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New Chinese law aimed at curbing tiger trade

A new law aimed at combating illegal wildlife trade in China went into effect Sept 1, 2006, which according to TRAFFIC, WWF and other environmental groups will enhance China ' s ability to combat the import and export of endangered wildlife species.

The new law is aimed at complimenting an already existing domestic ban in China on the trade in endangered wildlife species including tiger parts and their derivatives. Since the country's 1993 ban, tiger bone, for example, has been removed from the list of ingredients in official Chinese pharmacopoeia, all legal manufacturing of medicines containing tiger bone has been stopped, and all stocks of existing medicines containing tiger bone have been locked away under government seal. Reputable traditional Chinese medicine experts support this ban and use substitute ingredients that meet the medical needs of their patients.

Environmental groups hope that as China's new wildlife law comes into effect, the tiger trade ban will also remain in place.

'Any resumption in legal domestic trade of tiger parts could be the final act that drives the tiger towards extinction,' says Dr Susan Lieberman, Director of WWF's Global Species Programme. 'That is why we call up on the Chinese government to retain and reinforce its important trade ban.'

'If the ban were lifted, it would undo all the excellent work the Chinese government has done over the past 12 years,' Dr Lieberman added.

WWF, together with TRAFFIC, Conservation International, International Fund for Animal Welfare, Save the Tiger Fund and the Wildlife Conservation Society, have sent an open letter to China's Premier Wen Jiabao to ensure that the ban remains in place.

For the full story see: http://www.panda.org/news_facts/newsroom/index.cfm?uNewsID=79660

Traditional Chinese medicine experts speak against captive breeding of tigers

Traditional Chinese medicine experts from China's top universities, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and traditional medicine associations spoke out against the captive breeding of tigers as a means of conservation.

Supported by TRAFFIC, over 40 experts gathered at the East China Normal University in Shanghai to discuss the conservation and sustainable use of medicinal wildlife resources, with particular focus on the possible re-opening of the domestic tiger trade in China.

The Chinese government is now considering legalizing limited trade in products from its tiger farms for use in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). Such action would revoke a ban that has been in place since 1993. Conservationists believe that such a move could cause a catastrophic increase in poaching of wild tigers.

'Captive breeding centers such as the Hengdao River Breeding Center*, established in 1986, were set up for commercial purposes,' said Dr Yang Qisen of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, 'However, when the Chinese government banned trade of tigers in 1993, the center claimed their aim was to conserve wild tigers. I believe conserving wild animals by captive breeding is not possible. Many areas of China no longer have suitable habitat for tigers, such as for the South China tiger.'

Another participant, Dr Ma Qiang of the Chinese Academy of Forestry stated that if China reopened its trade in tiger products, 'it would not be possible to distinguish whether tiger products were from captive sources or from the wild. This could stimulate more poaching of wild tigers, and result in devastating consequences for the world's remaining wild tiger population.'

Prof. Zhou Caiquan of West China Normal University believes that the use of tiger bone is not necessary, 'TCM practitioners have found that bones from sailong, a kind of mole found in the Tibetan Plateau, is more effective than tiger bones. This effective substitute could make the TCM tiger trade obsolete.'

At the meeting, TCM experts and wildlife scientists made similar cases against the captive breeding of musk deer as well as freshwater turtles, two other endangered species widely used in TCM.

'An open dialogue and active participation of Chinese medicine practitioners in conservation helps dispel the myth that TCM is contradictory to conservation,' said Prof Xu Hongfa, Director of TRAFFIC East Asia's China program, 'With this kind of leadership, TCM can play a role in promoting a healthy ecosystem, and not contribute to species extinction and illegal wildlife trade.'



Amur tiger. © WWF-Canon / Vladimir FILONOV

* The Hengdao River breeding center, located in Heilongjiang province in northeast China, is one of China's two largest tiger captive breeding centers. Its captive population is estimated at over 1000.

* TRAFFIC East Asia, China's CITES Scientific Authority, and experts throughout China's traditional medicine community, have formed the Traditional Medicines Advisory group (TMAG). The group provides a forum to discuss key issues with regard to conservation and

sustainability. The aim is to give all members of China's traditional medicine community the information they need to achieve the common goal of sustainable use. The recent workshop marks the 7th meeting of TMAG.

WWF, TRAFFIC lay foundation for the conservation of tigers, leopards in China

Home to the Amur, Bengal, Indo-Chinese and the China tiger, China has a major role to play in the survival of the world's tigers and leopards. In addition to being home to small populations of tigers (approximately 40 individuals) and leopards (snow leopards and common leopards), China is also the world's major market and consumer of products made from tigers and leopards.

To address illegal wildlife trade and promote further conservation measures for tigers and other Asian big cats, over 20 Chinese government experts and decision-makers from China's State Forestry Administration, CITES Management Authority, Chinese Wildlife Conservation Association, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and international conservation experts recently came together in Beijing to lay the foundation for a new and comprehensive WWF/TRAFFIC strategy in China to benefit the conservation of tigers and leopards both within China's borders and globally. Participants agreed that urgent measures are needed in China to protect wild tigers and leopards in China and beyond.

As a result of the workshop, major conservation issues of Asian big cats were identified and the foundation was laid for establishing a comprehensive network on Asian big cat conservation in China—both for fieldwork and on wildlife trade issues. Geographically, the major areas of focus for habitat work are the Amur-Heilong region in northeast China, and the Tibetan Plateau region. This marks WWF/TRAFFIC's first comprehensive conservation

What is CITES?

CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international agreement between governments. Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. 169 countries are members of CITES, with China joining in 1981.

strategy for work in China on tigers, snow leopards and common leopards.

Currently TRAFFIC and WWF's Asian big cat work includes protecting the Amur tiger habitat in northeast China, and curbing illegal wildlife trade of Asian big cat parts through market research and working with enforcers and other government decision-makers.

'Tigers and leopards are under increasing threat,' said Professor Xu Hongfa, TRAFFIC East Asia China program director, 'This gathering of key government decision-makers and experts to develop a country-wide strategy for China gives new hope for the survival of tigers and leopards not only in China but other tiger range countries.'

In the last part of the twentieth century, China went from one of the range countries with the largest wild tiger population (approximately 4,000 in the 1950s) to the range state with the smallest. 'WWF International looks forward to working cooperatively with all our partners (government, NGOs, scientists) in China and around the world to meet the serious conservation challenges facing tigers today,' said Dr Susan Lieberman, Director of WWF International's Global Species Programme, 'How we deal with not only the habitat issues, but the trade demand and enforcement issues in China, will determine the future of tigers in the wild across Asia.'

Strengthening law enforcement capacity to combat the illegal trade of Asian big cats in southwest China

A TRAFFIC workshop aimed at addressing the illegal trade of Asian big cats through promoting the enforcement of CITES regulations in southwest China took place on November 28-29, 2006, in Dujiangyan, Sichuan province.

Over 30 participants attended the workshop, including front-line policemen, market monitoring officers, customs enforcers, and officers from local forestry bureaus. Staff from the following organizations took part – the China National CITES Management Authority, the Anti-Smuggling Bureau of China Customs, Conservation International, the Forestry Public Security Bureau of the SFA and the State Administration for Industry & Commerce from Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu, and Qinghai provinces and the Tibetan Autonomous Region.

‘Participants said they were unaware of the crisis facing many endangered species,’ said Yang Qin, Program Coordinator for the TRAFFIC East Asia China Program, ‘The workshop helped them understand how their work is key to stopping illegal wildlife trade.’

Mr. Meng Xianlin, Director of CNMA, gave a general introduction of CITES and how China implements this international treaty. His presentation emphasized illegal trade in tiger and leopard skins, as well as ivory. TRAFFIC introduced the results of a recent survey on tiger and leopard bone products of 27 pharmacies and wholesale markets throughout China.

‘Before the workshop, I had little knowledge on species identification and relevant national laws, as well as little support from other organizations to help us effectively implement monitoring methods,’ said one participant from the State Administration for Industry & Commerce, ‘The workshop provided

some easy and practical training, and the chance for better cooperation with other stakeholders in the future.’



Workshop participants learn to identify leopard skins. © TRAFFIC East Asia - China

Building wildlife law enforcement capacity in Yunnan province

On September 11-12, 2006, TRAFFIC, the China CITES Management Authority Kunming Office (Yunnan province) and the Kunming Customs Bureau jointly organized the ‘CITES enforcement workshop for Kunming customs officers.’

James Compton and Pat Cheng of TRAFFIC Southeast Asia gave a presentation to introduce CITES, permit management, identification, and the status of wildlife trade in Southeast Asia. Prof. Xu Hongfa of TRAFFIC East Asia China Programme presented on CITES Appendix I & II and the status of endangered species in China. The director of the China CITES Management Authority Kunming office gave presentations on CITES enforcement in China and import and export regulations on wildlife trade. Finally, a species identification course on mammals, birds, plants and amphibians was given, along with a field visit to the Kunming Zoological Institute Museum.

TRAFFIC participates in GFTN China annual meeting and helps produce documentary on the timber trade

The Global Forest & Trade Network (GFTN) China, WWF's initiative to eliminate illegal logging and improve the management of valuable and threatened forests, held their annual meeting in Shanghai on November 6-9, 2006.

At the meeting, WWF announced the recent publication of *Keep it Legal*, a new WWF manual aimed at helping buyers of timber forest products to avoid purchasing wood and wood products made from illegally logged timber. The manual will be translated into Chinese in 2007. WWF also introduced two new CFTN (China Forest and Trade Network) members.

Liu Xueyan of TRAFFIC gave an introduction to TRAFFIC's work to promote legal standards that GFTN members must adhere to.



TRAFFIC helped produce a BBC report on the timber trade, which aired in 140 countries. ©Liu Xueyan

Before the meeting, TRAFFIC helped produce video footage in the Shanghai area on GFTN as part of BBC's *Earth Report*. The video includes an interview with the Anxin Flooring Co. Ltd., a key GFTN member, as well as a visit to SCA, an international consumer goods and paper company. This was followed up with documenting the 'timber trail' – tracing timber from logs to saw-wood to

In Brief

TRAFFIC-WWF/IUCN Wildlife Trade Meeting -

TRAFFIC's Annual conference was held in Beijing September 4-7, 2006. In addition to strengthening the delivery of the TRAFFIC Programme worldwide, the challenges and opportunities at a global scale of China's wildlife trade was highlighted at the conference. Over 50 members of the global TRAFFIC network, along with participants from WWF, IUCN and Beijing-based NGOs, took part.

On November 7-8, 2006, Shelley Clarke, fisheries consultant for TRAFFIC East Asia, took part in the "International Shark Dialogue," a meeting in Beijing on the shark fin trade, co-sponsored by WildAid and the China Fisheries Administration. Other members of the panel included Sarah Fowler (IUCN) and John Stevens (CSIRO, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation).

A TRAFFIC photo-essay – *Traveling Smart* –

What to watch out for when buying wildlife souvenirs - to raise awareness amongst tourists against consuming illegal wildlife products appeared in the September 2006 issue of Air China's in-flight magazine, *Wings of China*. The full photo-essay can be viewed at (bottom of left-hand column):

<http://www.wwfchina.org/english/loca.php?loca=3>



boards – at one of China's largest ports for transporting timber, Nan Pu Port in Zhejiang Province. Finally, TRAFFIC and WWF called on B&Q in Shanghai, where TRAFFIC conducted a survey of B&Q customers to learn more about consumer demand in China for FSC products.

The video *Timber Futures*, an episode of BBC's *Earth Report*, aired December 2-4, 2006, in over 140 countries, reaching nearly 260 million homes worldwide and around one million hotel bedrooms in 200 countries. To view the trailer, see: <http://www.forestandtradeasia.org>

New Publications



A joint Conservation International, TRAFFIC, WWF, IFAW and CITES poster and calendar aimed at raising awareness on tiger conservation amongst Tibetan communities in Qinghai, Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu and Tibet was published in December 2006. 30,000 copies of the poster will be distributed in these regions.

Upcoming reports

A TRAFFIC report on the development of China's *Taxus* industry (Chinese with English summaries) is scheduled for publication in Feb 2007.

Taming the Tiger Trade: China's Markets for Wild and Captive Tiger Products Since the 1993 Domestic Trade Ban (English with Chinese summaries) is scheduled for publication in March-April 2007

Wildlife trade trends in China

85 Indian python skins seized by Chinese customs officials

On October 10, Guangdong Huangpu customs reportedly seized at least 10,000 snake skins on board a cargo ship. Among these skins, 85 Indian python (*Python molurus*) skins were found. Indian python is listed in CITES Appendix I and as a National First-class Protected Wildlife in China. This is China's largest ever seizure of snake skins. (Note: A TRAFFIC expert later identified the seizure, based on the photo below, as *P. reticulates*, a CITES Appendix II listed species (not *Python molurus*).

(Source:

http://news.sina.com.cn/c/l/p/2006-10-10/064911194839_shtm)



Photo ©Liao Keqiang

53 pangolins seized at Guangxi-Guangdong province border

On November 19, 2006, local policemen seized 53 pangolins from a car when it crossed the border from Guangxi province into Guangdong province. Policemen discovered 53 pangolins packed in a bag in the trunk of the car, among which 14 were dead. The surviving pangolins have been sent to the Guangxi Endangered Wild Animals Aid Center. The smugglers escaped. Forestry experts told reporters that the car's exhaust fumes caused the death of the 14 pangolins. The original source of the pangolins is unknown. Source: Xinhua Net, <http://www.cwca.org.cn/Article/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=2242>

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