zoos, Black Magic, Medicine and Taxidermy

Exported mainly to the Middle East as well as to Europe

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Turtles & Tortoises

Ganges Soft Shell Turtle, Common Soft Shell Turtle, Star Tortoise

Legal status:

WPA – Schedule –I

CITES – Appendix – I (Ganges Soft Shell)
II (Common Soft Shell)

IUCN – E (Common Soft Shell)

Parts Traded: Shell, Carapace, meat
and live

Used for Show pieces, medicines, pets
and food

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Seizures

- Chennai: A total of 1406 live tortoises were seized from the baggage of a Malaysian citizen at the Chennai airport on 12th Dec 2006.
- Chennai: A “kingpin” of tortoise smuggling was arrested “*in connection with a drug smuggling case*” who admitted to have purchased over 1660 Star tortoises and tried to smuggle these to Malaysia through carriers. Both consignments however were seized at the airport.

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The master minds

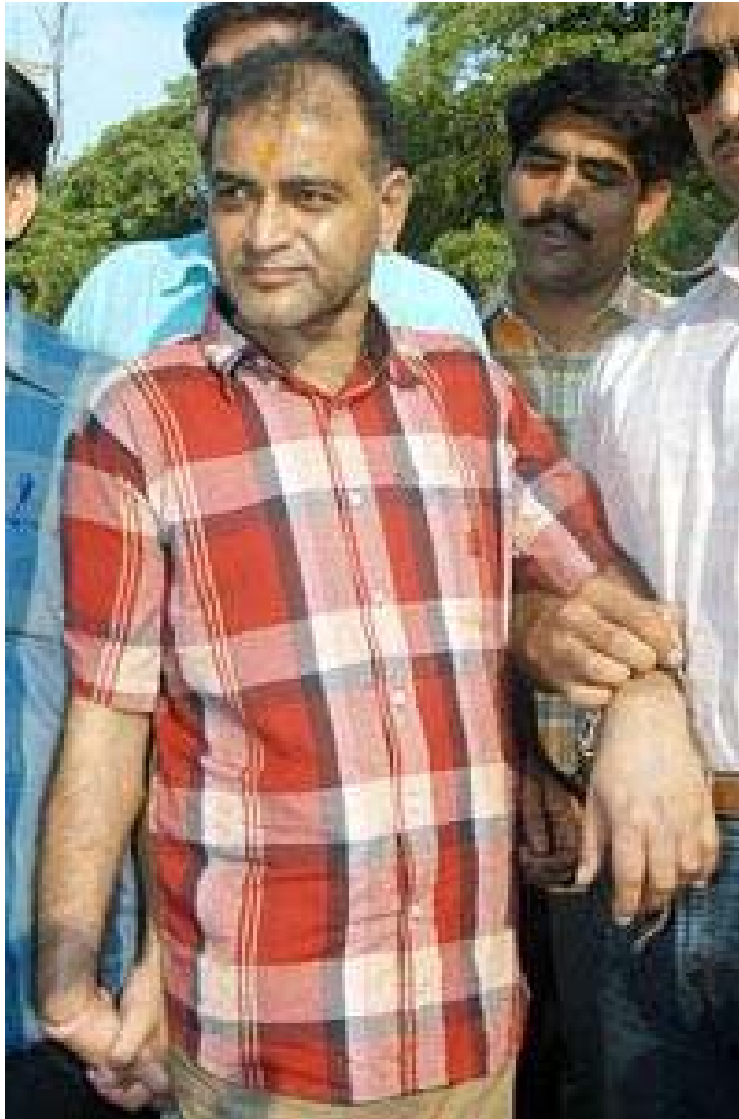
Three persons arrested for wildlife trade in Delhi on 6th April 2005

- A total of 59 trophies of wild animals were recovered.
- These consisted of 45 Leopard skins
- 14 Otter skins.
- These trophies were to be transported to Nepal.

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Sansar Chand



It is alleged that Sansar Chand has supplied over 350 tiger skins, 2350 leopard skins and 3800 otter skins to the buyers of Tibet and Nepal Origin

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Conservation is a war...

- Multiple roles are required to contribute to this war effort
- Most importantly, Informed Public opinion must rise in support of conservation

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For wildlife crimes committed for commercial purposes....

- Usually the strings are pulled by big traders who operate far away from the actual scene of crime
- Transborder Wildlife traders are likely to have links or stakes with other crimes such as illegal arms, illegal liquor, drugs etc.
- Media, by sensationalising value and uses of wildlife derivatives, is also sometimes responsible for driving such crime

Major Penalties for violation of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972

- Imprisonment up to 3 years and fine up to Rs 25,000 for any infringement of Act.
- Offences related to hunting of Sch. I and Part II of Sch. II animals, hunting in National Parks and Sanctuaries and alteration of their boundaries - imprisonment of at least 3 years extendable up to 7 years and fine of at least Rs 10,000.
- Repetition of offence – min 3 yrs imprisonment and fine at least Rs 25,000.
- Provision of forfeiture of properties gained through illegal trade of wildlife.

Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act 2006

- Notified on 4th Sept. 06
- Creation of National Tiger Conservation Authority
- Wildlife Crime Control Bureau
 - Director Wildlife Preservation- Director
 - IGP Addl. Director
 - DIG Police Jt. Director
 - Addl. Comm. (Customs & CA) Jt. Director

- Offence related to Core Area of a Tiger Reserve or Hunting or Boundary alteration in a Tiger Reserve
 - First Conviction: Minimum 3 yrs term which may extend to 7 years and fine not less than 50 thousand which may extend to Rs. 2 lakh
 - Second or subsequent conviction: Not less than 7 yrs. term and fine not less than 5 lakh which may extend to **Rs. 50 lakh.**

- Sec 25 of the Indian Evidence Act 1872 provides that Confession made before a police officer is not to be proved.
- Before the Indian Evidence Act, a Forest Officer is NOT a Police officer.
- Section 50 (9) of the WLPA 1972 provides that any evidence recorded and received by an officer not below the rank of ACF shall be admissible in trial *provided it has been taken in the presence of the accused.*

*Forest Range Officer vs. Abbobacker & other, Cr. Appeal
No. 317 of 1988
Justice K.T.Thomas, Kerala High Court*

-there is no rule of law that no evidence should be relied on unless there is corroboration....

Forest is an area where human activities are scanty except the clandestine adventures of poachers....Hence it would be pedantic to insist on the rule of corroboration by independent evidence in proof of offence relating to forest and wildlife.

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-The admissibility of the confession made to the Forest Range Officer is not open to doubt since the embargo contained in Sec. 25 of the Indian Evidence Act is not applicable to forest officers. Forest officers, though they are invested with some of the police powers are not police officers. Hence they can give evidence before court regarding admissions or confessions made to them by accused persons, whether or not such persons were then in custody.

State of Karnataka vs. K.Krishnan

Judgment Dated 17th August 2000 in Crl. Appeal
No. 668 of 2000

When any vehicle is seized on the allegation that it has been used for committing a forest offence, it shall normally not be returned to the party till the culmination of the proceedings in respect of such offence....

If for any exceptional reasons, a Court is inclined to release the vehicle during such pendancy, furnishing a bank guarantee should be the minimum condition

*Reiterated in Ran Veer Singh v/s State of U.P.,
Crl. Appeal 737 of 2000*

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Some Recent International Trends in Organised Wildlife Crime

- Involvement of Diplomats
- Convergence of Smuggling interests-
Barter of products
- Involvement of Insurgents

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The response

What needs to be done

- Regular study and monitoring of emerging trade issues, trade routes etc.
- Close Coordination amongst all enforcement agencies
- International cooperation, as most key markets lie outside the country's borders
 - *When the buying stops, the killing will...*
- Capacity building
 - Training & Retraining
 - Equipment
- Regular Follow up of cases in court

What is TRAFFIC ?

- The TRAFFIC network is a joint conservation programme of WWF and IUCN-The World Conservation Union.
- TRAFFIC's **goal** is to ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature.
- TRAFFIC's **vision** is of a world in which trade in wild animals and plants will be managed at sustainable levels without damaging the integrity of ecological systems

Our strengths

- Objective, multi-disciplinary and knowledge driven analysis of issues
- Interface with a large number of National and International agencies both within and outside governments.
- Working *with* Governments

How can we contribute?

- By studying and analysing wildlife trade trends and providing a regular feedback
- By supporting Capacity Building for the Forest Department and other Enforcement Agencies
- By interfacing with State and Central Governments, supporting Policy changes, as may be appropriate
- By encouraging cooperation between different countries to curb markets and killing/collection

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- *The roar of the tiger*, a compilation on the Tiger debate at CoP 14 brought out and widely circulated.
- In the pipeline
 - Don't Buy Trouble series of posters

Publications

TRAFFIC
the wildlife trade monitoring network



The roar of the tiger

Led by India and other range states like Nepal, China, Bhutan and Russia, the 14th CoP of CITES was able to garner strong support for conservation of tigers in the wild

The Tiger Debate at CoP 14
Compiled by TRAFFIC-India
June 2007



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TRAFFIC POST

the wildlife trade monitoring network

ISSUE 1
SEPTEMBER, 2007

TRAFFIC INDIA NEWSLETTER ON ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



TRAFFIC INDIA UPDATE

- WWF-India and TRAFFIC organise a press conference to highlight issues related to Tiger conservation
- CITES rejects lifting of the ban on Tiger Trade
- WWF and TRAFFIC launch a Signature Campaign for the Tigers in the wild
- TRAFFIC India up scales its effort to curb illegal wildlife trade
- Tie-up with Disney Adventure
- TRAFFIC and SACIS sign an initiative to curb illegal wildlife trade in South Asia



OUTPOST



TRAFFIC ALERT



- Latest news on the most unique and alarming illegal wildlife trade trends in India



- Fact file on illegal trade of Indian Star Tortoise



IN FOCUS

From the desk

Welcome to the first issue of the TRAFFIC Post - a quarterly newsletter of TRAFFIC India. This newsletter also marks the comeback of TRAFFIC India.

The TRAFFIC Network is a joint conservation programme of WWF, the global conservation organisation and IUCN-The World Conservation Union. TRAFFIC was established in 1976, since when it has developed into a worldwide network with a considerable international reputation for helping to identify and address conservation challenges linked to wildlife trade.

TRAFFIC came to India in 1991, operating as a division of WWF India. It worked closely with the National and the State Governments and various agencies to help study, monitor and influence action to curb illegal wildlife trade. For various reasons, the office had to shut down in 2002. It resumed work once again in December 2006. WWF and TRAFFIC are committed to work together with government agencies, NGOs, and all like-minded individuals to curb illegal wildlife trade that has become a growing threat to our natural treasures.

As a specialist organisation monitoring wildlife trade issues, TRAFFIC India has an important contribution to make in the country.

TRAFFIC Post is a TRAFFIC India's quarterly newsletter conceived to highlight the burning issues related to illegal wildlife trade. It also aims to update its readers on TRAFFIC India's efforts in this cause. You can also look forward to reading about emerging issues on wildlife trade trends through the sections called TRAFFIC Alert and In Focus.

We look forward to your valued inputs on how to make this publication even better. Let's work together to help ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature in India.

Shamir, Conservation,
Ravi Singh
SG& CEO
WWF-India

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TRAFFIC POST

the wildlife trade monitoring network

ISSUE 2
DECEMBER, 2007

TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



TRAFFIC INDIA UPDATE

- "Wildlife Quiz" organized to launch Wildlife Week celebration
- Wildlife Crime Control Bureau takes shape
- TRAFFIC India launches its Consumer Awareness campaign
- Three-hour training programme to curb illegal wildlife trade
- South Asia Wildlife Trade Initiative (SAWTTI) - a new regional collaborative effort
- TRAFFIC invites information for ongoing Leopard trade study



OUTPOST



TRAFFIC ALERT

- Pangolin trade racket based in China
- Latest news on the alarming illegal wildlife trade trends in India



- Rhinos targeted: Kaziranga National Park



IN FOCUS

From Roland Melisch, Global Programme Co-ordinator on "The making of a truly South Asian Programme of TRAFFIC"



TRAFFIC took its first step towards "the making of a truly South Asian Programme" by organising a goal-setting workshop in New Delhi, India on 6-7 December 2007. Representatives from South Asian countries such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and India participated in this meeting.

Roland Melisch, the Global Programme Co-ordinator, TRAFFIC International, who is also leading this initiative, talks to TRAFFIC India about the programme and the illegal wildlife trade scenario.

What, according to you, are the key issues in illegal wildlife trade in India?

India is the world's third-largest exporter of medicinal and aromatic plants. It has a growing consumer market for the world's timber resources and is the world's second-largest shark-catching nation, despite having little provision for safeguarding these Tigers of the sea. The current management schemes are apparently not providing ample incentives to manage these resources sustainably. There also seems to be a lack of adequate federal structures to combat organized wildlife crime in India. It is to be hoped that this will change with the establishment of the National Wildlife Crime Bureau.

What is the purpose of this initiative, "Towards a region: the making of a truly South Asian Regional Programme"? In the past, TRAFFIC has mainly concentrated its efforts in India and on cross-border trade issues between Nepal and India. Whilst India will always remain a centre of focus of our work, it is time to establish a more coherent approach at a regional level, encompassing a bigger proportion of the eight countries comprising South Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. During a recent visit to Pakistan, I have received very strong signals inviting TRAFFIC to operate in that country.

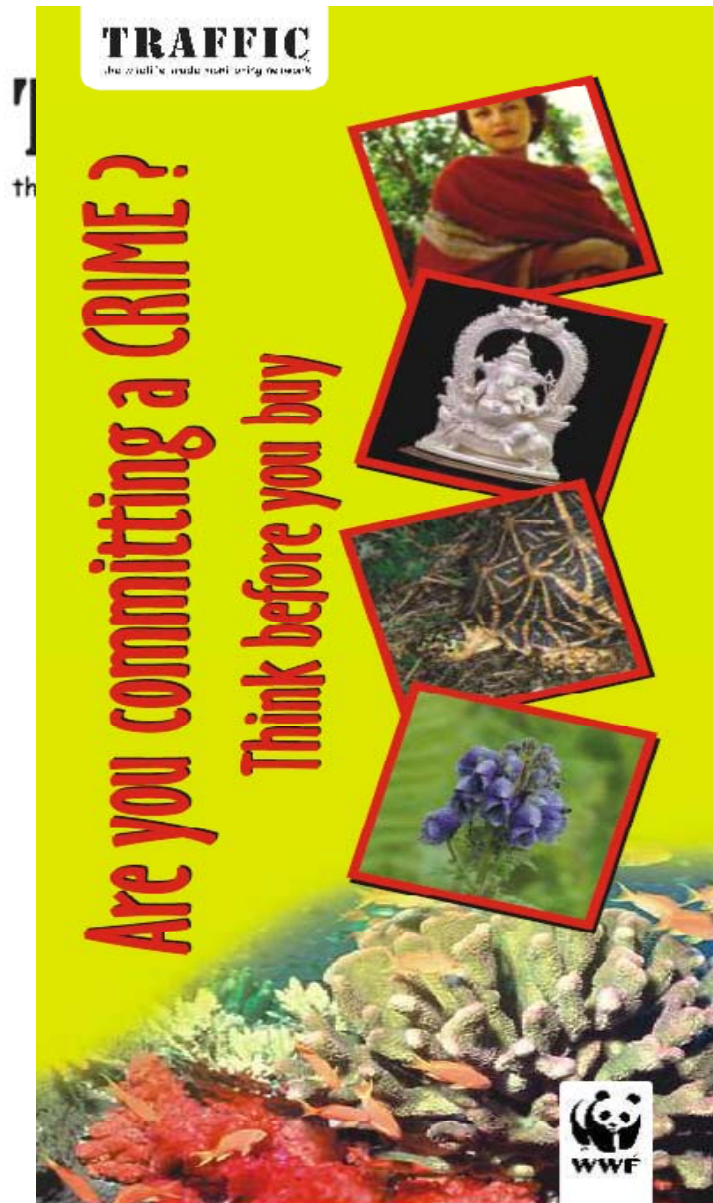
What do you plan to achieve through this? Countries neighbouring each other in South Asia face almost similar challenges and have a lot of problems and opportunities in common. Therefore TRAFFIC firmly believes that improving networking, co-operation and co-ordination among countries in South Asia will help to control wildlife crime. Exchange of experience and knowledge will help to enhance sustainability levels of trade in wildlife that is legal and crack down on the wildlife crime gangs operating across borders.

Continued on page 2

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**TRAFFIC India is ready and willing to assist towards this
Common Cause**

Together Let's make a difference

**Let us join hands NOW,
Or else.....**

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Thank You

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