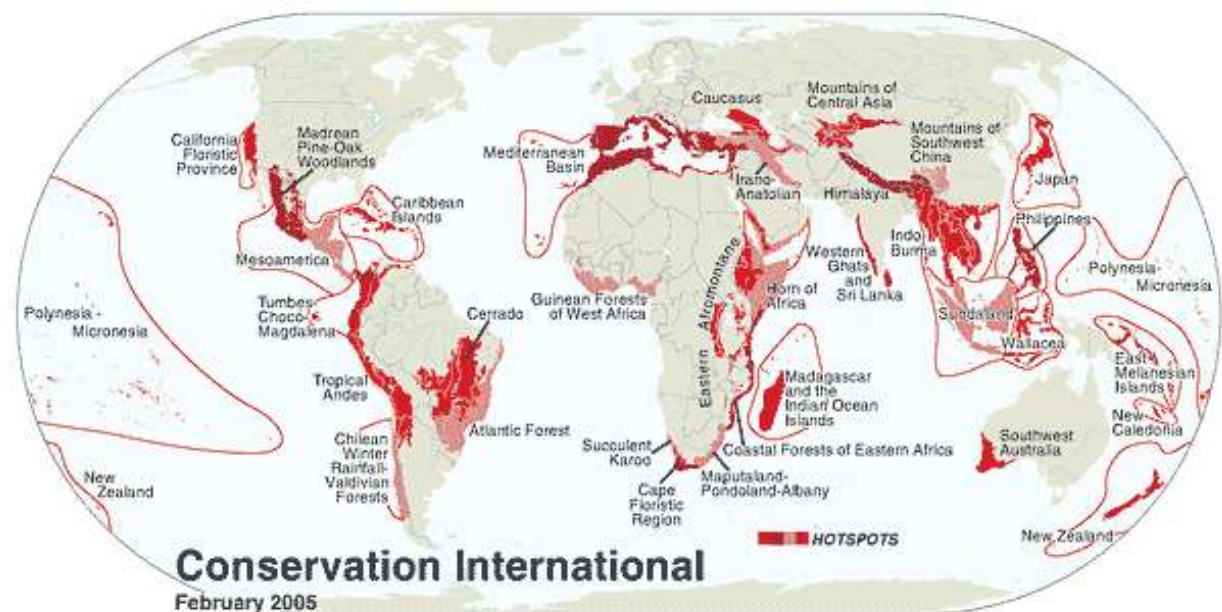


UNODC

Agenda I: Illegal Exploitation of Wild Flora and Fauna in Asia

1.1 Introduction and background



"Wildlife and forest" refers to all fauna and flora, including animals, birds and fish, as well as timber and non-timber forest products. "Wildlife and forest crime" refers to the taking, trading (supplying, selling or trafficking), importing, exporting, processing, possessing, obtaining and consumption of wild fauna and flora, including timber and other forest products, in contravention of national or international law. Broadly speaking, wildlife and forest crime is the illegal exploitation of the world's wild flora and fauna.

South Asian countries account for 15 per cent of the world's biodiversity. The iconic tiger and elephant, snow leopard and other big cats, one-horn rhino, pangolin, brown bear, deer, reptiles, seahorse, star tortoise, butterflies, peacocks, birds, red sander, orchids, shells, corals to name some of the species -partly endemic to South Asia - are seriously endangered or even on the brink of extinction, mainly because of rampant poaching and unscrupulous illegal trade of wildlife for the sale of hides, trophies, ornamental plants, music instruments and for traditional medicine, often in outside markets.

1.2. Current Situation

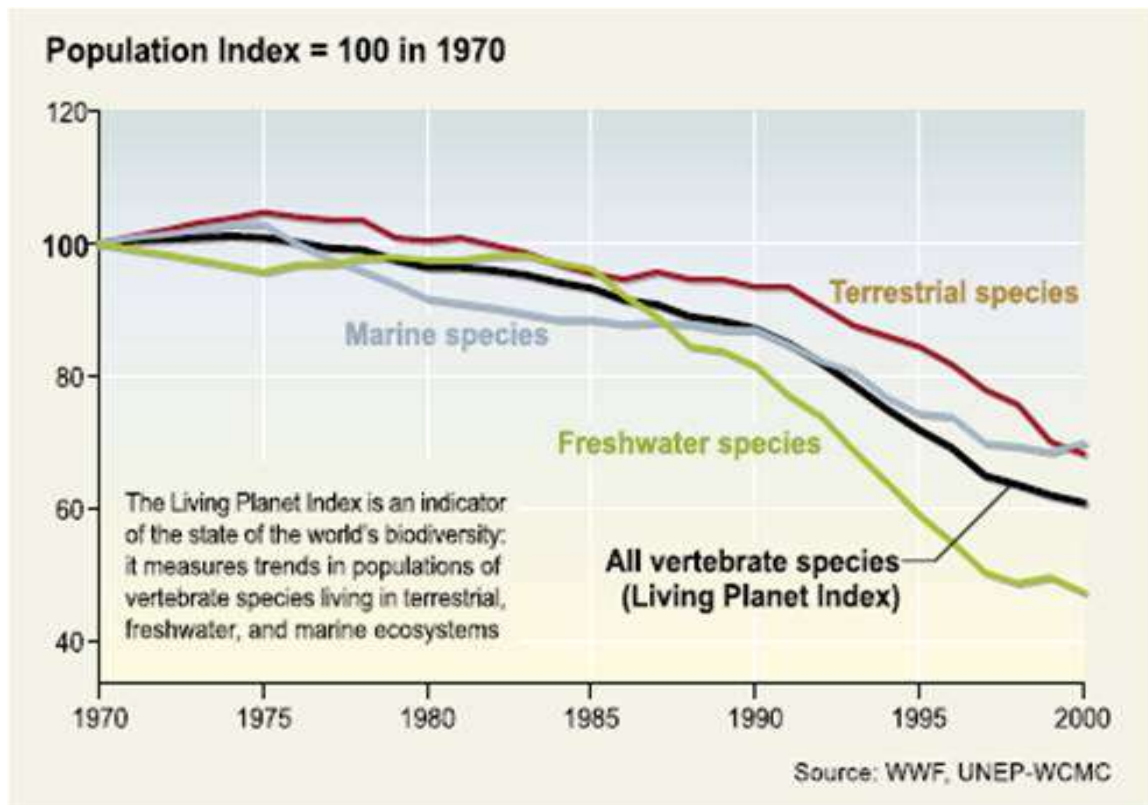
The world is dealing with an unprecedented spike in illegal wildlife trade, threatening to overturn decades of conservation gains. Ivory estimated to weigh more than 23 metric tons—a figure that represents 2,500 elephants—was seized in the 13 largest seizures of illegal ivory in 2011. Poaching threatens the last of our wild tigers that number as few as 3,200.

Once an emerging threat, wildlife and forest crime today has transformed into one of the largest transnational organized criminal activities alongside drug trafficking, arms, and trafficking in human beings. Criminal groups are using the same routes and techniques for wildlife trafficking as for smuggling of other illicit commodities, exploiting gaps in national law enforcement and criminal justice systems. The billions of dollars generated by this illegal business are being used to further nefarious ends. In some cases money goes to financing terrorism and contributing to instability. These crimes are also closely interlinked with money-laundering, corruption, murder and extreme violence.

Wildlife and forest transnational organized crime is particularly acute in developing countries as under-resourced Governments often lack the capacity to regulate the exploitation of their natural assets. Rather than promoting economic progress, poorly managed natural wealth can lead to bad governance, corruption or even violent conflict.

Wildlife and forest crime threatens biodiversity and endangered species, the livelihood of people, and severely impacts national security, social and economic development.

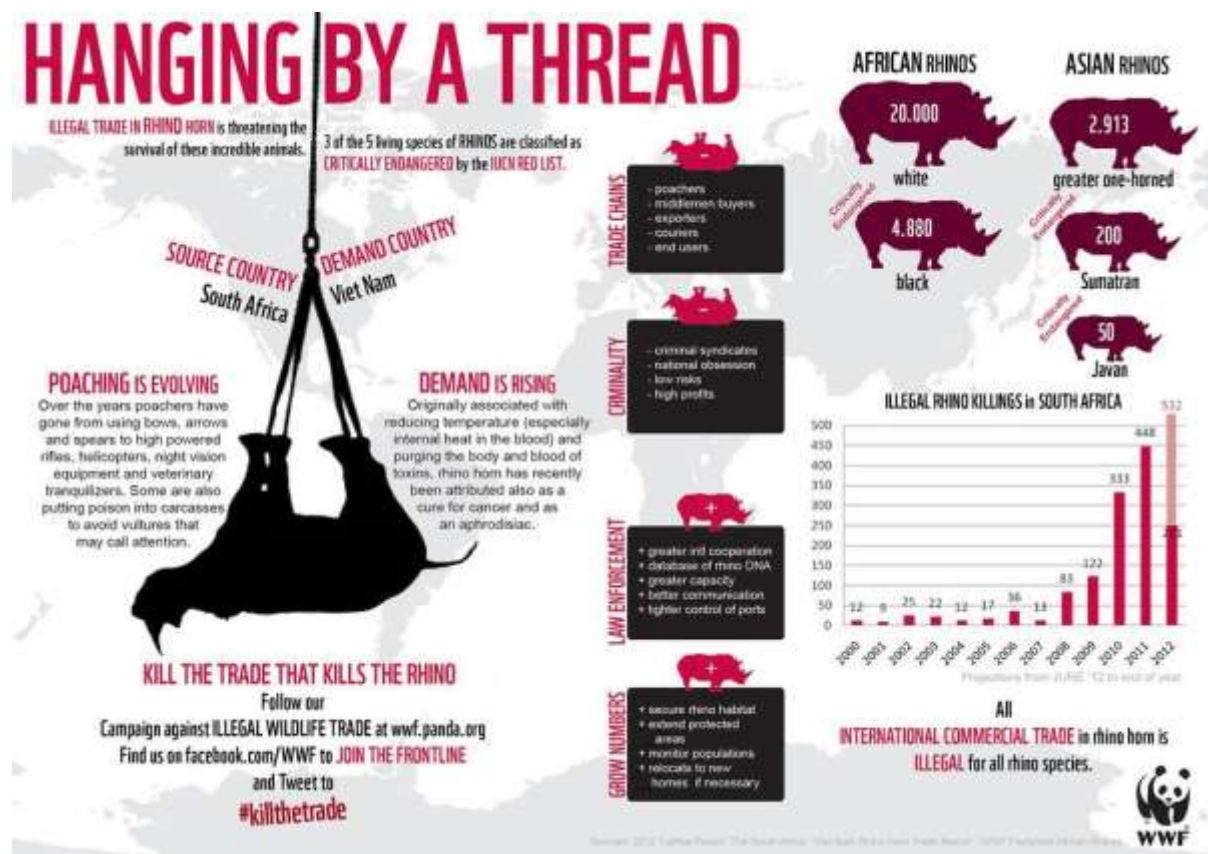
Illicit Exploitation leads to illicit trade of flora and fauna. It is estimated that illicit trade of flora and fauna was the 5th most profitable trade amounting to \$10 billion annually and the growth rate has not reduced.



1.3. Nature of the market

The harvesting of natural resources is basic to everyday human life. The global exchange of wild plants and animals provides us with food, pharmaceuticals, building materials, decorative objects, clothing, cultural and religious items, and pets. In 2008, the combined global value of legally traded commodities derived from wild plants and animals was approximately US\$24.5 billion. The supply of wildlife is not infinite and its trade requires tight and rigorous regulation. While the illegal trade in wildlife is a major threat to biodiversity, it provides a significant source of profit for criminals. By distorting and undercutting legitimate commerce, it can cause economic and social disruption. Governments impacted by illegal wildlife trade are deprived of direct and indirect sales and tax revenues on import and export goods – goods that would normally be state-controlled natural resources. Furthermore, the high level of corruption underpinning this illegal activity poses a serious threat to national governance. Traditional medicine attracts a wildlife trade driven by often-unverified beliefs about the medicinal properties of rare plants and animals or their parts and derivatives. Examples include: orchids, tiger parts and rhino horn. In Asia, traditional medicine is tied very closely to cultural values and traditions that have been practiced for thousands of years. The World Health Organization estimates that 80% of the population in some Asian nations is dependent on traditional medicine for primary health care. Believed to be expanding at a rate of 10% per annum, the market for traditional medicine is linked to illegal wildlife trade as it involves the consumption of products from endangered animals and their parts and derivatives. The most dramatic example of such misconceptions is the use of rhino horn, whose demand has recently grown exponentially in Vietnam, after the spread of uncorroborated claims that rhino horn medicine cured a Vietnamese official of cancer. Today,

a kilo of rhino horn is valued at approximately that of a kilo of gold. As a result, the survival of rhinos is under unprecedented pressure.



Increasing wildlife trade is driving a broad range of wildlife species towards global extinction. Yet, there are many more mammals, reptiles, marine species and plants that have declined drastically. Unfortunately, for these species, there is very limited public awareness. Consequently, protection is weak. A description is provided below of the species that account for the bulk of the illegal trade volume of wildlife in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

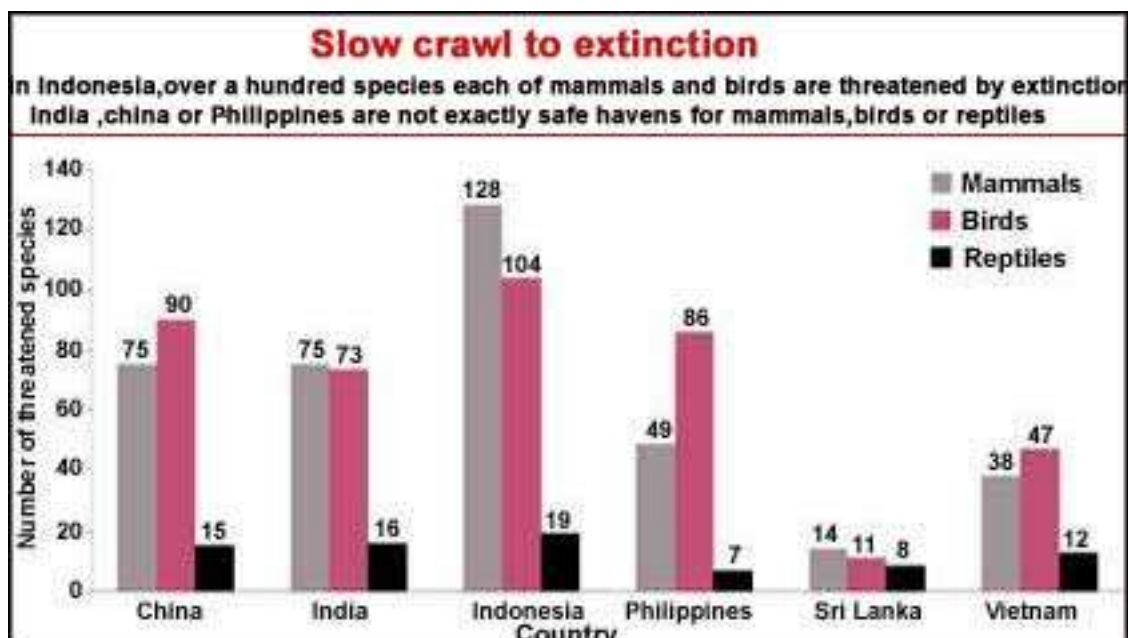
Bear bile and gall bladders are used for the purposes of traditional medicine in East Asia and East Asian Diaspora communities around the world. But while the trade in bear bile is illegal in most parts of the region, the cross-border trade in raw bear bile, live bears and manufactured bile products remains widespread. This is in violation of national laws and CITES regulations.

Pangolins, also known as scaly anteaters, are nocturnal mammals native to Africa and Asia. The demand for pangolins as 'luxury' wild meat and traditional medicine, is driven by increasing consumer affluence, mainly in China, Hong Kong (China), Taiwan (Province of China) and Vietnam. The illegal international trade in Asian pangolins and their scales currently constitutes the principal threat to this CITES-protected species. Recent seizures indicate that since pangolins have become rare in the region, brokers and traffickers are sourcing from Africa in order to meet the growing Asian demand.

Reptiles traded as food items account for the majority of illegal wildlife trafficked from Southeast Asia to China. In 2011, Thai officials in Prachuab Khiri Khan seized more than

2,000 monitor lizards from Malaysia en route to China with an estimated retail value of US\$60,000.¹⁶ Freshwater turtles form a large part of the reptile trade, and a significant portion of Asia's freshwater turtles are now endangered. All wild orchid species are protected by CITES. Worldwide, orchids are traded in high volumes. Southeast Asia is a major supplier to the retail trade that is estimated to be worth US\$9 billion per year. In 2000, orchid exports from Thailand alone amounted to more than US\$250 million in total sales, mostly in domestically-propagated cultivars rather than wild-collected plants. Illegal wildlife trade is by no means restricted to land-based species. Substantial volumes of protected marine wildlife are being illegally traded to supply regional and global demand, with extremely high profit margins for traders. International demand for shark meat, fins and medicinal products is the driving force of a lucrative trade that is often illegal and is endangering a growing number of shark species around the world. Trade in CITES-listed shark species mainly consists of parts of Whale Shark, Basking Shark and Great White Shark. Similar to the consumption of other illegal wildlife, the consumption of shark fins is driven by wealth, social status and traditional beliefs. The main consumers in the region include China, Hong Kong (China), Taiwan (Province of China), Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. The EU and the US also import significant quantities to supply demand among the East and Southeast Asian Diaspora.

Marine turtles are heavily traded in East Asia and the Pacific in spite of CITES protection. Almost 30,000 illegal items made from critically endangered Hawksbill turtle were found on sale in Vietnam in 2002. This trade also supplies illegal export markets for tortoise-shell (Bekko) items in China and Japan. The depletion of turtle numbers off the coast of Vietnam means that traders are now going further afield – to places such as the Philippines and the Pacific – in order to obtain turtles for the shell-processing industry.



1.4. Methods of trafficking

Internet, e-banking and efficient transport systems give dealers and smugglers unprecedented access to new markets. Transport infrastructure (such as new roads opening up forested areas) provides better access to previously remote areas. This facilitates extraction and trade of

wildlife products. Open borders and better infrastructure have both also permitted inflows of poachers and traders to areas where wildlife can be sourced.

Wildlife is transported by land, air or sea in different ways. Traffickers often use the same routes as legal importers, but falsify certificates, exploit regulatory loopholes, take advantage of poor capacity in law enforcement agencies or obtain genuine documents corruptly. Concealment methods are limited only by the relative bulk of shipments and the ingenuity of the smugglers. On airlines in the Pacific and Asia, wildlife traffickers have been caught squeezing birds into tubes, packing animals like tiger cubs into hand luggage and hiding eggs in specifically designed clothing. By land, transportation is carried out in special hidden compartments in cars, vans and trucks, and by employing couriers to take larger loads across borders in separate and smaller containers. Bears traded illegally in Vietnam have even been transported as patients in ambulances and in vehicles carrying fake government plates.

A common method for smuggling includes fraudulent paperwork or mixing protected species with legal shipments of look-alike species. Wildlife “laundering” also occurs when wild-collected plants and animals are passed off as captive bred.

Countries in East Asia and the Pacific can play one or more roles (source, transit and destination) in the illegal international wildlife trade. Indonesia remains a key source country because it retains more intact forests than its Southeast Asian neighbours. Its forests are critical to the sustainability of species. As indicated by a staggering number of seizures between 2007 and 2011, New Zealand has become a source for criminal networks trading into Europe, but also as a destination country for endangered species coming from Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands.

Major trans-shipment countries in Southeast Asia are Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Vietnam is both a major consumer country and an important conduit to China. Another study has found that live coral exported from Palau for the aquarium trade is sold at around US\$3 per kg compared to coral sold locally for construction material at less than US\$0.02 per. For example, in 2004 and 2005, the origins of more than 3,000 wild Malagasy chameleons were intentionally mis-declared by Thai wildlife dealers to obtain CITES import permits in order to enter the chameleons in the pet trade. Thailand is not alone in facing problems with mis-declarations of protected reptiles. Many reptiles are exported from Indonesia to the European Union (EU) under paperwork declaring them to be captive-bred specimens. There are serious discrepancies, however, between the numbers of reptiles exported and the numbers of reptiles that purported breeding facilities in Indonesia are actually producing, or have the capacity to produce. These discrepancies suggest that large numbers of wild-caught reptiles are being mis-declared on CITES permits exported from Indonesia as “captive-bred”.

International route:



In 2000, the estimated revenue generated by the illegal wildlife trade in Vietnam totaled US\$67 million, more than 12 times the value of the legal wildlife trade in that country. By some estimates, 3,500 to 4,000 tons of illegal wildlife (foodstuffs and forest products) are trafficked in and out of Vietnam each year. The data analyzed in the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) show increasing frequencies of large-scale ivory seizures around the world. Within Southeast Asia, large ivory seizures in Malaysia between 2010-2011 indicate that the country was a major trans-shipping hub in this chain. These shipments were likely bound for China, as that country has major ivory processing centers.

China is the largest consumer in East Asia of wildlife for food, traditional medicine and other purposes such as ornaments. In 2010, Chinese Customs made 933 seizures of wildlife. An analysis of the seizures suggests that illegal wildlife not only enters mainland China, but is also exported to neighbouring provinces of Hong Kong (China) and Taiwan (Province of China), as well as Japan and the Republic of Korea. According to the official data, Beijing and Guangdong accounted for 80% of the total number of seizures in 2010, mainly due to the high level of connectivity of these two towns by air and seaports. The vast majority of these seizures relate to imports. In particular, the number of seizures increased during national holidays, indicating that the trade correlates with vacation travel. Ivory represented 80-90% of such seizures, equivalent to an average of two ivory seizures a day. In 93% of the cases,

the smugglers were Chinese, travelling from East Africa and the Middle East and detected at airports.

1.5. Wildlife trade in Asia



Southeast Asia, perhaps more than any other region on the planet, encapsulates the full range of challenges facing the management of wildlife trade. World-renowned not only for its diversity of animal and plant species, but also for cultural, linguistic, political and religious diversity, South-east Asia encompasses a range of lifestyles that all rely in some way upon wildlife resources for food, medicines, clothing and other products.

Economic growth, expansion of infrastructure, free trade agendas and a general push for development are contributing to a rapidly changing socio-economic dynamic. In a liberalized trade policy environment, it is all too easy to treat wildlife as just another commodity rather than paying heed to the management needs of natural production systems. However, now that Lao PDR has joined CITES, all 10 countries in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) are Parties to the Convention – which creates a common basis upon which to conduct legal and sustainable wildlife trade. But the challenges remain daunting. While more effective law enforcement and inter-agency co-operation is needed to control illegal trade, only by reversing trends of over-harvesting can trade in legally acquired wild species, their by-products and derivatives, continue to support the sustainable development of human societies.

1.6. Sectors of Trade

1.6.1. Traditional Medicine

Many traditional medicines use wildlife as ingredients, for example traditional East Asian medicines use parts and derivatives from more than 1000 plant and animal species including tiger bone, bear gall bladder, pangolin scales, rhinoceros horn and Dendrobium orchids. Maintaining medicinal plant harvest and trade within sustainable levels also presents a major challenge in the region. TRAFFIC's work has shown continued availability of rare species as ingredients without any systems in place to ensure their legality and sustainability – and medicinal vendors rarely have any knowledge on the status of the species in the wild.

1.6.2. The Pet Trade

Much of the pet trade is dominated by reptiles and birds, and an increasing trend exists to meet the demand of specialist collectors for some of the world's rarest species. These 'hobbyists' often specialize in particular groups of species such as types of parrots and songbirds (e.g. Straw-headed Bulbul *Pycnonotus zeylanicus*, Palm Cockatoo, *Probosciger aterrimus*), tortoises and freshwater turtles (e.g. Indian Star Tortoise *Geochelone elegans*, and the Pignosed Turtle *Carretochelys insculpta*), snakes or lizards, with a view to collecting the broadest, and often the rarest range of species.

It is this global demand for rare and exotic pets that fuels much of the illegal collection and smuggling from the renowned biodiversity hotspots in South-east Asia – as well as rising demand from countries within South-east Asia for endemic species from Africa, South America and Australasia.

1.6.3. Food

For many people, wildlife is an important source of protein. In some countries, food harvested from nature, whether wild meat, fisheries products or edible plants, contributes to national economies and the livelihoods of local communities.

However, in recent decades, growing human populations, unsustainable harvesting and illegal activities have put additional pressure on these resources. For example, studies by TRAFFIC and other scientific assessments have shown that trade in live reef fish for food is a serious threat to the survival of wild populations of groupers and wrasses in South-east Asia, with the declining aggregations of Humphead Wrasse *Cheilinus undulatus* illustrative of broader trends.

In many parts of the region, wild meat from species such as deer, pangolin and snakes is consumed as delicacies or 'tonic' food items, rather than for subsistence needs.

In East Asia, meat from freshwater turtles (such as the South-east Asian Box Turtle *Cuora amboinensis*) is consumed in huge volumes despite the fact that three-quarters of the 90 species found in Asia are considered threatened, and 18 are considered critically endangered, such as the River Terrapin *Batagur baska*. As turtles are long-lived animals, consumers hope to attain similar longevity, and many believe that the 'wildness' of the meat will benefit their

health.

1.6.4. Curios and trophies

A wide range of animal products are found in Southeast Asia's ornamental trade, including elephant ivory carvings, products made from the shell of the Hawksbill Turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata*, seashells, coral souvenirs, mounted insects such as butterflies and beetles. Horns, antlers and heads are hunted and traded for their value as trophies, such as those from Sambar *Cervus unicolor* and Serow *Naemorhedus sumatraensis*.

International travelers frequently have the option to purchase goods made from endangered species, such as marine turtle products and elephant ivory while abroad. Often this illegal trade is unintentional, resulting from ignorance of the laws and of which species require permits for export and or import. In many cases, these products can be legally offered for sale in popular tourist locations, but transporting them across international borders requires special permits, such as those issued by CITES authorities.

1.7. Value

A conservative estimate for the illegal trade in selected mammal species to and within Southeast Asia and the Pacific is close to US\$400 million, with more than half of this trade involving ivory products. Surprisingly, the value of the black market for relatively unknown species – such as pangolins – dwarfs the value associated with the rarer, emblematic species, like tigers, which nevertheless provide a highly profitable niche for organized crime networks.

Existing studies by NGOs, as well as recent UNODC surveys among the law enforcement community, reveal that the range of wildlife illegally traded in Southeast Asia. Existing studies by NGOs, as well as recent UNODC surveys among the law enforcement community, reveal that the range of wildlife illegally traded in Southeast Asia. This includes snakes, turtles, monkeys, orchids, lizards, slow loris, aloe vera, geckos and many more. Data for this trade remain extremely scattered and susceptible to miscalculations and gross oversights. A review of some of the most credible information (derived mainly from a few market surveys) indicates a market value in these species ranging from US\$500,000 to US\$1 million.

Based on the above analysis and in consideration of the fact that the actual value of the illegal wildlife trade in the region should encompass more species, more countries, and highly volatile prices at retail level, a conservative estimate values the regional illegal wildlife trade at US\$2.5 billion a year, excluding illegal timber and off-shore fishing. This amount includes wildlife that it is either traded in a completely clandestine manner as well as wildlife that is concealed, mis-declared or disguised within legal shipments.

1.8. Measures taken by various organizations for protection of wildlife

Due to illegal exploitation of wild flora and fauna in Asia, several steps have been taken to prevent them. One of them is the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network or ASEAN-WEN. It was officially launched on 1 December 2005, as a regional inter-agency and inter-governmental initiative to counter the illegal cross-border trade in endangered flora and fauna. It helps countries share information on and tackle cross-border wildlife crime and

facilitates the exchange of regional best practices in combating those crimes. As the world's largest wildlife law enforcement network, it comprises the law enforcement agencies of the 10 Asian countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam and Thailand) forming a regional intergovernmental law-enforcement network.

Trade Ban Enforcement IFAW(International Fund for Animal Welfare) has trained more than 1,000 customs and wildlife law enforcement officers across the globe to identify smuggled animals and illegal wildlife products before they cross borders. International collaboration on wildlife crime enforcement is critical to protecting species that are being over-exploited for profit. IFAW has supported INTERPOL enforcement projects, including funding a Criminal Intelligence Officer for Wildlife since 2006. INTERPOL law enforcement operations across Asia from 2008-2010 resulted in the seizure of several tons of contraband ivory and more than 200 persons arrested and charged with illegal commerce in elephant ivory. An INTERPOL operation in 2010 resulted in the arrest of 25 people across six countries involved in the illicit trade of tigers.

Due to this, The Royal Thai Customs seizure of elephant tusks, 739 pieces, total weight 4,000 kilograms valued at 200 million baht (\$6 million US Dollars). The ivory was in a shipping container no. CMAU 2140407 carried on the vessel KATA BHUM voyage on 18 April 2015.

In 1975, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) came into force with the purpose to protect endangered wildlife. Most South Asian countries have ratified the Convention. Nevertheless wildlife has decreased substantially over the years symbolized prominently by the drastic reduction of tigers in the wild, whose number went down in one century from 100,000 to approximately 3,200. From 17 to 19 May 2010, South Asian countries met at the "First Meeting of the South Asia Experts Group on Illegal Wildlife Trade", in Kathmandu, Nepal to discuss, how they can work better together in wildlife law enforcement to effectively contain illegal wildlife trade, bring poachers and smugglers to justice and rescue animals when seized. The ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) supported by Freeland and TRAFFIC (the wildlife trade monitoring network of the World Wildlife Fund) provided valuable insight in its capacity-building, networking and communication work over the last six years, which resulted in major achievements with regard to the rescue of 28,000 animals and the first multiple years convictions for wildlife smugglers in several South East Asian countries. In the light of this experience, the Representatives of the respective Government agencies decided to form a similar network for South Asia, the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) and identified the immediate actions required to give shape to this network, including the establishment of a secretariat, the carrying out of joint operations, intelligence sharing and identification of markets for illegal wildlife products.

With this step done, the Declaration of the South Asia Cooperative Environmental Program (SACEP) in 2008 meeting marked a renewed commitment by South Asian countries to protect our valuable natural resources and wildlife in a region that hosts one fourth of the world's population. And they can count with the support of TRAFFIC, the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime, -formed in 2009 by CITES, Interpol, the World Customs Organization and UNODC - as well as of other partners such as the World Bank and the US.

In Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park and Bukit Balai Renjang Landscape in Indonesia, tiger populations have been significantly decreasing over the last several years due to severe poaching and habitat fragmentation. With the support of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's

Wildlife Without Borders – Rhino Tiger Conservation Fund, Wildlife Conservation Society and their Wildlife Crime Unit (WCU) and Wildlife Response Unit (WRU) are conducting human-wildlife conflict patrols, wildlife crime investigations (including legal aid for the prosecution of illegal poachers), and tiger conservation education events to help protect this charismatic species. Between 2006 and 2008, the WCU generated 63 reports of illegal hunting, trading, smuggling or possession, which led 35 arrest or confiscation operations. Monitoring for illegal wildlife trade has been expanded to Palembang in South Sumatra and Jakarta, the capital of Sumatra. Both are important exit points for wildlife smuggling and also Indonesia's two largest wildlife markets, including markets for wild-caught tigers and tiger parts. Together with TRAFFIC, the WCU team and the national police raided a factory and seized 14 tons of frozen pangolins, worth 2.7 million dollars, and arrested three suspects. This was the biggest wildlife trafficking law enforcement seizure in Indonesian history.

1.9. Bibliography

1. <http://www.traffic.org/trade/>
2. http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/sais_review/v026/26.1deeks.html
3. https://books.google.co.in/books?hl=en&lr=&id=3gexAgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=wildlife+trafficking&ots=yCQ_ehbQLi&sig=NZLpkKS0TibtEeEwho0WcfyrCc#v=onepage&q=wildlife%20trafficking&f=false
4. http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/species/problems/illegal_trade/
5. <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/campaigns/forests/threats/illegal-logging/>
6. http://www.unodc.org/documents/NGO/EIA_Ecocrime_report_0908_final_draft_1ow.pdf

1.10 Questions a resolution must answer

1. In what ways can the UNODC Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit be implemented with specific focus to South Asia?
2. What are the key mechanisms in the International Environmental Regime?
3. How can individuals be included in the fight against international environmental crime, from both the perspective of a victim and that of a perpetrator?
4. What are some of the major obstacles in implementation of such an international criminal law concerning offenses against the environment?

AGENDA- 2: Trade of Illicit Narcotics in South America and Mexico

Introduction

The illicit trade of narcotics in South America primarily includes the production and sale of cocaine obtained through the Coca cultivation in the Andes of South America, particularly in Colombia, Peru and Bolivia. This further includes the export of these banned substances to the United States of America and Europe.

While consumption of drugs remains relatively low in South America, the consumption of cocaine has increased significantly in countries along the major smuggling routes namely Mexico, Colombia, Brazil and other countries in South and Central America. In fact, crackdowns on drug trafficking by the Mexican government have forced many cartels to operate routes through Guatemala and Honduras instead. This is a shift from the 1980s and early 90s, when the main smuggling route was via the Caribbean into Florida. The United

States is the primary destination, but around 25 to 30% of global cocaine production travels from Latin America to Europe, typically via West Africa. Major drug trafficking organisations or cartels are Mexican and Colombian, and are estimated to generate somewhere between \$18 to \$39 billion in wholesale proceeds per year. Since February 2010, the major Mexican cartels have again aligned in two factions, one integrated by the Juárez Cartel, Tijuana Cartel, Los Zetas and the Beltrán-Leyva Cartel; the other faction integrated by the Gulf Cartel, Sinaloa Cartel and La Familia Cartel. As a result of the illicit trade of narcotics, Central and South America and the Caribbean have the world's highest crime rates. While the drug cartels in Colombia and Mexico regularly make headlines, attention must also be paid to the growing role of Brazil—and Brazilian organised crime—as a major player in the global trade in illicit narcotics.

The Central America and Caribbean region continues to be used as a major transit point for the large-scale trafficking of illicit drugs because of its location at the crossroads of the main producing countries in South America and the consumer markets in North America and Europe. The total amount of cocaine smuggled to

North America has declined due to reduction in demand, the proportion of narcotics in transit through Central America has increased significantly. The United States of America is the main destination for illicit drug shipments. Drug cartels based in Mexico dominate the market for cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine in the United States. According to figures provided by the United Nations Office of Narcotics and Crime (UNODC), the number of seizure cases involving Brazil as a transit country increased tenfold in the past four years. Both geography and commerce help explain Brazil's growing profile in the narcotics trade. While Brazil does not produce cocaine, its vast coastline and weakly patrolled borders have presented an attractive

opportunity for traffickers. Countries including Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, which are among the three largest cocaine producing countries share borders with Brazil and so does Paraguay, one of the largest marijuana producers.



Moreover, the growing legitimate trade relationship between Brazil and Africa has opened a new corridor for illicit traffic. Trade between South American drug cartels and Western African countries reached \$17.2 billion in 2009. A case in point is Angola, which calls Brazil its largest trading partner and ranks among the top destinations for Brazilian exports.

Between 2005 and 2009, trade between Brazil and Angola increased from \$520 million to \$1.5 billion, an increase of 183 percent. Nigeria, where organised crime groups have been involved in the drug smuggling business since the 1970s, is another hotspot in the Brazil– Africa connection. The illicit narcotics trade between Brazil and Western Africa alone accounts for nearly \$800 million.

The Terrorist Threat

Other consequences of the trans-Atlantic drug trade are less noticeable. Brazilian authorities claim that the huge revenues from illicit drug trafficking are triggering an underground arms smuggling trade. In addition, increasing illicit commerce with Africa may increase Brazil's vulnerability to terrorist networks.

After years of conjecture, there is now strong evidence linking drug traffickers and terrorist organizations. Since the majority of narcotics leaving South America for Europe exit Brazil and travel through terrorist strongholds in West Africa, these established ties may increase.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration has identified West Africa as a developing hub of narcoterrorism, and there is evidence that Latin American traffickers are collaborating with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Hezbollah to smuggle cocaine to Europe.⁹ In December 2009, the UNODC informed the UN Security Council that narcotics were being traded by “terrorists and anti-government forces” to fund their operations.¹⁰ That same month, authorities arrested three individuals in Ghana for cocaine trafficking who reported that they were supporting al-Qaeda.

Drug trafficking is not new to either Brazil or West Africa, but the level of sophistication of today's global drug traffickers has raised international concern. Several security agencies have reported that drug dealers have their own goods containers and their own jet aircraft network that links the cocaine-producing regions of South America and West Africa for eventual transport to Europe. It is estimated that the fleet includes twin-engine turboprops, executive jets and even a Boeing 727 (which can carry up to 10 tons of cargo). In 2009, drug traffickers landed a Boeing 727 on a makeshift runway in Mali and unloaded as much

as 10 tons of cocaine before setting the plane ablaze when it failed to take off again. The transportation fleet gives terrorist groups like the FARC, al-Qaeda and AQIM the ability to move vast amounts of illicit materials back and forth between Brazil and West Africa.¹¹ The link between terrorist networks in West Africa and Brazil's drug traffickers represents an increasing security threat to Brazil, particularly as the bidirectional pipelines used to

transport goods, arms, materials, and people expand and grow more seamless. Coupled with the fact that Brazil is a nuclear power, this may create the incentive and capability for acquiring and transporting illicit nuclear materials, which captured documents indicate has long been a goal of al-Qaeda and other militant Muslim groups. Among South American states, Brazil already has the largest presence of nonterrorist criminal groups, many of which are involved in the illegal drug trade. Experts believe terrorists increasingly use them as a source of material support. However, while the tri-border area between Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay has been described as a "haven for fund-raising, recruiting and [plotting] terrorist attacks elsewhere,"¹² there is no conclusive evidence that terrorist networks are involved in illicit trade in Brazil. Still, intelligence analysts have confirmed ties between Latin American drug traffickers and terrorist networks

in West Africa. In West Africa, the rise of the drug trade has increased fears that weak states could become criminalized "narco-states."¹³ In Guinea-Bissau the assassination of the military chief of staff, General Batista Tagme Na Wai, and the murder of the country's president, João Bernardo Vieira, in 2009 were linked to a trafficking dispute. The growing drug trade has also been blamed for increasing political instability and violence elsewhere in the region, including, in 2008, riots in Cote d'Ivoire, an attempted coup in Guinea-Bissau and an actual coup in Guinea. The number of West African organized crime groups involved in drug

smuggling is growing; some even have their own armies and caches of weapons.¹⁴
Protect the Border

These threats of violence and terrorism have not been completely ignored by domestic authorities. Brazil and West African countries have taken both unilateral and regional action to improve border security and the capacity to detect and interdict illicit activities.

A recent arms trafficking report noting that Brazil's border control is "far from satisfactory" has prodded the government to pursue new initiatives such as doubling troops along the entire Brazilian border.¹⁵ But whether those efforts will be enough to diminish the drug trade and threats of terrorist activity remains to be seen.

In June 2011, President Dilma Rousseff announced a new Strategic Border Plan,

aimed at strengthening cooperation on border control with neighboring countries to fight organized crime. One provision gives the Brazilian Army the power to carry out police actions. Brazil

also intends to send 7,000 soldiers and 30 warplanes to patrol areas along its border with Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay.

Authorities identified 34 places along the Brazilian border in which organized criminal gangs operate. Justice Minister José Eduardo Cardozo said border control in these places

will be reinforced in concert with the Federal Police, the Federal Highway Police and the

Armed Forces.¹⁶

At the same time, Brazil is working on bilateral border security agreements with all 10 countries with which it shares borders. In July, Brazil and Paraguay signed bilateral agreements to improve information sharing and to coordinate anti-trafficking efforts. Less than a month later, Brazil and Colombia signed a border agreement to combat organized crime and protect natural resources along their shared Amazon border. The agreement created a Border Commission composed of security forces from both countries that will regularly monitor and evaluate border security progress.

The agreements are already producing results. At the time of this article's publication, Brazil was planning a joint "mega operation" with Paraguay to hunt down traffickers of narcotics and contraband in their shared border area. The operation involved large investments in technology to aid

the police and military operations, and was to include the use of spy planes and satellites.¹⁷

To cover sea and air routes, Brazil's Federal Police will use unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in late 2011. Eventually these high-tech reinforcements will be coordinated with Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru so the drones can monitor trade routes across the joint airspace of all four countries.¹⁸

Special attention is being paid to the West African link as well. Brazil has joined the Airport Communications Project (AIRCOP)—a new UNODC-sponsored project funded by Canada and the European Commission, in cooperation with Interpol and the World Customs Organization.¹⁹ AIRCOP seeks to strengthen communication and encourage intelligence-sharing at the airport and police level between Brazil and seven West African states (Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal,

and Togo).

Corruption and Limited Resources on the Receiving End

But such efforts are complicated by West Africa's own governance problems. The lack of domestic security architecture, along with insufficient equipment, corruption and poor training for police are common problem across the region. For example, until last year,

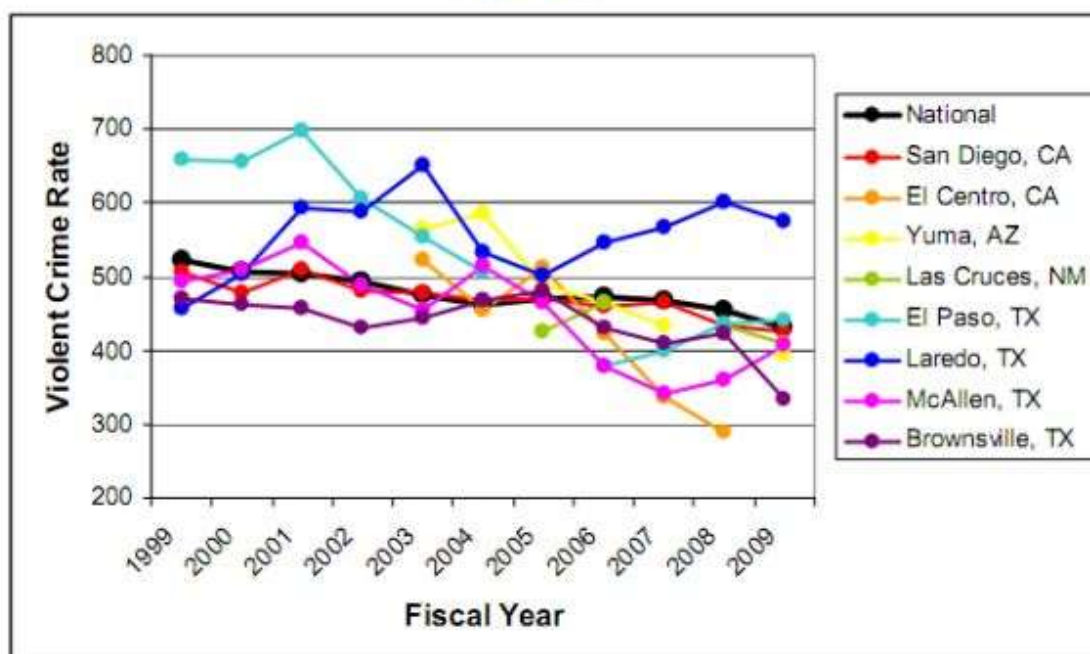
Guinea did not have a single scanner at its international airports. Nigeria only began using body scanners at its airports in 2010. The attention to air smuggling is timely. When sea interdiction efforts increased, drug traffickers switched to air transport in Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, and Sierra Leone. It

is well documented that the drug traffickers freely use abandoned airfields and landing strips in these countries where police have no presence. Authorities in Mali, where AQIM has now infiltrated, are so overburdened and under-resourced that they "lack the capacity to patrol the northern parts of their country."²⁰

Notwithstanding their budget constraints and institutional challenges, many African countries are taking a tougher stance against drug trafficking. The Nigerian National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has increased interdiction efforts, particularly at the airports. Earlier this year, the leader of Gambia's National Drug Enforcement Agency warned that it would carry out a "tougher and more aggressive" fight against drug traffickers and reiterated

Figure 4. Violent Crime Rate in Selected Southwest Border MSAs

FY 1999-FY2009



Gambia's "double zero tolerance" on narcotics.²¹

Like Brazil, West African nations are beginning to recognize the value of regional cooperation. Last fall, Gambia hosted a regional forum on illegal drug trafficking and organized crime. In 2010, delegates from 34 countries gathered at the Fourth Session of the African Union Ministerial Conference on Crime Prevention and Drug Control to discuss harmonization of legislation across countries and the creation of a coordination, collection and data processing organization to assess the drug and crime threat.²²

Earlier this year, African Union lawyers from Angola and Mozambique reportedly agreed to assist Guinea-Bissau in drafting legislation to combat the drug trade.²³ In July 2011, police chiefs from several West African countries met in Guinea to discuss countering national and transnational crime via simultaneous police operations and to review the status of efforts to harmonize national legislation on transnational crimes.²⁴

African nations are also receiving help from international bodies. Both the European Union and Germany have offered technical support to Nigeria's NDLEA, while the Portuguese Judiciary Police has collaborated with Angola to combat drug trafficking and violent crime. In 2009, the United Nations Office for West Africa, in partnership with UNODC, Interpol and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, set up the West Africa Coast

Initiative (WACI) to address growing problems of illicit drug trafficking and organized crime. A keystone of WACI is the establishment of a Transnational Crime Unit in each country that is charged with gathering information and developing operational intelligence.

25

There's still a lot to be done to improve the ability of the region to combat the growing transnational crime threat. As long as West Africa remains hamstrung by limited resources, international development agencies must target their funding to address the critical link between hard security and soft security (economic development and growth).

But across the Atlantic, the sheer size and economic power of Brazil makes it the crucial player—whether in tackling the spread of drug trafficking in South America or in breaking the West Africa–Brazil drug connection.

With its more ample resources, Brazil should increase bilateral aid and technical assistance to its resource-scarce counterparts in West Africa. More technical assistance to its WestAfrican trade partners in areas ranging from intelligence-gathering and information-sharing to interdiction across agencies will reduce its own vulnerability.

In the fight against transnational crime, the landscape is always shifting. Crime groups are adept at staying one step ahead of authorities simply by shifting their base of operations.

Several Brazilian groups, for example, have relocated to Paraguay, while continuing to control operations at home.²⁶ Drug traffickers' success (and wealth) make them a nimble and resourceful enemy, and it will take a similarly flexible and well-funded strategy on the part of governments across the globe to defeat them.

REFERENCES

<http://www.americasquarterly.org/brune>

<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/index.html?ref=menuside>

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/03/02/us-narcotics-un-idUSTRE72127620110302>