

## Synopses

**1. Global CITES operation nets over 4500 endangered species in one day** – 90 Customs agencies worldwide targeted CITES contraband on 15 January, resulting in seizure of 4,630 live specimens as well as large volumes of illegal “parts and derivatives.”

**2. Forest conservation now turning deadly** – Two Ugandan forestry officers hacked to death by illegal tree cutters. “As we mourn our fallen colleagues, we also celebrate their extraordinary commitment to duty and their contribution the forestry sector. We hope their spilt blood invokes a quick solution that prevents further murder of NFA staff.”

**3. Shahtoosh shawls worth crores seized; cases registered** – India’s Wildlife Crime Control Bureau and CBI cooperated to seize 66 shahtoosh shawls that were mixed with legal pashmina shawls and being prepared for export to Qatar and Muscat.

**4. Five leopard skins seized; two arrested** -- India’s WCCB keeps up the pressure, this time working on information that led to the seizure of five leopard skins, with two suspects carted off to the hoosegow.

**5. Zimbabwe: Parks Operations Hindered** – Zimbabwe’s parks and wildlife director quoted as saying poaching, especially of rhinoceroses, has intensified while his agency is hampered by poor vehicles and inadequate fuel supplies.

**6. What does environmental crime have in common with organized crime?** – Brief essay from UNODC links environmental crime (including wildlife) to serious social, development and economic consequences “particularly in least developed countries and are a threat to basic human rights.”

**7. Rising ivory demand threatens Asia elephants –study** -- Rising prices and strong demand for illegal ivory threaten the survival of Indochina's remaining elephants, according to a study by TRAFFIC. In the report, the group said they had surveyed 669 shops in Vietnam and found 11 percent selling nearly 2,500 ivory items.

**8. Thailand seizes 270 pangolins** – Article reports consignment valued at U.S. \$60,000 (i.e. U.S. \$222 per animal!) en route to Chinese market. One arrested and charged with smuggling an endangered species (maximum 10 year prisons sentence in Thailand).

**9. 11-member task force to curb lion poaching** – India creates special units to target Asian lion and tiger poaching.

**10. Chinese national arrested with ivory at JKIA** – Kenya Wildlife Service arrests another Chinese national carrying contraband ivory through Nairobi’s Jomo Kenyatta International Airport.

**11. Game meat sale lands woman in court** – Kenya Wildlife Service arrests woman accused of mixing 74 kg. of contraband bush meat with inspected legal meat at Nairobi market.

**12. Angola: Government to Protect Threatened Species** – Angola’s environment minister promises new legislation to suppress illegal trade in wildlife and forest resources.

**13. Slaughtered tigers, panther seized in Thailand** – Thai authorities seize two butchered tigers and one black panther in a road check. One person arrested.

**14. Poachers have killed more than 150 vicunas** — one of two wild South American camelids — near the highland community of Huancabamba, in Peru’s southern department of Apurímac, said community leader.

**15. Poachers Pose a Threat to Survival of the Giant Sable** – Angola’s national symbol reduced to “one herd of 10 to 15 animals.”

**16. Tiger Skin and Skeleton Seized near Corbett Tiger Reserve** – Indian NGO assists Forest Department in seizure that recovers skin, skeleton and traps. Two arrested. Article reports 28 tigers known poached in India during 2008.

**17. Record Wildlife Contraband Seized in Vietnam** – Hanoi authorities seize two tons of illegally-taken wildlife products. Three persons arrested.

**18. POLICE CONFISCATED 98 PROTECTED BIRDS** – Malta Police environmental unit seize 98 protected birds (including many raptors) and charge one person with illegal trade.

**19. 3000 tortoise seized in Bihar** – Indian police intercept a large consignment of contraband tortoises being shipped overland.

**20. Illegal Tortoise Eggs, Meat Seized In Atlanta** – U.S. authorities seize protected tortoise meat and eggs at airport.

**21. "Noah's Ark" found off Peru** – Chilean Navy intercepts unlighted boat smuggling contraband wildlife from Peru

**22. Kashmir Inc seeks end to ban on Shahtoosh** – Kashmir’s Chamber of Commerce and Industry moves to lift prohibition of trade in shahtoosh shawls, made from the wool of CITES Appendix I Tibetan antelopes.

**23. Perhilitan Solves 6,587 Wildlife Smuggling Cases** – Malaysia’s Wildlife and National Parks Department strengthens its Wildlife Crime Unit to improve intelligence gathering and anti-smuggling capacity.

**24. German National Arrested for Smuggling Coral from the Philippines** -- US authorities arraign German national accused in a nine-count indictment of illegally

importing coral.

**25. Banned tiger parts cost Richmond company \$45,000 fine** -- Wing Quon Enterprises Ltd. was also ordered to forfeit medicines and products seized by Environment Canada investigators following a lengthy probe into the company's activities. Ground tiger bone was used as an ingredient in some of the medicines.

**26. SA 'losing abalone war'** – Article reports 3,000 tons of abalone poached last year in South Africa – a three-fold increase over 2007. CITES permits not endorsed at point-of-export cited as contributing factor.

**27. Myanmar Bans Crocodile Export** – Article also reports new initiative to target tiger trafficking in Myanmar, coordinated with Wildlife Conservation Society.

**28. TWO JUNEAU GUIDES SENTENCED IN FEDERAL COURT FOR WILDLIFE CRIMES** – Conspiracy conviction results in home confinement, probation and fines. They also had to forfeit their custom rifles and are banned from guiding and hunting during the probation period.

**29. Chile seizes five blue-fronted Amazon parrots from a bus at the Los Libertadores (Argentina-Chile) border crossing.** – Article, in Spanish, reports Chilean Customs seizure and prices paid for the birds in both Argentina and Chile.

**30. 800 Animals seized in Lima** – Peruvian authorities seize boas, iguanas, parrots, turtles and lizards.

**31. Inside the world of 'Wildlife CSI'** – Lengthy, yet very interesting article about the UK's wildlife forensics capabilities, including a nice quote from our own Brian Stuart!

## Articles

### 1. Global CITES operation nets over 4500 endangered species in one day

Brussels, 2 February 2009

The summary result of an intensive global one day CITES operation carried out by 90 Customs administrations across the globe on 15 January 2009 reveal seizures totalling 4,630 endangered live species as well as products and derivatives. These seizures included as many as 80 kinds of species, including ivory tusks, musk, tiger derivatives, caviar, rhinoceros horns, lynx, snow lotus, and lion skins with many of the species regarded as critically endangered and at the edge of extinction!

Approximately 10,000 Customs officers together with the World Customs Organization's (WCO) 11 Regional Intelligence Liaison Offices (RILO) participated in this exercise at the request of the WCO Secretariat in the lead up to International Customs Day on 26 January 2009 which was

dedicated to the theme: “Customs and the environment: protecting our natural heritage”.

The operation was coordinated by the WCO Secretariat and targeted the trafficking of endangered species protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES Convention). Customs officers supported by their national counterparts from CITES management authorities, reinforced controls at selected seaports, airports, and land boundaries. All participating Customs administrations were connected to CENCOMM, the WCO secure real-time communication system to share information and report seizures.

Among the 90 seizures reported, Australian Customs stopped 26 attempts to smuggle endangered species, Customs in Belgium seized more than 10 cases, raids by South African Customs led to the seizure at a butchery of 560 kg of abalone and 12 sharks fins, and in Spain, in one single case, Customs seized 80 pieces of up to 14 kinds of wildlife.

Almost all these endangered species were moved, or were ready to be moved, across the border without valid CITES documents, and at least 80% of them were stopped at airports. This indicates a high degree of non-compliance with CITES and national legislation.

This operation was only one of many actions taken by the international Customs community to fight this illegal trade. Customs will conduct more operations targeting other environmentally sensitive goods during 2009 in an effort to combat environmental crime.

<http://www.wcoomd.org/press/?v=1&lid=1&cid=6&id=174>

UNODC on Environmental Crime  
30 January 2009

## **2. Forest conservation now turning deadly**

Thursday, 5th February, 2009

By Moses Watasa

January 14 started like a normal working day for the National Forestry Authority (NFA) officers, Alfred Ezati, a forest supervisor and Emmanuel Asiiimwe, a patrolman at the Masaka field office. This, until they got reports that the shrill sound of the dreaded chain-saw had been detected in Jubia forest reserve along the shores of Lake Victoria and that illegal operators were felling trees. By 10:00am, the duo was riding to the forest to verify the reports.

The superstitious would probably say destiny was beckoning them. The trip turned tragic and was their last to the forest. The diabolical hacking-to-death of Alfred Ezati and Emmanuel Asiiimwe by illegal timber loggers has left us sobbing, speechless and soul-searching.

As the news filtered through, an environment reporter inquired: “How did

this situation get this bad? Won't other NFA officers be murdered?" "NFA is operating in a fluid, complex and often dangerous conditions," I told him.

NFA manages 506 forest reserves, belonging to the government and thus Ugandans. For sustainable management, the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act, 2003 spells out prohibited activities in forest reserves, including unauthorised extraction of timber.

Since forest reserves are public forests, NFA is an overseer, conserving them for Uganda and for posterity. So if they were not cold-blooded hoodlums, the murderers of Alfred Ezati and Emmanuel Asiimwe would realise they killed their 'custodian' and transgressed against government because these were public officers on duty.

The danger lurking over NFA's staff lies in how a growing population, fused with raw business interests and local politics clashing with the quest for conservation.

This, coupled with depletion of trees on private land is heightening sinister timber-extraction on protected areas and forest reserves. The demand for wood out-strips supply by about 18 %, therefore, NFA faces a monstrous task to keep illegal loggers at bay.

Today, over 300,000 hostile encroachers occupy forest reserves. Emboldened by local politicians, encroachers have declared no-go areas for NFA in parts of south-Busoga reserves.

In Bugoma reserves, Hoima district, a sense of security for staff returned after the deployment of the Uganda People's Defence Forces to back-up NFA.

To address this situation, the Government should encourage Ugandans to plant trees. Broadening subsidies to the private sector for establishment of commercial timber plantations could also be considered. A component on consistently addressing encroachment in an orderly way is also necessary.

In the short-run, the Government should beef-up security for NFA staff. This could be through creating an 'environment force' appended to NFA or as proposed by board chairman, Baguma Isoke, by training and arming staff in dangerous environs.

As we mourn our fallen colleagues, we also celebrate their extraordinary commitment to duty and their contribution the forestry sector. We hope their spilt blood invokes a quick solution that prevents further murder of NFA staff.

The writer is the public relations manager of the National Forestry Authority

<http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/459/670472>

### **3. Shahtoosh shawls worth crores seized; cases registered**

Tue, 10 Feb 2009

New Delhi, Feb 10 : CBI and the newly set-up Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) have seized two major consignments of banned Shahtoosh shawls worth crores of rupees, which were to be exported to the Gulf countries, at the Indira Gandhi International airport here.

Two separate cases under various sections of Indian Penal Code and Wildlife Crime Prevention act have been registered against Bhat Shawl's of Kashmir and Jaipur-based Indian Art Gallery in this connection recently for allegedly mixing Shahtoosh shawls with pashmina shawls for export, official sources said.

Two major consignments comprising 66 Shahtoosh shawls, costing between Rs two to three crores, meant for export to Qatar and Muscat, were seized by the WCCB officials with the help of CBI at the airport recently, they said.

The case came to light when a WCCB official noticed a suspicious looking pashmina consignment meant for export to Qatar at the customs in November last year.

"The official found that some shawls were having 'guard hairs'. These are thick pointed fibres of Tibetan Antelope, from which Shahtoosh is extracted, which can be identified by an experienced person only. The parcel was of 455 shawls from a Srinagar-based trader, meant for export to Gulf," a CBI official said.

<http://www.samaylive.com/news/shahtoosh-shawls-worth-crores-seized-cases-registered/607771.html>

### **4. Five leopard skins seized; two arrested**

Published: February 12,2009

New Delhi

A joint team of Wildlife Crime Control Bureau and Delhi police has seized five leopard skins and arrested two persons in this connection from the national capital.

Acting on a tip-off that two persons were coming to Delhi from Himachal Pradesh to deliver leopard skins, a joint team comprising officials of special investigation team of crime branch and WCCB was constituted to nab the accused, WCCB Director Ramesh Pandey told media.

"Moinuddin, a resident of Sirmor in Himachal Pradesh and Ajay Sharma of Yamuna Nagar in Haryana were intercepted at Nangli Puna Village near Karnal and leopard skins were seized from their possession yesterday evening," Pandey said. An FIR has been registered against the accused

under the Wildlife Section Act.

"The accused were today sent to judicial custody," he said, adding that investigations are on to identify the prospective buyer of the skins.

<http://www.indopia.in/India-usa-uk-news/latest-news/500881/National/1/20/1>

Published by the government of Zimbabwe

## **5. Zimbabwe: Parks Operations Hindered**

10 February 2009

Harare — THE operations of the National Parks and Wildlife Management Authority hang in the balance due to erratic fuel supplies and manpower shortage, an official said on Sunday.

Director General Dr Morris Mutsambiwa said the rate of poaching called for more resources.

"Poaching incidents especially of the rhino are on the increase," he said.

"Shortages of fuel have been making it difficult to carry out operations in most of the affected areas."

Dr Mutsambiwa said poaching had become rampant in the Southeast Lowveld.

"The poachers are locals who have knowledge of the terrain and animal hideouts which had made it difficult for us to apprehend them," he said.

The Parks fleet, he said, was no longer suitable for day to day operations.

"Some of our vehicles are no longer fit for our operations especially in the Eastern Highlands," he said.

Dr Mutsambiwa said foreigners were mostly involved in poaching activities in the past, but recent incidents revealed increased local participation.

He said the scourge had affected most National Parks in the country.

"Hwange National Park, the Chizarira area of the Zambezi Valley are some of the most affected," he said.

Dr Mutsambiwa said the rhino population in the Save Conservancy was under serious threat.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200902100025.html>

## **6. What does environmental crime have in common with organized crime?**

30 January 2009 - Environmental crime is often transnational in nature and involves organized crime activities-such as illicit trafficking in natural resources, crime of illegal

trade in wildlife, illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing and illegal exploitation and trafficking in minerals and precious stones, are some of these.

It is widely recognized that environmental crime is a rising challenge for developed and developing countries. The impact of illegal activities broadly covered by terms "environmental crime" is multiple, and goes well beyond the obvious effects on the environment and biodiversity. Crimes against the environment have serious social, development and economic consequences, particularly in least developed countries, and are a threat to basic human rights.

The transnational nature of environmental crimes, the established involvement of organized criminal groups, as well as the failings of government structures which often sustain these forms of criminality, make them highly relevant to UNODC's area of work. Forest products, including timber, wildlife and other forest biological resources, and hazardous waste are the object of illicit international trafficking, often perpetrated by organized criminal groups that operate across borders and might be engaged in other illicit trafficking, often relying on failures in the criminal justice system .

In 2007, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice adopted its resolution 16/1, "International cooperation in preventing and combating illicit international trafficking in forest products, including timber, wildlife and other forest biological resources". This resolution strongly encourages Member States to cooperate at bilateral, regional and international levels to prevent, combat and eradicate these forms of illicit trafficking by applying the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

UNODC Field Offices have recently begun developing several projects concerning environmental crime in Moscow, Bangkok, Jakarta and Bogotá. These projects have been set up in response to recipient needs and have secured funding in a relatively short time, demonstrating the relevance of UNODC skills in the fight against the trafficking of natural resources.

In dealing with environmental crime, UNODC will continue to adopt a comprehensive and multidisciplinary response and will continue to develop profound expertise and strengthen its existing mandate.

<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/what-does-environmental-crime-have-in-common-with-organised-crime.html>

## **7. Rising ivory demand threatens Asia elephants -study**

Mon Feb 16, 2009 2:15am EST

SINGAPORE, Feb 16 (Reuters) - Rising prices and strong demand for illegal ivory threaten the survival of Indochina's remaining elephants, according to a study by TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network.

In the report, released on Monday, the group said they had surveyed 669 shops in Vietnam and found 11 percent selling nearly 2,500 ivory items.

Much of the raw ivory was said to have originated from neighbouring Laos, with the remainder from Vietnam and Cambodia. No raw African ivory was found.

"This is a worrying trend that indicates even more pressure is being put on already fragile Asian elephant populations," Azrina Abdullah, director of TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, said in a statement.

According to figures from the International Union for Conservation of Nature, there are at most 1,000 elephants in Laos and about 150 in Vietnam.

An earlier TRAFFIC report found evidence of widespread smuggling of live Asian elephants and their ivory from Myanmar.

The latest TRAFFIC study found that Vietnamese illegal ivory prices could be the highest in the world, with reports of tusks selling for up to US\$1,500 per kilogram and small, cut pieces selling for up to \$1,863 a kg.

"Continued demand for illegal ivory is driving the prices so high," Abdullah said.

The report said the main buyers were from China (including Hong Kong and Taiwan), Thailand, local Vietnamese, American-Vietnamese and Europeans.

"Trade in ivory was outlawed in Vietnam in 1992, but a major loophole in the legislation exists because shops can still sell ivory in stock dating from the prohibition," said TRAFFIC in the statement.

"This allows some shop owners to restock illegally with recently made carved ivory," it said.

The report said there were fewer ivory items seen in shops in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi in 2008 than in 2001 during a similar survey. But it said worked ivory was increasingly being sold directly to buyers through middlemen or on the Internet, bypassing retail outlets.

It said Vietnam acceded to the U.N. convention that governs trade in endangered species and called on the government to close any loopholes that allowed the illegal ivory trade to flourish. (Reporting by David Fogarty; Editing by Sanjeev Miglani)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSSP427805>

Jan 30, 2009

## **8. Thailand seizes 270 pangolins**

BANGKOK - THAI customs on Friday seized 270 pangolins and arrested a man who was attempting to smuggle the endangered animals out of the country, an official said.

Customs officers intercepted a truck headed towards Bangkok in central Prachuab Khirikhan province on Thursday morning and found the pangolins, or scaly anteaters, hidden in plastic baskets, senior customs official Rakop Srisupa-at told AFP.

The mammals are usually exported via neighbouring Laos to China, where they are eaten as an expensive delicacy.

Srisupa-at estimated the pangolins were worth 1.4 million baht (S\$60,000).

'The driver claimed he had been paid 5,000 baht to drive the truck to Bangkok where another man would call him on his mobile phone to fetch the pangolins,' he said.

The Thai driver was arrested and charged with possessing and smuggling endangered wildlife, which carries a maximum 10-year prison sentence.

Trade in Asian pangolins has been illegal since 2000. While their meat fetches high prices in China, the scales are believed to cure a wide range of ailments. -- AFP

[http://www.straitstimes.com/Breaking%2BNews/SE%2BAsia/Story/STIStory\\_332224.html](http://www.straitstimes.com/Breaking%2BNews/SE%2BAsia/Story/STIStory_332224.html)

### **9. 11-member task force to curb lion poaching**

29 Jan 2009, 0226 hrs IST, Himanshu Kaushik, TNN

Ahmedabad : Anxious about the poaching going on in and around Gir sanctuary, state forest department has decided to form a task force to tackle the illegal activity.

In March and April 2007, eight lions were poached in Babariya range in Una taluka, Bhavnagar district. Six lions were poached on March 3 and March 29, while two carcasses were recovered from Bhanderiya village near Jesar in the same district. Five more lions were killed after a farmer passed electric current to save his standing crop.

Officials said the Greater Gir Protection Task Force' would be a 11-member team headed by deputy conservator of forests, (DCF). The first DCF to head the team would be GA Mistry. It would consist of four range forest officers and six foresters.

A similar task force is being formed for Jim Corbett National Park in Uttaranchal. However, the rapid action team on the prowl for tiger poachers will have rangers, ex-army jawans and forest volunteers.

Gujarat team would also keep a check on animals that stray into human settlements on the park's edges. It would also tackle the jungle mafia smuggling forest produce.

The task force is similar to one in a Zambian national park where poaching had reached alarming proportions five years ago. With this force in place, hopes have risen that poaching incidents will become rare.

The force will be formed and start taking action soon. Officials said it would have power to act as per wildlife protection Act, Indian penal code and criminal procedure code.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Ahmedabad/11-member-task-force-to-curb-lion-poaching/articleshow/4044128.cms>

## **10. Chinese national arrested with ivory at JKIA**

Written By: Claire Wanja/KNA , Posted: Sat, Feb 07, 2009

Caption: KWS in collaboration with other law enforcement agencies have stepped up efforts to curb illegal trade in wildlife products.

A Chinese national was Saturday morning seized with four bangles of ivory at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi.

Mr Zhang Zhong, 37, who was on transit from Guinea to Uganda's Entebbe Airport, was arrested at 8am by Customs and Kenya Wildlife Service officials.

The suspect is being held at the JKIA police station and is expected to be charged with possession of wildlife trophy without a permit at Makadara Law Court on Monday morning.

Although the backstreet value of the bangles is estimated at Sh1500, the actual value is incalculable since an elephant was killed for the ivory to be extracted.

Kenya Wildlife Service in collaboration with other law enforcement agencies including the Kenya Airports Authority, the police and Customs have stepped up efforts to curb illegal trade in wildlife products.

KWS has stationed sniffer dogs at key entry and exit points to detect contraband elephant tusks, rhino horns and weapons.

Last month, three Chinese men were charged with illegal possession of government trophies at Makadara law courts.

The suspects were seized with the illegal ivory at same airport.

Yu Zhong, Zhngle Chen and Liu Songlu, who were all travelling to different destinations in China, were also found with lion teeth, ivory bracelets and necklaces.

The sniffer dogs stationed at the international airport detected two processed ivory carvings weighing 2.5 kg and one necklace concealed in a bag.

The second suspect was seized by Customs officials at 2.30pm with two necklaces, four lion teeth and four bracelets while the third one was arrested at 10 pm with 380g of carved ivory.

Two of the suspects were travelling from Kenya while the third was from Uganda.

<http://www.kbc.co.ke/story.asp?ID=55425>

## **11. Game meat sale lands woman in court**

BY LAURA WALUBENGO

Update 1 hours and 55 minutes ago

NAIROBI, Kenya, Feb 2 - A Nairobi businesswoman was on Monday due to appear in a Kibera court to face charges of illegally selling game meat.

Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) investigators arrested the suspect on Saturday at a popular meat eating joint in Nairobi, Burma Market, with 74kg of bush meat.

KWS officials alleged that the woman had hidden the bush meat under a butchery counter and was mixing it with inspected meat on display, which she would sell to unsuspecting buyers.

KWS Corporate Communications Manager Paul Udoto said in a statement that trade in such meat not only drives poaching, but also poses a great health risk to the public.

“Un-inspected meat is likely to transmit diseases such as Anthrax and Ebola,” said Mr Udoto.

During the raid on Saturday, another suspect who is thought to be involved in selling the game meat managed to escape the KWS dragnet.

However, a man who incited the public against the KWS officials was arrested, and is being held at Shauri Moyo police station.

Rising cases of illegal gaming and poaching in the past couple of years has seen the KWS heighten its surveillance, to curb the practice.

In several incidents, the Wildlife Service has said that its rangers have exchanged fire with a number of poaching gangs, leading to the recovery of weapons and the elimination of several gangs, many of which are from Tanzania.

The Kenya Wildlife Service and Tanzanian Wildlife Authority are currently working closely on wildlife security through a cross-border agreement facilitated by the Lusaka Task Force.

The Task Force was established under the Lusaka Agreement, to fight wildlife crime in Africa. To date, six governments are Parties to the Agreement, which entered into force in December 1996.

## **12. Angola: Government to Protect Threatened Species**

2 February 2009

Lubango — Angolan minister of Environment, Fátima Jardim, said over the weekend, in southern Huila province, that the Government will create the legal instruments ruling the exploration of forest resources and fauna.

The minister said the action will focus mainly at airports, ports and border posts, to arrest illegal import and export of animals and forest resources.

The minister was speaking at the opening of the seminar on international trade of species of the fauna and wild flora threatened with extinction that is going under the motto "Safe environment, better future".

Fátima Jardim said the publicising of the instruments on animals and species of the flora threatened with extinction will determine and maintain a control of how much animals and plants in the country are imported and exported.

She on the occasion recommended the airports, ports and border posts controlling officers to arrest individuals who do not have documents licensing them to exercise the trade of animals.

Fátima Jardim also mentioned poaching and indiscriminated cutting of trees in the forests as another concern of the Ministry.

She informed that there are in the country animals threatened with extinction, due to poaching and habitat adaptation problems.

The minister said the Government will take strict action on individuals who insist in poaching, wildfires, illegal cutting of trees in prohibited zones.

For two days, the seminar will tackle such topics as protected species in Angola, legal procedures on export and import of wild animals, regulation on trade of threatened species, role of administrative and scientific authorities.

National legislation, customs duties, tourism and craftsmanship and its culture, Huila province's experience in the control of trade of species, are some of the other topics being dealt with at the seminar.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200902021587.html>

### **13. Slaughtered tigers, panther seized in Thailand**

Tue, Feb 10, 2009

AFP

YALA, THAILAND - Thai authorities have seized the butchered carcasses of two tigers and a panther and charged the man transporting them with possession of endangered wildlife, police said Tuesday.

The two Bengali tigers and a black panther were discovered when a truck was stopped for a routine search late Monday in the southern province of

Pattani.

Lieutenant Colonel Theewa Daorueng, of Pattani's police force, said the animals had been shot, cut in half and frozen for the journey. It was not clear where the big cats had come from, he added.

'The driver was charged with illegal possession of carcasses of endangered wildlife and faces four years imprisonment,' he told AFP.

'He has denied the charges and said he was not aware that there were carcasses in his pick-up truck.'

The arrested man told police that he was hired to drive from Sungai Kolok town on the Malaysian border to Hat Yai city, the Thai south's commercial hub.

Thailand, with its highly developed infrastructure and location, is a transportation centre for the thriving illicit animal trade in Southeast Asia, animal rights groups have said.

Tiger hunting is illegal worldwide, but tiger numbers in Asia are declining because of loss of prey and habitat due to uncontrolled development, and poaching for the black market trade in tiger skins and bones.

The wines and medicines made from the animals are traditionally believed to have healing or aphrodisiac properties.

<http://news.asiaone.com/News/Latest%2BNews/Asia/Story/A1Story20090210-120884.html>

**14. Poachers have killed more than 150 vicunas** — one of two wild South American camelids — near the highland community of Huancabamba, in Peru's southern department of Apurímac, said community leader Eugenio Allccia Díaz.

According to Allccia, the poachers rounded up the vicuna with 4×4 jeeps, shot them dead, and then stripped the animals of their precious fiber.

Public Ministry delegates have traveled to the area for investigation, and Andahuaylas provincial mayor Víctor Molina Quintana has requested help from Peru's Ministry of Interior and the National South American Camelid Council, or Conacs.

The vicuna, a relative of the llama and the alpaca, lives wild in the Andes Mountains at altitudes of more than 4,000 meters.

For decades, poachers in search of the world's most valuable wool — it sells anywhere from \$437 to \$650 per kilo — simply shot vicunas rather than struggle to trap, shear and then release the elusive animals.

By 1964, only 25,000 vicunas were left, and the species was on the brink of extinction. That same year, the Peruvian government created the Pampa Galeras National Reserve,

now the principal sanctuary for the species. Since then, Peru's vicuna population has steadily risen to approximately 200,000 animals.

Today, as during Inca times, vicunas are captured, shorn and released. Villagers conduct small-scale roundups throughout the highlands' May-September dry season, and take part in the national Chaccu, an annual roundup coupled with a three-day festival.

Source: Peruvian Times

## **15. Poachers Pose a Threat to Survival of the Giant Sable**

Absalom Shigwedha

29 January 2009

POACHING is threatening Angola's national symbol, the giant sable antelope, with extinction.

The antelope barely survived three decades of civil war, the head of the Giant Sable Conservation Project based at Cangandala National Park, Pedro Vaz Pinto, said recently.

Vaz Pinto, who last year made a presentation in Windhoek on the rediscovery of the Angolan giant sable, told Reuters this month that poaching since the war has cut the population of giant sables in the park by 50 per cent to one herd of 10 to 15 animals.

And Vaz Pinto fears that this very low number may not sustain even occasional poaching. He said poaching is now the greatest threat to an already dwindling population.

The Giant Sable Conservation Project is based at Cangandala National Park, while some animals were also found in the Luando Nature Reserve.

The project started in 2003 and uses remote cameras triggered by an infrared beam to search for the animals. Vaz Pinto said he has enlisted local shepherds who patrol for poachers and he plans to continue bringing in more manpower and technology to help track and conserve the animals.

He hopes 2009 will be a decisive year in the recovery of this national symbol.

Many people assumed that 27 years of civil war had wiped out the species because there had been no confirmed sighting since 1982.

Locally known as Palanca Negra, Angolans across the country view the antelope as a mystical, almost sacred creature and this helped it to protect it from poachers.

The striking curved horns of the adult male, which can grow up to 165 cm long, appear on the logo of the country's airline (TAAG) and the national football team.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200901290546.html>

## **16. Tiger Skin and Skeleton Seized near Corbett Tiger Reserve**

30 January 2009

Early this morning, acting on information supplied by WPSI, the Uttarakhand Forest Department raided a location in Fatehpur Range, Ramnagar Division, adjoining Corbett Tiger Reserve and seized a tiger skin, a tiger skeleton, one spring trap and wooden lathis. WPSI personnel assisted in the raid. Two poachers were arrested and four others are absconding.

The unfortunate tiger, which is believed to be a female, was allegedly killed in Fatehpur Range using a steel trap. After the tiger was caught in the trap it was allegedly beaten to death by the poachers using wooden lathis.

The raid was a joint operation of the Uttarakhand Forest Department, the Haldwani Police and WPSI. Three Forest Department divisions were involved and the operation was led by Mr P.C Arya, Sub Divisional Officer of the Terai West Division. Officers from the Terai Central Division and Ramnagar Division were also present.

According to the latest tiger estimation report, Corbett Tiger Reserve has one of the largest tiger populations in India, so it should come as no surprise that the area is being targeted by poachers. WPSI wildlife crime database has reports of 28 tigers that were killed by poachers in 2008.

## **17. Record Wildlife Contraband Seized in Vietnam**

Hanoi authorities have made their largest-ever seizure of illegally-harvested wildlife products. After detaining a man found transporting a set of tiger bones and 10 kilograms of serow - a small antelope-like mammal found in Asia - bones and horns by motorbike, investigators were led to a stockpile of some two tonnes of tiger bones, bear paws and gall bladders, and heaps of bones from various other increasingly rare wild animals. Three people have been arrested in connection to the incident.

“We continue to be impressed and encouraged by the good work that the Environmental Police are doing,” says Nguyen Dao Ngoc Van of international wildlife monitoring network TRAFFIC. “The presence of the Environmental Police in Vietnam will change illegal wildlife trade for the better.”

Van concedes that this case underscores the threat of illegal trade to Vietnam’s endangered wildlife. But he points out that a recent string of seizures shows improvements in enforcement capacity since the establishment of the Environmental Police in 2007.

TRAFFIC estimates that up to 4,000 tonnes of live animals, meats, skins, ground bones, and other animal products are trafficked into and out of Vietnam each year, generating about 67 million dollars in sales. Authorities say that the sheer volume of trade - an estimated 2,500 kilograms per day - and creativity of smugglers - one investigation

turned up a bear dressed as a patient in the back of an ambulance - can make enforcement difficult.

Vietnam's wildlife habitat, previously shut off from the world by war and politics, has been described by some biologists as home to some of the greatest wildlife discoveries over the last decade. Since 1992 researchers have documented 63 vertebrates, 45 previously unknown fish, and discovered the saola - the world's largest mammal found in over half a century.

Studies say that illegal trade in wildlife products rivals habitat loss in the threat of extinction to many species. Eric Coull of the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) says that wildlife populations in Vietnam in particular are decreasing at alarming rates. "Vietnam has become famous over the past 15 years for the discovery of new species," says Coull. "It could become famous for their extinction."

"Vietnam becoming Asia's illegal animal, 'Supermarket'" MARYANN MOTT (National Geographic) 13 September 2006; "Illegal wildlife trade takes heavy toll in Vietnam," FRANK ZELLER (Yahoo News), 14 August 2006; "Hanoi Environmental Police seize tons of illegal wildlife parts," ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS SERVICE, 21 January 2009; Hanoi's Environmental Police record largest-ever seizure, LISA KELLEY (TRAFFIC), 19 January 2009

<http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/40090/>

## **18. POLICE CONFISCATED 98 PROTECTED BIRDS**

During the week end the Police raided a house at Safi in the south of the Island following reports that an individual was in possession of a number of protected species. It resulted that they were ready to be stuffed illegally

During the raid the police elevated 98 protected species which were in the possession to a 21 year old man. Police sources told International Animal Rescue that they confiscated the protected stuffed birds in the possession of this young man because they were never officially registered as required by law.

The Administrative Law Enforcement police (ALE) and inspectors from the Malta Environment and Planning Authority were informed by this find by the Birzebbugia district police who made this find during some investigations. During the investigations the ALE found also in this house materials and tools used in the process of stuffing birds for display. The Stuffing of birds in Malta is illegal. Police investigations were completed on Saturday. All birds were confiscated and this man will be brought before the court in the coming weeks.

International Animal Rescue Malta, as have than in the pass congratulate the police for their sterling work to protect our environment. Although the police environment unit is rather small the officers and men within the unit are very motivated.

A spokesman for International Animal Rescue in Malta said that for the benefit of this European Environmental Heritage it is very important that the police and the court will join forces so that illegal hunting in

Malta will come to end once and for all.

Among the birds which were in possession of this young man there were a considerable number of birds of prey, amongst which are honey buzzards, kestrels, marsh harriers, and falcons. The probability is that these birds were not the property of the man in whose possession where found but where in his possession for stuffing and erecting as trophies.

### **19. 3000 tortoise seized in Bihar**

7 Feb 2009, 2218 hrs IST, PTI

GAYA (Bihar): More than 3000 live tortoise being smuggled to Kolkata was seized at a place in Bihar Gaya district.

Superintendent of Police, R Malar Vizzi said, "The tortoises were seized at a checkpoint near Barachatti manned by forest department officials. They were being smuggled from Uttar Pradesh to Kolkata."

She said a jeep was carrying the tortoises contained in 30 bags.

A case under Wildlife Violation Act has been registered and the driver of the vehicle Reyaz Ahmed was arrested.

The tortoises were being smuggled from Akbarpur in Uttar Pradesh to Kolkata, she said.

[http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Earth/Bihar\\_3000\\_tortoise\\_seized/articleshow/4093275.cms](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Earth/Bihar_3000_tortoise_seized/articleshow/4093275.cms)

### **20. Illegal Tortoise Eggs, Meat Seized In Atlanta**

Tortoises Among Protected Species

Friday, February 6, 2009

ATLANTA -- U. S. Customs and Border Protection seized illegal Tortoise meat and eggs from an international traveler at Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, officials announced Friday.

"This interception is significant," said Stephen Kremer, area port director for Customs and Border Protection in Atlanta.

Officials said the seizure, which occurred in late January, included approximately 2 pounds of tortoise meat and 31 tortoise eggs.

The agency said it routinely seizes goods confiscated from passengers who either inadvertently bring prohibited items into the country or blatantly ignore laws banning importation of certain items.

Tortoises are a protected species under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). While the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the primary agency responsible for enforcing CITES in the

United States, Customs and Border Protection works closely with the agency to ensure CITES is enforced at every port of entry in the United States.

“This is an excellent example of the CBP commitment at our ports of entry to partner with other federal agencies whose laws CBP helps to enforce,” said Kremer.

<http://www.wsbtv.com/news/18658753/detail.html>

## **21. "Noah's Ark" found off Peru**

(01:39) Report

<http://uk.reuters.com/news/video?videoId=97026>

Jan 14 - The Chilean Navy has uncovered a "Noah's Ark" of contraband exotic animals - some of them endangered - which were being shipped from Peru.

A Navy patrol boat from the Chilean port of Arica noticed a boat heading for shore with its lights off.

After checking on board for a registration, the authorities discovered the animals, most of which were from the Amazon jungle.

## **22. Kashmir Inc seeks end to ban on Shahtoosh**

[http://www.greaterkashmir.com/full\\_story.asp?Date=26\\_1\\_2009&ItemID=9&cat=5](http://www.greaterkashmir.com/full_story.asp?Date=26_1_2009&ItemID=9&cat=5)  
BILAL HUSSAIN

Srinagar, Jan 25: The apex business chamber of the valley, Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), demanded lifting of ban on shahtoosh.

President KCCI, Dr Mubeen Shah told Greater Kashmir that the chamber has been insisting the state government and New Delhi to take away ban on the shahtoosh trade.

“It has been nine years now and we have been advocating for removal of ban on the trade,” he said.

The annual turnover of the shahtoosh trade is over Rs 120 crore. Over thirty thousand families were depending on the trade. “The ban has brought miseries to the shahtoosh weavers, traders and their families and these families are facing starvation,” he said.

The KCCI has recently sent a recommendation to the state government on lifting ban on the trade. “This is a matter of grave concern for us. The concerned agencies should find a solution to the problem at earliest. There is hardly a day when affected families especially poor women come to our office to express their hardship,” Dr Shah said, “We would try our best to take away the ban to bring respite to 600 year old industry.”

Kashmir Shawl industry is famous in the world. Shahtoosh are so fine that an average size shawl can be passed through a wedding ring. “We have world famous artisans associated with the trade and the state of art embroidery on shawls is unique in the world,” he added.

The ban has led to the demise of the skill of the Kashmir weavers, who were the only ones in the world who could handle the fibre, he added. “China has vested interest in the ban as they are not able to handle the wool from Tibetan antelope,” he added.

Giving the details Dr Shah said that the population of the Tibetan antelope has been found dwindling and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species

(CITES), listed it as endangered specie in the 1970's. "The government of India enacted this in schedule I of the wild life Act without giving reservation, which was within the scope of CITES. States Shahtoosh shawl sector was not consulted," he said. The selling of shahtoosh was made illegal in all countries that signed the CITES.

However, since J&K had its own wild life Act as such it continued to be in schedule II allowing trading of Shahtoosh. "Free trading within the state could not help in survival of the industry as the major outlets were the outside markets which come under enforcement of wild life Act prohibiting the sale," he added.

In 2005 the government of India constituted an expert group to look into the issues relating to shahtoosh trade. The group was of the view that lifting ban would mean killing of antelopes. However, in the meeting Dr A M Mir had argued that the shahtoosh fiber used in making shawls comes from live chirus and not from dead animals because according to him the fiber obtained from the dead animals is useless and can't be converted into shawls.

The wild life societies are of the opinion that antelope from which shahtoosh wool is derived is most endangered specie and wool is derived from killing the animal. However, Dr Shah says that the wool shedding is a biological process. Like other animals of cold climate, the Tibetan antelope also sheds their thick winter coats when ambient temperature rises with onset of winter. "Dead wool is of no use in the shahtoosh shawl production," he said.

The government should look for the options of setting commercial farming. "Captive breeding has not been attempted till date," he added.

The antelope lives at an altitude of 14-17,000 feet. In winter months due to lack of vegetation chiru move down to the plains. It is here they share pastures with domestic live stock and are near human habitation, he said.

### **23. Perhilitan Solves 6,587 Wildlife Smuggling Cases**

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 3 (Bernama) -- The Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan) has solved 6,587 cases of protected species smuggling from 2005 until January this year.

Deputy Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Maznah Mazlan said of them, 44 cases were brought to the court.

Perhilitan seized 917 owls in Muar in November last year and 319 more in Kuantan in January, she said after visiting the department here, Tuesday.

She said the department conducted checks on pet shops under "Ops Sayang" and the premises of taxidermists and leather hide sellers under 'Ops 49' and 'Ops Kulit', last year.

Maznah said Perhilitan had beefed up its Wildlife Crime Unit to enhance its intelligence gathering and anti-smuggling operations.

-- BERNAMA

<http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsgeneral.php?id=387456>

## **24. German National Arrested for Smuggling Coral from the Philippines**

Discovery of shipping containers full of illegal coral in Oregon led to arrest

WASHINGTON, Feb. 13 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Gunther Wenzek, a German national, was arraigned today in U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Va., on a nine count indictment charging him with three felony counts of smuggling protected coral into the United States port of Portland, Ore., three felony counts of violating the Lacey Act and three misdemeanor charges of violating the Endangered Species Act, the Justice Department announced. Wenzek appeared today before U.S. Magistrate Judge T. Rawles Jones, Jr. of the Eastern District of Virginia.

A grand jury in Portland, Ore. indicted Wenzek in July 2008. The indictment had been sealed pending Wenzek's scheduled appearance at the Global Pet Expo in Orlando, Fla., this week. Law enforcement officials arrested Wenzek Wednesday night as he entered the United States at Dulles airport outside of Washington, D.C., en route to the pet exposition.

According to the indictment, Wenzek owns a company named CoraPet, based in Essen, Germany, and has sold various coral products to retailers in the United States. An investigation was launched in 2007 after Wenzek tried to ship a container loaded with fragments of endangered coral from reefs off the Philippine coast to Portland. After this initial shipment, agents subsequently seized two full containers of endangered coral shipped by Wenzek to a customer in Portland. These two shipments made up a total of over 40 tons of coral.

The corals seized have been identified as corals from the scientific order Scleractinia, genera Porites, Acropora, and Pocillopora, common to Philippine reefs. Due to the threat of extinction, stony corals, such as those seized in this case are protected by international law. Philippine law specifically forbids exports of all coral. Moreover, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) bars importation of the coral Wenzek tried to import to customers in the United States, absent a permit.

"Protection of coral reefs continues to play an important role in the Department of Justice's environmental enforcement efforts both domestically and internationally, said John C. Cruden, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department's Environment and Natural Resources Division. "Preventing the further decline of coral reefs is of paramount importance in preserving our marine environment and fisheries."

Andrew Bruckner, a biologist from the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, Office of Law Enforcement said, "The removal of dead coral and live rock is of major concern for coral reefs, including those reefs protecting coastal communities from storms. These corals are the fundamental building blocks of the coral reef ecosystem. Unsustainable collection of coral frequently results in the loss of important nursery areas, feeding grounds, refuge for fish and invertebrates, and increased erosion of reef systems."

Karin J. Immergut, U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon, said, "We will not allow criminals to profit from the illegal devastation of the world's coral reefs. We will scour the globe for those responsible for this devastation and bring them to justice."

"We appreciate the support from fellow law enforcement on this very important investigation," said Paul Chang, Special Agent in Charge of Law Enforcement for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Pacific Region, based in Portland. "Stopping the type of criminal activity alleged in this case ranks among our highest priorities because of the very significant impact it has on the dwindling coral reefs of the world."

The Lacey Act prohibits import, export, transportation, sale, receipt, acquisition or purchase of fish, wildlife, or plants that are taken, possessed, transported or sold in violation of any federal, state, tribal or foreign law.

An indictment is merely an accusation, and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the National Marine Fisheries Service. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney, Dwight Holton from the District of Oregon and Senior Trial Attorney J. Ronald Sutcliffe of the Justice Department's Environmental Crimes Section, with assistance from the Eastern District of Virginia.

SOURCE U.S. Department of Justice

<http://news.prnewswire.com/DisplayReleaseContent.aspx?ACCT=104&STORY=/www/story/02-13-2009/0004972313&EDATE=>

## **25. Banned tiger parts cost Richmond company \$45,000 fine**

By Gerry Bellett, Vancouver Sun February 18, 2009

A Richmond company that produces herbal medicines has been fined \$45,000 after pleading guilty in Richmond Provincial Court of possessing banned tiger parts.

Wing Quon Enterprises Ltd. was also ordered to forfeit medicines and products seized by Environment Canada investigators following a lengthy probe into the company's activities.

Ground tiger bone was used as an ingredient in some of the medicines.

According to Environment Canada wildlife enforcement division official Marko Goluza, the company was producing medicines and products made from some of the "rarest plant and animal species on the planet" including tiger, costus root, agarwood, bear, pangolin, musk deer and rhinoceros.

“All of these are protected species listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora,” said Goluza.

Goluza said the investigation began when officials became aware that products advertising they contained these banned substances were being sold.

He said \$40,000 of the fine will be directed to the traffic wildlife trade-monitoring program of the World Wildlife Fund, which is dedicated to preventing the trade in rare plants and animal parts.

<http://www.vancouversun.com/Technology/Banned+tiger+parts+cost+Richmond+company+fine/1303417/story.html>

## **26. SA 'losing abalone war'**

YOLANDI GROENEWALD | JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA - Feb 04 2009 06:00

New research indicates that a record 3 000 tons of abalone was poached from South African waters and sold in Asia last year. And fingers are being pointed at the leaky convention on international trade in endangered species (Cites) permit system, which authorities struggle to enforce.

The research was conducted by Feike, an independent natural resources advisory firm based in Cape Town, and non-governmental pressure group Traffic.

Said Feike director Shaheen Moosa: "The Environmental Affairs Department's inability to implement Cites obligations is facilitating the sale of illegal abalone."

The department could not confirm the research figures, but said it had recovered 170 247 units of poached abalone last year.

The poaching spike is clear in some areas, including the Overstrand coast, which has experienced a threefold increase in poaching since 2007, according to non-governmental organisation Seawatch.

The quotas allow 1 000 tons of farmed abalone and 125 tons of wild shellfish to be harvested.

Environmental activists were outraged last year when it emerged that environmental affairs officials had not endorsed a single Cites permit.

In 2007, to combat rampant poaching, environment minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk said that an endorsed Cites permit must accompany all abalone exports. But because of an inability to endorse at the country's borders the strategy has failed. South Africa has asked countries to accept permits without endorsement, leading to further abuse.

Syndicates repeatedly use unendorsed permits, which are valid for six months, for illegal exports.

<http://www.mg.co.za/article/2009-02-04-sa-losing-abalone-war>

## **27. Myanmar Bans Crocodile Export**

YANGON, Feb 16 (Bernama) -- Myanmar has banned export of crocodiles to foreign countries to protect them from extinction, the Ministry of Livestock Breeding and Fisheries said on Monday.

As Myanmar crocodiles are included in the list of world's extinction species, the export of such wildlife is subject to the permission of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild Fauna and Flora, Xinhua news agency cited a local daily as saying here.

Of a total of 23 species of crocodiles in the world, 4 species - - Ngamoeyeik, Thai crocodiles, Gingga crocodile are found in Myanmar.

Ngamoeyeik crocodiles take sanctuary in Bogalay, Laputta in Ayeyawaddy division and other three in Magway and Taninthayi divisions.

Breeding of crocodiles in Myanmar started in 1978.

Meanwhile, Myanmar is building a wildlife park in a border town in Kachin state, northernmost part of the country, to undertake conservation work with wild animals.

The 405-hectare park lying at Putao between Mularoti and Zayar mountains will keep wildlife and rare animals taking sanctuary in snow-capped region.

There is also a large tiger reserve called Hukuang in the same state established in 2004 on an area of about 22,000 square kilometers.

However, only 150 tigers reportedly remain alive in the reserve.

In the wake of tiger extinction threat, Myanmar wildlife police and forest rangers have also planned to step up combating wildlife trade and crimes in the tiger reserve and special training programs have been introduced jointly by the Myanmar forest ministry and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).

Besides, elephant conservation is also carried out at the Bago Yoma mountain range in the country's central part where most of the elephants take sanctuary.

-- BERNAMA

## **28. TWO JUNEAU GUIDES SENTENCED IN FEDERAL COURT FOR WILDLIFE CRIMES**

SitNews, AK, January 21, 2009 Wednesday

[http://www.sitnews.us/0109news/012109/012109\\_wildlife.html](http://www.sitnews.us/0109news/012109/012109_wildlife.html)

Anchorage, Alaska United States Attorney Nelson P. Cohen announced that on January 14, 2009, Juneau residents Shawn Hooton and Shane Hooton were sentenced in federal

court in Anchorage on one count of conspiracy to violate the Lacey Act. The sentencing was the result of the Hootons' earlier pleas of guilty to the charge.

Shawn Hooton was sentenced to two years probation, three months home confinement and a \$30,000 fine. He was also ordered to forfeit equipment used in the offense, including a custom .460 Weatherby and scope. During his two-year probation, he is prohibited from commercial guiding and hunting. Shane Hooton was sentenced to a term of one year probation, a fine of \$20,000, and ordered to forfeit a custom .460 Weatherby and scope. He is also prohibited from commercial guiding and hunting during the term of his probation.

Shawn Hooton, age 42, and Shane Hooton, age 41, were sentenced by Chief United States District Court Judge John W. Sedwick.

Assistant United States Attorney Steven E. Skrocki advised the court that the Hootons, who were registered guides, conspired with their father, Larry Hooton, age 70, also a registered guide, to illegally guide out-of-state hunters for brown bears on Admiralty Island National Monument in excess of their one hunt permit issued by the National Forest Service. The plea agreements detailed that the Hootons exceeded their one permitted brown bear hunt limit by guiding three more hunters than the permit allowed and by taking four brown bears when only a single brown bear was allocated by their Forest Service permit. Charging documents and the plea agreements detailed the actions by Larry Hooton, who, as justification for the excess kills, claimed that the additional bears were killed below mean high tide, when, in fact, the client hunters all utilized Admiralty Island lands to stalk and illegally kill the brown bears.

Judge Sedwick scheduled sentencing for Larry Hooton, who also pleaded guilty to the conspiracy, for March 24, 2009. The terms of his plea agreement will require him to pay a \$41,000 fine; pay restitution to the State of Alaska and the Tongass National Forest in the amount of \$30,000; forfeit equipment used during the offense; cease commercial guiding for brown bear; and not to hunt for up to three years. He also faces a possible six-month prison term.

This investigation that culminated in these prosecutions was a cooperative effort by U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement and Investigations, Alaska Wildlife Troopers Juneau Post, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Law Enforcement and the U. S. Attorney's Office. U.S. Attorney Cohen stated, "Our great state remains home to awe inspiring nature like no where else in our country. The rules put in place on Admiralty Island were designed to protect a brown bear population under pressure. These defendants blatantly violated those rules for personal profit. Along with our law enforcement partners, we will continue to pursue violators and prosecute them criminally."

Special Agent in Charge, Stanley F. Pruszenski with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Alaska Region, complimented all of the participating enforcement personnel on their cooperative efforts, adding, "Alaska is rich in its wildlife resources. We cannot allow this resource to be exploited illegally for commercial gain."

U.S. Forest Service Assistant Special Agent in Charge Dennis Deason stated, "The successful resolution of this case is a tribute to the strong working relationships between all the law enforcement agencies involved in the investigation and prosecution of this case. We hope this will serve as a reminder to those who would illegally exploit our public resources for commercial gain that the agencies involved take our stewardship roles seriously and will aggressively pursue these violations."

The United States Department of Agriculture, United States Forest Service, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service conducted the investigation that led to the prosecution of the Hootons.

### **29. Chile seizes five blue-fronted Amazon parrots from a bus at the Los Libertadores (Argentina-Chile) border crossing.**

Complete article in Spanish below.

.....

Detectan en paso Los Libertadores contrabando de animales exóticos  
Funcionarios del SAG y Aduanas detectaron el ingreso ilegal de cinco loros argentinos protegidos por tratados internacionales.

por Francisco Bonifaz | 29/01/2009 - 17:06

Un nuevo caso de contrabando de animales exóticos quedó al descubierto a las 4:00 de la madrugada de hoy por personal de Aduanas y el SAG, apostados en el paso fronterizo Los Libertadores, luego que los funcionarios de ambas reparticiones detectaran la presencia de cinco loros habladores argentinos, al interior de una caja de cartón escondida debajo de un asiento de un bus de la empresa Tas Choapa.

El administrador (s) de la Aduana de Los Andes, Nelson Ortega, explicó que las especies incautadas se encuentran incluidas en la lista de la Convención sobre el Comercio Internacional de Especies Amenazadas de Fauna y Flora Silvestre (CITES), por lo que la importancia del hallazgo radica, "no en la cantidad, sino en la necesaria toma de conciencia de la ciudadanía de que no se puede comerciar ni transportar animales o plantas que estén en peligro de extinción, ni sus partes o subproductos", explicó a través de Aduanas.

Según se conoció después los cinco loros habladores argentinos pertenecían a la variedad "frente azul amazona estiva", la cual es vendida en argentina desde los 500 a 650 pesos argentinos, lo que supera los cien mil pesos en plata chilena.

En la audiencia de formalización se identificó como H. del C.C.V. (63) al conductor, mientras que el auxiliar C.M.G.C. (33), ambos con domicilio en Santiago, los que fueron formalizados por el delito de contrabando de especies exóticas.

El Ministerio Público estimó una salida alternativa al procedimiento, dado que ninguno de los involucrados tenía antecedentes penales, por lo que accedieron a una suspensión condicional del procedimiento, mientras que los loros fueron derivados a una institución de protección animal en Argentina.

[http://www.latercera.com/contenido/680\\_97259\\_9.shtml](http://www.latercera.com/contenido/680_97259_9.shtml)

### **30. 800 Animals seized in Lima**

Feb 6, 2009

800 animals that were being illegally offered for sale, were seized in the center of Lima. The salesmen fled before authorities arrived. Seized animals included:

a boa 2.5 metros long, 200 iguanas, 50 lizards, 15 parrots, 100 turtles, a monkey and a squirrel.

Complete article in Spanish below.

06 de Febrero del 2009 - 10:43 284 Lecturas |

Incautan 800 animales silvestres que se vendían ilícitamente

Este operativo se llevó a cabo en los inmuebles 516, 558 y 560 del jirón Ayacucho en el Centro de Lima.

Unos 800 animales que eran comercializados de manera ilegal en la cuadra 5 del jirón Ayacucho, fueron incautados por la Municipalidad de Lima, Inrena y el Ministerio Público.

Este operativo se llevó a cabo en los inmuebles 516, 558 y 560 del jirón Ayacucho en el Centro de Lima, los vendedores huyeron despavoridos ante la sorpresiva llegada de las autoridades, dejando a muchos animales en abandono.

En el operativo intervinieron inspectores de Fiscalización de Sanidad y Seguridad Ciudadana de la Municipalidad de Lima; la Fiscal Diana Vargas; y, Mario Candela en representación de Inrena.

Animales incautados:

El operativo puso al descubierto hasta una boa de 2.5 metros de largo, 200 iguanas y 50 lagartijas. También se pudo comprobar la presencia de 15 loros cabeza amarilla, 100 tortugas, un mono y una ardilla.

[http://www.rpp.com.pe/2009-02-06-incautan-800-animales-silvestres-que-se-vendian-ilicitamente-noticia\\_162537.html](http://www.rpp.com.pe/2009-02-06-incautan-800-animales-silvestres-que-se-vendian-ilicitamente-noticia_162537.html)

### **31. Inside the world of 'Wildlife CSI'**

Techniques familiar from shows such as 'Silent Witness' are now being used to fight the illegal trade in wildlife.

By Richard Gray

Last Updated: 4:33PM GMT 02 Feb 2009

Inside the world of 'Wildlife CSI'

Techniques familiar from shows such as 'Silent Witness' are now being used to fight the illegal trade in wildlife.

Dressed from head to toe in protective white clothing, Rob Ogden and his team are hunched over the bodies laid out at Heathrow Airport, carefully collecting samples of hair, blood and tissue to be analysed.

Forensic scientists are now a routine sight at the scenes of grisly

murders, and the inspiration for prime-time drama series such as *Silent Witness*. But in this case, the corpses are not those of humans: Dr Ogden and his colleagues are faced with body parts from a water buffalo and the remains of a scaly anteater known as a pangolin. Welcome to the world of 'Wildlife CSI'.

Although forensics has been a central plank of police work for decades, its techniques are still rarely employed when it comes to animals. Cash-strapped police forces are reluctant put funds into investigating wildlife felonies when they already have so many human crimes to solve.

But the problem is not a small one. Interpol estimates that the illegal trade in animals and plants is worth up to £13 billion a year, a figure topped only by that in drugs. Around 3.5 million protected species, or products made using protected species, are seized in Europe every year, and in many cases smuggling by organised gangs is pushing species to extinction.

Now, however, a new scheme is to provide police with the first dedicated wildlife forensics service. Funded by the Department of Food, Environment and Rural Affairs, the World Wildlife Fund and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, it will allow cutting-edge techniques to be used in wildlife crime cases – with the first trial using such evidence due this month. "We are aiming to secure prosecutions of the 'Mr Bigs', not just the smugglers bringing the products in," says Dr Ross McEwan, the director of the Trace Wildlife Forensics Network, which is running the scheme.

Often the first problem facing the authorities is exactly what species they are dealing with. Unlike human forensics, where experts are looking for minute differences in DNA to identify individuals, wildlife forensics involves a wide range of genetic profiles from many different species.

"An offence can only be demonstrated if you can prove that a sample has come from a protected species," says Dr McEwan. "Sometimes the legal protection is only associated with specific geographical regions and not the species, so we also need to show that a sample has originated from a specific location. Then we need to be able to establish individual identity, so we can trace different samples from the same individual."

This is where Dr Ogden and his team at Wildlife DNA Services, a company specialising in animal DNA analysis, come in. They have developed new ways of linking smuggled rhinoceros horns to the carcasses of animals killed by poachers in Africa. Rhino horn is prized both for ornament and as an ingredient in traditional Chinese medicines; the demand has seen rhinos become critically endangered through relentless poaching. There are now just 14,500 white rhinos and 4,000 black rhinos left in the wild.

To help eliminate smuggling, the scientists have been working with park rangers in Africa to develop a method for extracting DNA from rhino horns seized anywhere in the world, which can then be matched to hair and blood samples taken from the slaughtered remains. It is a crucial

way of tracing the supply chain from smugglers back to poachers. This is important because the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (Cites) only bans animal products that have been transported across international borders after 1947; matching a piece of horn or ivory to a recently killed rhino or elephant is often vital.

"DNA can hold a lot of information," says Dr Ogden. "It can tell us what species the animal is, who its parents were, and even its location. Crucially, it allows us to match products such as ivory, rhino horn or fur to individual animals killed in the wild."

Similar DNA profiling is being used to identify shahtoosh shawls, which are made from the coats of endangered Tibetan antelopes and can sell for up to £5,000. Distinguishing the shahtoosh from pashmina wool, which is legal to trade, can be difficult without genetic analysis. The same is true of types of meat: the recent operation at Heathrow Airport saw Dr Ogden's team working with customs officials who were searching flights from Africa for illegally smuggled bushmeat.

For the scientists, it was a rare chance to use their techniques outside their laboratory. "We had to carry out all the sampling and tests at the airport," says Dr Ogden, "because none of the meat was allowed to enter through customs. We found pangolin, water buffalo, cane rat, and even camel."

The variety of smuggled products is practically endless. Bile from protected black bears, or various parts of tigers, find a massive market among practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine. And the criminals do not necessarily have to have crossed borders: Dr Ogden recalls a case in which blood-soaked clothes were received from a suspect who claimed to have been helping an injured badger, but his team were able to determine that the blood came from an animal that had been killed.

Beyond genetics, many other techniques can be used – often to solve some longstanding mysteries. Andrew Kitchener, principal curator for mammals and birds at National Museums Scotland, is a specialist in identifying samples of hair and body parts. He uses fibre matching – long established in human forensics – to compare samples of hair or hide sent to him with the museum's collection, identifying which animal they came from. His skills have proved useful in recent cases of wildcats being illegally killed, and he has also helped with another recent police operation to seize bushmeat being sold in London.

His highest-profile case, however, was last year's investigation into the death of Phar Lap, a famous racehorse born in New Zealand in 1926, which died in mysterious circumstances in 1932. There were rumours that it had been poisoned. These had never been proved, however, and the case was made more difficult by the fact that, at that time, arsenic was used in the stuffing and preserving process.

"It was difficult to tell from the stuffed body if it had been poisoned," says Dr Kitchener. "So we were asked for samples from preserved horses of a similar era, to test against hair samples from

Phar Lap. The arsenic in our samples was on the surface of the hair, while in Phar Lap it was inside the hair itself. The conclusion was that Phar Lap had indeed been poisoned."

Another important tool in the fight against wildlife crime is the radiation thrown up by nuclear bomb testing in the 1950s. Experts at the radiocarbon laboratory of the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre in Glasgow use the levels of radioactive carbon, known as carbon-14, in bone, tusks and teeth to determine when animals lived and died. Again, this helps with the Cites rules: if the radiation is present, scientists can be sure that the animal lived after the convention was signed.

"As long as an organism is alive and continues to feed, it will retain an equilibrium of carbon-14," explains Professor Gordon Cook, who has been leading the research. "When it dies, the carbon-14 is not replenished and it decays away, so we can tell the time that has elapsed since death.

"Atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons has also artificially enriched the natural levels of carbon-14 from the 1950s onwards, so we can use this measure of enrichment to more precisely identify when animals lived and died during the nuclear era."

Levels of a naturally occurring form of hydrogen, known as deuterium or "heavy hydrogen", have also provided a way of identifying illegally trapped songbirds. Dr Jason Newton, who also works at the centre in Glasgow, has been able to use the levels of deuterium in feathers to map where birds came from. Trade in birds bred in captivity is legal, but those trapped in the wild are often smuggled into the country or passed off as captive birds.

"The ratio of deuterium in rainwater changes from area to area," explains Dr Newton. "All animals and plants living in that region will reflect the hydrogen isotope ratio of the environment they live in, as they take in the isotopes through their food and water. We analysed feathers from 14 confiscated goldfinches. Seven of these had hydrogen isotope ratios consistent with them being trapped in Siberia and transported here."

Such forensic science is starting to give police a valuable weapon in their fight against wildlife crime – but it is an ever-escalating battle. The National Wildlife Crime Unit, which focuses on serious and organised crime, estimates that around 600 incidents are reported in Britain every month, and has a database of 3,000 individuals connected with wildlife crime.

"Our natural heritage draws a lot of people to our country," says Detective Inspector Brian Stuart, the head of the unit. "If you damage that, it's not like rebuilding a house: it's very difficult to rebuild a species once it is gone.

"Forensic science has a huge role to play in providing evidence in

wildlife crime cases. The techniques that are now being used are a huge step forward."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/scienceandtechnology/4436586/Inside-the-world-of-Wildlife-CSI.html>