CHAPTER - II

INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES

India's biological diversity is the most significant in the world. There are 45,000 wild species of plants 77,000 wild species of animals which have been recorded. They together comprise about 65% of the world's known wildlife, making India truly one of the mega diversity areas of the world. India has 60% of the world's tiger population, 50% of the Asian elephant population and about 80% of the one horned rhinos, more than 13,000 species of butterflies and moths and over 1,200 species of birds. What is also significant is the duality of this sheer diversity with uniqueness. As many as 33% of the flowering plants and 185 of all plants found here are believed to be endemic (BSI-undated). In the case of fauna, endemism is high among groups like amphibian (62% of Amphibian species are found only in India). Unfortunately we have not been very successful in conserving this rich natural heritage. At least 105 of India's recorded wild flora and possible a large fraction of it's wild fauna is on the threatened list as a consequence of losing at least 50% of forests, polluting about 70% of the water bodies, building or cultivating over most of the grasslands and degrading most of the coasts in the last few decades. To this habitat destruction add pesticide poisoning, hunting, overexploitation and illegal wildlife trade and we have a perfect formula to destroy most of our lifeforms.

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1 Botanical Survey of India (BSI) - undated), Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) - 1991.
Endowed with a variety of exotic life forms, India has been a major resource centre for a majority of consuming nations and there exists a steady outward traffic of wildlife and wildlife products, a large part of it being illegal. Wildlife and wildlife articles under trade includes an amazing array of species ranging from a large number of charismatic species of mega fauna like tiger, rhino and elephant etc. to a great variety of flora. The main items are pelts of tiger and other feline species, parts of tiger like bones teeth claws, rhino horns bear bile, musk pods, skins of reptiles like snakes and crocodiles, ivory, live birds, animals and butterflies, corals, turtle products, ornamental plants like orchids, medical plants, frog legs, swiftlet's nests, deer antlers, hair bristles and wood and much more.

Wildlife trade in India with a history of 3000 years of tradition was till 30 years ago legal and India with it's rich bio-diversity was a major supplier of an extraordinarily large number of species. Historically, like trade in other consumer commodities like food grains wool etc., trade in wildlife is traditional and diffused in operation. The trade routes in both cases are same and in some cases also go along with narcotics drugs/gold and arms smuggling. Most prohibited items are traded ostensibly legally by altering or for gaining documents, laundering them through other countries or just plain lying about them. Traditional commodity trade carried out by certain communities who dealt only in one or two specific commodities has an unbroken tradition of 3000 years.

Trade in wildlife was like any other legal trade and was carried out in a manner similar to other traders, through the primary harvester who were generally a caste of people which specialised in hunting and gathering. Some of the tribes
whose profession is hunting and gathering are the Kanjars, Bahelias, Mogiars, Irulas etc. Being hunted and gathered by the primary harvester is beginning of the journey of the wildlife articles to the market. More often than not these primary harvesters are at a subsistence level. The next in the chain are small town business men who buy the article from the primary harvesters, who are paid a subsistence level remuneration. The product then undergoes primary processing and reaches the big city wholesaler, the money man who ultimately controls the trade.

Though a satisfactory mechanism of centralised data collection on wildlife crimes does not exists, a committee constituted under the parks protection case in 1995 looked at the available date on crimes against important wildlife species and discovered that there is a high incidence of wildlife crime in the northern and central India. Data available was insufficient as regards Wildlife crimes in other regions of the country, because of lack of communication from those areas. The population of tigers for instance was 4250 in 1989, dwindling to 2750 by 1993. The volume of illegal Wildlife trades is much larger earlier believed for instance till the middle of 1993 it was believed that snake skin trade in Southern India has virtually died out. Two seizures in 1994 however netted nearly 60,000 skins and investigators were promised a supply of 200,000 skin per year. There have also been massive seizures of tiger bones destined for China.

Until a few years ago, it was believed that the wildlife trade had largely died out as a result of the bans imposed by the amendments of the wildlife Protection Act. This belief was reinforced by the fact that there were seizures which were few and far between. Also there was no national, centralised data collection of wildlife
offenses. In the Indian states the wildlife offenses are handled at the local level and no comprehensive records are kept by the state headquarters. When offenses were detected in the early years of wildlife enforcement, either the cases were compounded (settled out of court), at very low fines, or if the cases went to court, decisions took far too long to be delivered and when the decisions did come, the offenders were generally let off due to legal technicalities or received light sentences.

There are good reasons to believe that illegal trade in wildlife has come back to India with a vengeance. Since many wildlife species have dwindled in South-East Asian countries the pressure on Indian wildlife has increased. Ironically, in that sense India is paying the price of its conservation successes of 1970s and the 1980s.

Till a few years ago China, Korea and Taiwan the leading consumers of tiger bones were able to meet their tiger bones requirement from Siberia, China and South East Asia. Now that tiger species in these areas have dwindled sharply, the traders directed their attack towards India. In 1993 an undercover investigator was offered a supply of 1,000 Kg of tiger bones, the product of 70 to 80 tigers, within 2 months. In another seizure nearly 400 kg of tiger bones along with some skins were confiscated in just two days. Tiger bone seizures have been occurring regularly all over northern India in Leh in Ladakh and Nepal, en route to Tibet. Another species that faces crisis because of the demand for its horn used in oriental medicine, is the rhino. During 1992 the death of rhino population was at the rate of one rhino per week. In the subsequent years however this carnage was brought under control by effective administrative changes.

Despite the ban by law, illegal trade in ivory still continuous and in Kerala
which has viable elephant population, tuskers are under heavy pressure. Elephants in other states like Karnataka and Orissa are also under threat.

Nearly one million US dollars worth of musk is smuggled out of India every year. The operation of smugglers of musk are secretive like those of narcotic smugglers and very little is known of the shadowy musk trade. Another species under pressure is the Himalayan bear, for use of bear bile for medicinal purposes. Live bear smuggled into neighboring countries, and parts of bear like the bear paws go to China as gourmet food. Floral species are also a part of the smuggling racket. In 1992 nearly 20 tones of the roots of a rare Himalayan plant called ‘kuth’ was seized by the wildlife authorities.

In the Sixties and Seventies the trade in Wildlife used to be in live animals, birds etc. Gradually shifted to parts products and derivatives which are rather difficult to identify and control, and at the same time easy to smuggle.  

The trade in flora is largely undocumented, through recently a number of plant species have attracted concern. They are Agarwood, Sandalwood, Cinnamon, Rosewood, Orchids and Medical plants.

The magnitude of the illegal trade in Wild Animals can only be roughly

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Some examples of animals parts, products and derivatives are: Elephant - Ivory, bone, tail, hair, nails, skin; Rhinoceros - Horn, toe nail, skin, urine, meat; Tiger/Leopard - Skin bone, teeth, skull, paw nails, penis etc.; Bear - Skin, fat, claws, gall, bladder, meat; Musk deer - Musk gland, canines, meat; Python, Cobra and other snakes - Skin, venom, meat; Crocodiles - Skin; Turtles and Tortoises - Meat, skin, eggs, complete shell as souvenir

There are many other marine and aquatic fauna including cetaceans which are treaded in various forms. The derivatives in which form such products are used are not only difficult to identity, but are difficult to isolate and are traded under various trade names.

In aspect of plants and plant products, the list is even longer. They are traded in various trade names in various forms - as roots, dried leaves, bark, seeds, flowers, petals, pollen and even extracts and oils.
estimated as the official customs trade statistics and the CITES Annual Reports rarely correspond - the former regularly recording figures larger than the latter. It is logical to conclude that whenever the gap is inexplicably large, it signals an illegal transaction.³

Forged documents secured through the connivance of veterinarians, customs officials and cooperative IATA member airline are used to ply this repulsive trade. Several species are mixed and labeled simply 'Live Birds' or 'Live Monkeys' to cheat the CITES provisions. It is easy to understand why the airlines are tempted to 'help out' the smugglers. For instance, the cost of sending one chimpanzee from Brussels to Morocco would amount to Belgian Francs 40,719 if the manner prescribed the CITES was adhered to. Disregarding these, a party could dispatch 2 Chimpanzees, 2 Tigers and a Cheetah for a sum of Belgian Francs 35,210 only.⁴

Lacunae in domestic legislation aggravate the problem. The state of Jammu and Kashmir in India has, for instance, not implemented the Wild Life Protection Act of 1972, Sales of Wild Life products are not banned. A study conducted by Martin Vandenberg and Resi Damhuis in July-August 1980-81 brought out some shocking facts - 10 fur shops and taxidermists in Srinagar were displaying and offering for sale skins of Snow Leopard, Clouded Leopard, Jungle cat and Desert cat. The asking price


was about US $ 180 per piece. Panther skins were valued at US $ 200 and Tiger skins at US $ 380. Fur Coats made out of Snow Leopard skins were priced at US $ 4000.⁵

There are many impediments to protecting the endangered species of animals and plants from poachers and smugglers. The margins of profit are huge - criminals are quite prepared to take extra risks. For instance, Rhinoceros horn is priced at US $ 300/kg in Hong Kong but fetches US $ 3000-5000/kg in the Chinese/Korean Markets. The poacher in Kenya is paid only US $ 265/kg for this commodity.⁶

Dr. I. D. Hamilton had estimated the African elephant population in 1976-79 as 1,343,340. The annual average figure for ivory obtained for these years was put at 496,200 kg. Other scholars have opined that between the years 1950-78 the exploitation of ivory totalled about 1,43,89,813 kg and that the thirds of the Kenyan populations was lost between the years 1970-78. Zaire later became the principal source of concern in the context of ivory trade.⁷

Many of the difficulties encountered in controlling the illegal trade in wildlife products are engendered due to the intransigence of states not party to the CITES, many of them quite affluent and closely allied to the powerful western countries. One such case is Singapore’s. The island republic repeatedly refused to join the CITES. It argued that the island republic has adequate legal provisions. When urged to join by the Singapore branch of Malaya Nature society the government spokesman maintained that the government has valid reasons for not becoming a party.⁸ When

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⁷ Ibid.
asked to detail these reasons he decided to do so. There are reasons to believe that the Government is aware of the profitability of this trade and does not wish to disturb the local business interests. In October 1982, 47 Cheetah skins were sized from an Australian tourist. The contraband was valued between Singapore $80,000-Singapore $100,000. The maximum penalty that the offender faced was S$46,000.9

There are very few countries that have adequate surveillance and enforcement machinery to ensure compliance with the CITES provisions. For instance in Latin America only Brazil has an administrative structure capable of meeting the requirement of CITES. The Wild life legislation and administration in Paraguay is very complex and Bolivia is notoriously lacking it.10

Obviously, it is not possible to survey, even superficially, the entire range of wildlife products traded as contraband. What this chapter seeks to do is to focus on the main items that have generated debate in the CITES conferences and are representative of the national interest of parties in different regions. The trades in ivory, rhinoceros products, snake and reptile skins, musk deer and birds along with tiger skin and bones have been selected as illustrative examples. These cases shed enough light for our purpose of analysing negotiations at the conference of parties on the objectives and diplomatic strategies of the African range states, India and her Asian neighbors and the major consumers like Japan, Federal Republic of Germany and the United Arab Emirates.

9 Ibid.
Trade in Ivory

The African elephant was originally listed in Appendix-I of the CITES in the year 1989 at - but the threatened populations managed to recover from the brink of extinction and their number was estimated around 1,50,000 in 1997. The increased population, put an unbearable pressure on land and the herds of elephants in many African countries caused wide-spread destruction of crops. The man-animal conflict began to assume serious proportions and there was a demand to lift the ban on the Ivory trade. Each of these nations expected to earn between US dollars 4 to 5 million from the sale of piled up stocks. They argued that they needed resources urgently for rural development, conservation and anti-poaching and therefore should not be penalized for their successful conservation programmes.

The Indian delegation to the CITES has always strongly opposed the inclusion of the African elephant in appendix II and the reopening of ivory trade. It has argued that this would open a backdoor to smuggle out ivory drawn from Asian elephants. Ashok Kumar, a member of the Indian delegation argued that ivory carvers in Japan preferred Asian ivory to the African variety, which is crumbly. He submitted that the price of Indian ivory had gone up by fifty percent over the past year in anticipation of the ban on Ivory trade being lifted. It was also submitted that resumption of trade would further encourage poaching.\(^\text{11}\)

The Indian argument was not acceptable to African participants, they maintained that the decline in the population of the Asian elephant was not due to

\(^{11}\) *Traffic Bulletin*, vol.3-4.
poaching but primarily to bad management. They argued that their own conservationist measures had begun to bear fruit and hence they should be allowed to generate resources from regulated trade. Their contention was that the funds accrued could once again be ploughed back for better maintenance of the Elephant populations. It was also submitted that poaching and smuggling could be ceased with better enforcement measures and stricter controls.

This, however, did not satisfy the Indians, as they felt that the banned Asian ivory was laundered with the import of permitted African ivory stocks. During the years 1970-77, Kenya declared that it had exported 21 tonne of ivory to India. The Indian figures for the same period was 118 tonne. Tanzania did not declare any exports to India for the years 1979-81 but the Indian figures showed imports of 605 kg., 1.4 tonne and 1.9 tonne of tusks in three years respectively.\footnote{For details see Vivek Menon, \textit{A God in Distress}, Asian Elephant Conservation Center, 1997.}

The U.S. representatives tried to put pressure on the African nations. Robert Mugabe, the then President of Zimbabwe, had bluntly said in his inaugural address, 'Every species must pay its way'. He had pointed out that protecting the Elephant was costing his country millions of dollars every year – as scarce underground water was being diverted from human needs to wildlife parks and the army, police and wildlife rangers were extremely hard-pressed to ward off poachers. It had been estimated the total cost of saving the Elephant efforts amounted to approximately US$ 400 per square km.
Mugabe stated that no poor country like his could be expected to bear this burden indefinitely. Mugabe's view was challenged by the imminent paleontologist and naturalist Leekey. He was the key speaker at a reception hosted by the Species Survival Network, a consortium of protectionist NGO's that included the U.S. Environmental Investigation Agency, the Humane Society of the United States and the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Leekey defiantly proclaimed himself to be an 'Elli Hugger' and the statement issued by this group mentioned that it was a sorry world in which the animals were expected to pay their way.

The protectionist NGOs encouraged the US delegation to pressurize those participants who were pleading for the ban on ivory trade to be lifted. It was reported during the conference that the Humane Society of the United States was trying the persuade the American government to withdraw aid from the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) in Zimbabwe. Rumors were also rife that those African states that supported the US position and opposed lifting the ban were promised additional aid.

The countries pleading for the lifting of the ban, expressed the desire for a secret ballot so that fellow African nations could vote without any fear. Chen Chinutengwende, the Zimbabwean Minister for Environment and Tourism, admitted candidly that the threats of aid stoppage had come only from western NGOs. Ironically, the demand for secret ballot was opposed by environmentally committed

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13 Proceedings of the Conference of the Parties at Harare.
14 Down to Earth, 15 July 1997, p. 28
groups like Greenpeace, who said that the idea violated the conventions commitment to transparency.

Scholars have indicated that 83 per cent of World Trade in African ivory is based in Hong Kong and Antwerp. These entrepots, obviously, value their reputation as havens of banned trade more than political (environmental) correctness. Their experience also shows that even small states and protectorates can defy international regime with impunity, in pursuit of national interests.

India has for centuries been an important centre for handicraft fabricated from ivory. Varanasi, Lucknow, Delhi, Jaipur, Mysor and Thiruanthapuram are renowned for the artistic skills of master-craftsmen specializing in ivory. Major items of export are chess sets, pill and powder boxes, statues and ornaments. In the year 1979, for instance total weight of ivory exports from India was 12,950 Kg - estimated to be the extract of 448 African elephants and its value was estimated to be Rs. 21,51,900. The major destinations for this export were Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, Denmark, USA, Netherlands, Canada and Belgium. The ivory imports were from West Germany (710 kg), United Kingdom (423 kg), Kenya (1349 kg), Tanzania (605 kg), Canada (577 kg).15

Those monitoring the contraband trade in Wildlife have repeatedly drawn attention to the fact that, mostly, it is the Germans who have played the key role in organizing this illegal trade. Many dealers in prohibited items assume the garb of tourists and operate as couriers.16

Countries of origin in ivory trade are many but, the trade is principally channeled through Singapore, Hong Kong, Bangkok (Chancery), Bujumbura (Burundi) and Kigali (Rwanda). Traffic in Wild Life is perfectly legal in Belgium - according to the statistics provided by *L’office Belge du Commerce Extérieurs* (The Belgian Office for Foreign Trade) the country’s trade was valued at 89 Million Belgian Francs worth of ivory. The national carrier, South-West airlines, transported 2-3 tonne of ivory per week.  

17 Federal Republic of Germany, another major consumer of ivory products, imported 69 tonne of ivory in 1978 and 66 tonne in 1979. The value of imports in a year amounted to Deutsche Marks 80 Million and the state earned 10 Million Deutsche Marks in revenue.  

A complex, but efficient laundering system has been put in place over the years. Flagrant abuse was exposed when Burundi ‘exported’ ivory - it has no elephants! 6.7 tonne of ivory were billed out of Zaire - a figure that could not be sustained by the elephant population of that country. Customs documents have recorded exports of Chimpanzees from Austria and Bobcat skins from Greece.  

19 The point that needs to be emphatically made is that it is not only the country of export but also of origin that has to be examined carefully. Re-exports and transit should not be allowed to be utilised as convenient loopholes.  

The trade in African ivory, is directly related to the threats that the dwindling Asian elephant population is exposed to. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between African and Asian ivory, especially after it has been worked

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17 *Traffic Bulletin*, vol. 3, no. 3-4, pp. 34-35.  
18 Ibid., 99. 16-17.  
upon. Many Asian countries are apprehensive that if trade in African ivory is not totally banned it will imperil the survival of the Asian elephant also. About 2000 wild Asian Elephants remain in Cambodia. Only the males bear tusks. Elephant hunting takes place, apparently not for meat, but for ivory. Elephant ivory has been carved in Cambodia for at least several hundred years, although only a few study the art of carving now. Long years of civil war disrupted social and economic life in the country and the amount of ivory available to work was drastically reduced. At the Centre de la Production d'Objet d'Arts Cultures, where the art of ivory carving may also be learned, students used only two kilogrammes of ivory in 1993, and in Battambang, two ivory craftsmen, who claimed to be the only ones in the town, reported using four to five kilogrammes of ivory each year.

The 30 or so craftsmen carving elephant ivory in and around Phnom Penh, work part-time owing to the scarcity and high cost of the tusks, most of which are reported to come from wild elephants in northeastern Cambodia. According to the manager, most ivory carvings are ornamental and small, which allows them to be easily concealed in luggage belonging to foreign buyers, who are said to be mainly

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20 Ibid.

21 In Ratanakiri Province in Cambodia, minority people have an ancestral taboo against eating elephant meat. Moreover, it would seem that live elephants are valued in Cambodia for work in the forests, including transportation of wildlife: one farmer, who had bought a young elephant for a sum equivalent to US$250, had been offered 18 times that amount for the seven-year-old animal in 1994, but refused to sell it. Several individuals in Ratanakiri, however, mentioned the practice of killing elephants to draw Tigers to the carcass.

22 Good quality ivory was purchased by carvers for the equivalent of US$340 per kg in 1992 and US$400 per kg in late 1993. Small, cracked pieces were valued only at US$100 per kg. In 1994, good quality ivory could fetch over US$400 per kg. Carvers in Battambang reported buying raw ivory from Phnom Penh and Lao PDR for US$15 per kg in 1991, a price which rose to US$350 per kg by 1993, and has since remained stable. Once carved, the ivory may sell to a retailer for US$5 for a flower bud ornament, for example, and in turn, to the next buyer for US$15-US$25 retail. The large mark-up in Battambang, may be owing to a small turnover in the shops, as Thai and American tourists are reported to buy directly from the carvers.
Thai, Japanese and French.

Some ivory is said to be smuggled into Laos PDR by Cambodian traders, and then transported to Thailand. In 1992, Laos PDR officials confiscated a young elephant from Cambodian traders who were planning to sell it in Thailand.

**Trade In Musk**

Another species involved in this illegal trade that is of great concern to India is the Musk deer. Musk probably is the most expensive wildlife commodity traded in. Whole selling at US $ 50/gm in Hong Kong and reaching a high of US $ 50,000 per kilogram in Japan rendering it many times more expensive than gold and even heroin.

The export of Musk pods from India was estimated to be 178 kg in 1972, it dropped to 81 kg in 1973 and further reduced to 16 kg in 1974. The export has since been totally banned. However, it would be naive to imagine that this ban can ensure the survival of Musk deer. There are reasons to apprehend that the Indian trade has been transplanted to Kathmandu.23

40 Musk pods make a kilo of Musk and, on an average, 4 animals are killed for 1 male animal captured in the snare. In the period 1974-78 Japan imported an average 5 kilo of Musk per year. In 1979 and 1980 the figure reached 46 and 40 kilos. It has been computed that 37,000 Musk deer have been killed to satisfy the Japanese demand alone. In addition 16 kilo of Musk was exported to France in 1980.24

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24 For details see MJB Green, WWF Project No. 1328. Also, Michael J.B. Green, 'Exploiting the Musk Deer for its Musk' Traffic Bulletin Vol.VIII, No.4, pp.59-60. Green has done extensive field work in difficult terrain in India and Nepal over the past decade and half and has established himself as the leading expert in the subject. He has submitted a Ph.D. dissertation to
When confronted with mounting international criticism MITI [Ministry of Trade and Industry in Japan] officials brazenly maintained that all the transactions were legal. They added, that the depletion of the Musk deer populations was due to Nepal's own negligence. One official asserted, that if they enforced their own law, things would not have reached such a sorry pass. In any case, critical media exposure (including in Japanese Media) seems to have had some effect. By 1981 the import of Musk had fallen to 17 kg. However the Japanese continued to defend the import as an essential ingredient of a life saving drug Kyushia for heart patients manufactured by the Tokyo Chinese Medical Association. Some Japanese journalists suggested voluntary import restriction but this did not find much favour with public at large.²⁵

Nepal had exported 112 kilograms of Musk in 1980 out of the total volume traded 239 kg. From this, some idea can be had of the significance of this commodity in the scarce foreign exchange earnings of that country. It has been pointed out that sale of a musk pod to a foreigner in dollars, allows a poor Nepalese villager to ensure basic food for himself and the family for many months.

**Trade in Birds**

The training of raptors, or birds of prey, to hunt birds and small mammals is a long-standing tradition in parts of Asia, the Middle-East and Europe. Though the

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²⁵ The Cambridge University and prepared valuable reports for the IUCN and WWF. Very useful material is also available in Michael J.B. Green, ‘Himalayan Musk Deer’ in Threatened Deer, IUCN 1978. Green has brought to light the fact, that the leading importer of Musk is the Japanese firm Mikuno and Company. Most valuable information regarding the state of the art research in Musk product and the illegal trade, is available in WWF project No.1328 and in ‘The Musk Deer Trade with particular reference to its impact on the Himalayan population of Moschus chrysgaster in Conservation in Developing Countries, Bombay Natural History Society.)

sport of falconry is now a vanishing art in India, a large number of raptors continue to be caught every year for this purpose, even though the hunting, local trade and export of all raptors in India, including migrant raptor species, is prohibited according to the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 (amended in 1991).

Raptors are among the most valuable of all birds, and those found trading in these species, face harsh penalties in India; the trade is therefore well concealed and difficult to penetrate. The birds are mostly smuggled out of India to the Middle East through Pakistan and Nepal, with a smaller number sold illegally in domestic bird markets.

As most bird hobbyists or keepers do not seek raptors, and as falconers are rare in India, most of these birds are bought from local markets or dealers and quickly smuggled out of the country. Following the blanket bird trade ban in India 1991, most raptors are smuggled to Dhaka in Bangladesh, and Kathmandu in Nepal. From where they are smuggled, in particular to Pakistan and Dubai (United Arab Emirates), both important centres for the bird trade.

**Trade In Alexandrine Parakeets**

Four parakeet species, comprise the bulk of pet birds exported from India: Plum-headed Parakeet, Red-breasted Parakeet, Rose-ringed Parakeet and the Alexandrine Parakeet. Of these, the Alexandrine Parakeet is preferred most, as a cage-bird owing to its ability to mimic the human voice and adapt well to captive conditions. It has a wide distribution across the country and is common in certain areas. There is concern, however, that trade might be affecting some populations and in some areas a decline in reported to have been observed.
Despite a ban on domestic trade in all wild birds and prohibition on bird exports being in effect since 1991, there is a sizeable trade in the species within India and specimens continue to be exported on a large scale. Prior to the ban, Alexandrine Parakeets were regularly exported: some 20,000 specimens between the years 1985 and 1990 inclusive. The Netherlands was the major importing country for 1989 to 1990, followed by Italy and Japan. Germany and the UK were also importers of the species. A study by (TRAFFIC) India of the trade in all live birds in India between March 1992 and October 1994 documented such trade in selected parts of the country.

The study noted that the majority of birds in trade originate in the states of Harayana (in particular Ambala and Jagadhiri) and from Jammu and surrounding areas in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, probably as a result of methods of capture and care. Birds trapped in the Punjab (Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Amritsar and Hoshiyarpur districts) are more docile than specimens found elsewhere, and are much -valued for their talking abilities. To a lesser extent, birds are also trapped in the states of Bihar and Orissa, and in the districts of Dehradun and Haridwar, in Uttar Pradesh; birds in passage from Nepal are also caught in this region.

Alexandrine parakeets were seen on 68 occasions during the survey period, and a total figure of more than 6000 specimens were recorded: at Hathibagan market, Calcutta, between 150 and 200 birds were observed on most of the 11 occasions the market was visited during the 12 months following March 1993; between 300 and

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26 A total of 75 markets in 47 locations were surveyed during the study period, of which 15 were inspected on several occasions. The survey methodology involved close monitoring of the trade and of activities at the trading establishments/stalls, so as to minimize duplication in counting or recounting unsold birds on subsequent market visits.
500 were observed at each of half a dozen other markets surveyed; fewer than 100 specimens were seen at the remaining outlets visited.

The Trade in Hill Mynas in India

The Hill Myna is another common bird in the pet trade. It is an accomplished mimic and talker in captivity, although such behaviour is not usual in the wild. A member of the family (Sturnidae) it is the only representative of its genus in India. It is traded in huge volumes in Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam.  

Following the export ban, illegal trade continued for example, 23 Hill Mynas were seized in October 1984 in Delhi from a Syrian national who was suspected of trying to smuggle the birds out of the country. This is just one of the many attempts to supply the trade using covert means.

The bird, which can be obtained for as little as Rs. 43 (US $1) direct from the poacher, can sell for Rs. 150-300 in Guwahati, Calcutta and the Jama Masjid Market in Delhi; this increases to between Rs. 3000 and Rs. 6000 on the international market. In the USA, a specimen sells for between US$170 and US$225 and a male specimen with a recorded breeding success may fetch US $325. The profit margins for the species are relatively high compared with other Indian birds. In 1979, tribesmen reportedly received Rs. 15-22 a bird and dealers Rs. 39-42. Today, dealers, pay Rs. 225-300 and Rs. 450. In 1979, it was estimated that 15000-25000 Mynas were

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S. Nashpers. Communication to TRAFFIC Network, 1994. The species is listed in CITES Appendix III in Thailand. In India, *Gracula religiosa* is listed in Schedule IV of The Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 which prohibits hunting of this species without a permit. The exportation of this species was also prohibited in 1972. Despite this, the bird continues to appear illegally in trade and has been fetching high prices since the mid-1990s.
collected for the trade from the north-east alone. While no data exists for the total number of Hill Mynas involved in either the domestic or the international trade, the evidence suggests that there is a substantial trade which warrants further investigation.28

**Bears:** Bear parts, including gall bladders from Sun Bear *Helaretos malayanus* and *Urus spp.* were seen for sale and three bear skulls were on sale at O Russei: in Lomphat, a soldier was observed offering a bear gall bladder to one author's driver. It was said to be worth US$100 in Phnom Penh. Six or more bear skulls were displayed for sale at O Russei in May and December 1995. Broad and Philips recorded parts of Asiatic Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus* and Sun Bear in trade in Cambodia.

**Trade in Hippopotamus Ivory**

Although the Hippopotamus is currently not threatened with extinction, it is vulnerable to heavy hunting pressures. The international trade in Hippopotamus specimens, and in particular in raw ivory form - the teeth, seems to have increased markedly since 1990. This seems to be the result of the use of Hippopotamus ivory as a substitute for elephant ivory. The alarming increase in trade is of concern to conservationists, and needs to be carefully monitored in order to ensure that it is conducted in a sustainable manner.

Recent reports of large shipments of Hippopotamus ivory suggest that, in some instances, it is of illegal or dubious origin, intended for the international market.

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28 For details refer to Vivek Menon's special report prepared for WWF India and summarized in the Traffic bulletin.
In April 1991, French CITES authorities refused a shipment of five tonne of Hippopotamus ivory from Burundi which was claimed to have been confiscated from private citizens in that country but rumored to have originated elsewhere. The consignment of 11,000 to 12,000 teeth was apparently destined for Japan.

In 1992 and 1993, insensitive poaching of Hippopotamus by army soldiers in Zaire was reported from the Virunga National Park in eastern Zaire, an area that once contained one of the largest concentrations of this species in Africa. In 1993, a Zairean certificate of origin for 10,000 Hippopotamus teeth was issued illegally by local authorities in eastern Zaire and subsequently intercepted by authorities in Uganda. The document indicated that the proposed destination for the shipment was Japan. Although, it reportedly left Zaire, the shipment was not recovered. The teeth were believed to have come from the protected Hippopotamus population in Virunga National Park. A further 417 teeth taken from Hippopotamus poached in the park, and bound for Uganda, were seized in the same year.

**Trade in Tiger**

It is difficult for people born into Western cultures to understand the importance of the use of rhino horn and Tiger bone in traditional Chinese medicines and to appreciate what impact elimination of these substances from the Chinese pharmacopoeia may have. The use of animals in traditional Chinese medicines is based on their therapeutic effects. With certain species, believed to possess medicinal properties that cannot be substituted. In recent years, however, some species valued

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29 An aerial census in July 1994 showed that the estimated population of 22,875 animals recorded in 1989 had dropped to 10,849 Languy et al., 1994 cited in Traffic Bulletin

30 Personal Communication to TRAFFIC Network by S.Mankoto Ma Mbaelele, in 1994.
for such use have been brought to the brink of extinction as a result of high levels of exploitation for domestic and international consumption. As a consumer, Taiwan has been a focus of international criticisms for its role in the trade of endangered species and their parts, in particular of rhinoceros horn and Tiger bones. Taiwan and East Asia can. Efforts (including economic and political measures) by the Taiwanese authorities to fulfil obligations to maintain traditional medicine culture, while at the same time protecting the threatened species utilized for such purposes, remain a challenge. Many nature conservation organizations have put forward recommendations to reduce utilization of endangered or threatened species to a level that is compatible with their survival in the wild. Many traditional Chinese medicines users hold the belief that human life is more valuable than that of an animal, further the medicinal use of some of these species has been seen to have benefited many people throughout history and may be deeply rooted in people's lives. Consequently, conservation programmes cannot be effectively implemented until these needs are taken into account and incentives provided for co-operation of the public.

Tiger products are found openly on sale in southeast Asian Markets. Two of the most important Tiger traders in Cambodia said that they had sold an estimated 33-43 dead Tigers. Traders at O Russei market and at Siem Reap and Poipet were seen selling Tiger parts, such as skins, bottled fat, bones, teeth and nails. Prices for Tiger bone have risen markedly from the early 1980s, when Thais were said to have bought bones for US$40 per kg. By 1994, market traders were selling bones for US$55 per kg, while average 1993 prices in the market were US$80-US$100 per kg, depending on bone size. The skeleton of the largest male Tigers in Cambodia weighs up to 20
kg, while that of an average adult Tiger weighs 12 kg-15 kg. In December 1993, a Cambodian soldier sold a whole carcass to a trader in Phnom Penh for US$1500 who in turn sold the nails and skin (after tanning) for US$900 to a Cambodian who shipped them to Thailand and Singapore. In 1992, a trader from Singapore bought Tiger bones for US$250 per kg in Koh Kong Province, the highest price known to have been paid.

Other reports indicate that hunters sell live Tigers for US$200-US$250 each to traders in Phnom Penh. The animals are sent to Vietnam, especially to Ho Chi Minh City, where they can be sold retail for as much as US$5000 each (Galster, 1994). In 1993, the two main Tiger traders in O Russei market sold two to five live young Tigers to Vietnamese traders for US$400-US$500 each.

**Leopards** : *Panthera pardus* were also noted in trade. In 1994, a small Leopard was for sale at US$30 at Ban Long Central market and two skins at O Russei market, while one or two Leopard skins were seen for sale at the market on two visits, several months apart, in 1995 (Anom., *in litt.*, February 1996). One live, year-old clouded Leopard *Neofelis nebulosa* was on sale at the Central market of Phnom Penh and two skins from the species were on sale at the Central market of Ban Long for US$50 each, 1994.

Taiwan is ineligible to become a Party to CITES in its own right owing to its non-recognition as a sovereign state by the United Nations. Taiwan began controlling the importation of Tiger bone in August 1985. In March 1986, Taiwanese pharmaceutical manufacturers were prohibited from applying to register new medicines containing Tiger bone; these controls also applied to rhino horn. In June
1989, Taiwan enacted the Wildlife conservation Law (WCL), which incorporates some of the requirements of CITES. This law regulates both international and domestic trade in all species listed as protected, including their parts and products (including the majority of fauna species listed in Appendices I and II of CITES), with the effect that the import and export of Tiger bone and rhino horn was prohibited, without permission of the COA. In November 1990, holders of privately-held rhino horn were required to register their stocks and in 1993, holders of Tiger bone had three months in which to register their stocks, 1994). However, in August 1994, the US Government imposed limited trade sanctions on Taiwan for failing to take stronger action to control illegal wildlife trade in particular of products derived from Tigers and rhinos. Taiwan responded by amending the WCL in October of that year to cover a prohibition on the importation, exports, sale or display of all listed species and their derivatives, in particular rhino horn, Tiger bone and related products. The legislation introduced in Taiwan in October 1994 does not take into account the needs of the TCM community for such items, nor does it provide incentives for public cooperation.

**Trade in Reptiles - Snake & Crocodile Skins**

Trade in snake skins is a topic of great interest to India. In mid 80's - in the immediate aftermath of the country hosting the COP of CITES met the subject generated popular interest. Traditionally, Irula Tribal from the state of Tamilnadu in India have supplied snake skins to the leather industry. However, trade in snake skin was banned by government of India in 1976 and Bharat Leather Corporation was
designated as the only outlet for the existing stocks to be exhausted as a one time exception. (The stock pile was estimated to be 20,000 in 1981) It is in the context of snake skins that the figures cited are most confusing. At times, the 'commodity' traded in is referred to by weight and at others numbers are mentioned. The countries of origin are deceptive, as 'trade figures' for succeeding years shift the 'origin' suddenly and unaccountably to a proximate neighbour. For instance, in 1982-83 the Federal Republic of Germany imported 25,900 kg. of snake skin from India. Next year this figure dropped inexplicably to 2,400 kg. The mystery unravelled itself when the exports for 1985 were disclosed from Bangladesh as amounting to 34,500 kg. (In 1980, a seizure was made by the countries authorities of 1,00,000 Checkered Keelback skins exported from West Pakistan marked - 'fruit'.) Nepal was reported to have exported 50,000 Olive Keelback Skins to Singapore and 40,000 skins to Belgium, Pakistan's exports to UAE accounted for another 70,000 skins. Ironically, this species occurs neither in Bangladesh, Pakistan or Nepal. UK had applied to CITES authorise for import of over 1,00,000 rat and snake skins from Nepal - the country that had exported 14,500 such skins to Netherlands. The inordinately large figures indicate that at least some spill over from India was being handled there.

The trade in snake skins is extremely difficult to monitor - there is remarkable value addition at each stage, from catcher to tanner to exporter to transhiper to importer. The transactions are fairly sophisticated and truly international in nature.

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31 Traffic Bulletin, Vol.IX, No.4, also see Josephine Andrews and Chris Birkinshaw, 'India's Snakeskin Trade' in Ibid, pp.66-77

Seizures are often lucky accidents. Border checks accord a much higher priority to curbing the smuggling of gold, narcotics and arms. Indian helplessness in controlling this illicit trade is not easy to comprehend. The blanket ban seems to have only driven the profits of trade to neighbouring countries - encouraging smuggling without any corresponding benefits in the field of conservation. The business like French stance in the context of Nile crocodile in the COPs may be contrasted with this naivette.\footnote{For details see "The Crocodile skin trade since 1979, Report compiled by Ginitte Harley and John Coldewill Traffic (USA) 1985.}