



DENDROBIUM SP.; K. LOCHEN / TRAFFIC

MORE THAN SIX TONNES OF DRIED DENDROBIUM SPECIMENS WERE SEIZED IN INDIA IN LATE 2007.

Ishimaki port in Miyagi prefecture around July 2005 and about 2 kg at Fukui port in Fukui prefecture in November 2005. The boss and gang members are also suspected to have stored 4.2 kg of the bear gall bladders illegally imported for sale without permission under the *Pharmaceutical Affairs Law*.

On 31 May 2007, police officials in Osaka and Okayama charged two men with violating the *Customs Law* and the *Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (LCES) following their arrest for allegedly smuggling and selling billiard cue sticks made from ivory. The pair are president and vice president of a billiards goods maker in Okayama Prefecture.

The case broke on 17 October 2006, when Customs officials at Kansai International Airport, Osaka, seized a courier package addressed to the billiards goods' maker that had arrived from Chicago, USA, and which contained 12 products made of elephant ivory. The ivory parts consisted of ferrules—small rods placed at the tip end of billiard cue sticks—measuring 15 cm in length and 3 cm wide.

A PARCEL CONTAINING LEOPARD TORTOISES *GEACHELONE PARDALIS* FROM TANZANIA WAS SEIZED IN MALAYSIA IN JUNE 2007.



WWF-CANON / MICHEL TERRETZ

Police subsequently raided the company's premises; according to a police investigation, the two men are suspected of having manufactured and sold 15 cue sticks using ivory. Many other parts and cues made from ivory were found during the raid. According to the company's accounting books, it appears that they have sold 147 cue sticks over a period of about seven years, which the police are investigating.

On 10 July 2007, at Osaka District Court, a man who attempted to import 2.8 t of African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* (CITES I) ivory in August 2006, was found guilty and sentenced to one year in prison, suspended for three years, and fined JPY800 000 (USD6932). Two Korean nationals, who had approached him and had suggested smuggling the items, were placed on an international wanted list on a charge of violating the *Customs Law*.

The ivory had arrived in Osaka Nanko Port on 21 August 2006, disguised to resemble marble and described as such in false import permits. This consignment represents the largest amount of ivory seized in the country since the international ivory ban was implemented in 1989 (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 21(2):69).

On 21 July 2007, the president of one of Japan's biggest reptile wholesalers "Rep JAPAN" was sentenced following his conviction on charges relating to fraudulent registration and fraudulent trading of reptiles during 2004 to 2005. Tsuyoshi Shirawa, who was sentenced to a gaol term of two years and six months and fined JPY1 800 000 (USD15 330), had stated that False Gavia *Tomistoma schlegelii* (CITES I) and Radiated Tortoise *Geochelone radiata* (CITES I) specimens that he had been involved in trading in, had been captive bred in Japan. An appeal to the Supreme Court was dismissed.

Two smugglers were also charged with illegally importing Rhinoceros Iguana *Cyclura cornuta* (CITES I), False Gavia and Radiated Tortoise. One was sentenced to two years' imprisonment and fined JPY2 000 000 and the other was sentenced to three years' imprisonment and fined JPY3 000 000. The pair sold the reptiles to Shirawa who obtained legal registration cards for these reptiles, required under the *Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (LCES), by submitting fraudulent applications to the registration agency in collusion with an employee at his firm and the director of a zoo in Gunma prefecture. For their part in the collaboration, the director of the zoo was fined JPY500 000. The employee was sentenced to six months' imprisonment, suspended for three years.

15 February/13 March/25 April 2007, *Shinano Mainichi Shimbun*; 15 February/13 March/25 April 2007, *Chunichi Shimbun*; 11 May 2007, *Kyodo Press*; *Sankei Shimbun*/Asahi Shimbun and Yomiuri Shimbun, 10 November 2006; *Mainichi Shimbun*, Asahi Shimbun and Yomiuri Shimbun, 1 June 2007; *Kyodo Press*, 21 June 2007; www.asahi.com, 10 July 2007, viewed 25 July 2007; *TRAFFIC Bulletin* 21(2):69, July 2007; *TRAFFIC East Asia*

MONGOLIA

On 7 October 2007, following the tireless efforts of WWF Mongolia and members of the Government's Mobile Anti-poaching Unit (funded

by WWF Mongolia), a case involving an attempt to smuggle 108 Saiga Antelope *Saiga tatarica mongolica* horns was ordered by the General Prosecutor's office in Ulaanbaatar to be reinvestigated by the Prosecutor's office in Khovd.

An offender from Khovd was detained at the crime scene in October 2006 in the county of Chandmani in Khovd Province when the Saiga horns were found concealed in the spare tyre of his vehicle; another 12 people were found to be involved in the offence. Although a local court in Khovd found the offenders guilty of illegal activity, certain reasons emerged that resulted in their sentences being repealed. These reasons included the fact that the court had found that the horns derived from antelopes that had been killed before December 2005 when the value of the horns had increased from USD65–1850; further, a law granting clemency to criminals had been approved in June 2006.

WWF Mongolia, in co-operation with the Division of Criminal Cases against Wildlife Crime of the General Police Office determined that only 19 of the antelopes had been killed prior to December 2005. In referring the case for reinvestigation, the General Prosecutor's office has placed an attorney, local prosecutor and a local police officer under special inspection following suspicion of their involvement in the alleged diversion of a criminal case.

A census of Saiga Antelopes in Mongolia was conducted by WWF Mongolia, in co-operation with the Institute of Biology, in January 2007 (Amgalan, 2007). During this survey, researchers recorded a total of 1734 Saiga Antelopes along the 2139 km-long route in Sharga Gobi, Huisiin Gobi and Durgon Tal in the Great Lakes Basin. With the help of an extrapolation method used for population censuses, some 2800 Saiga Antelopes were found to be inhabiting the Great Lakes Basin, which supports Mongolia's entire Saiga Antelope population. The population here has increased by 50 per cent since 2006 (Amgalan, 2007).

Amgalan, L., (2007). Report on Saiga Census, the Institute of Biology, Academy of Sciences, Mongolia. Unpublished report.

WWF Mongolia

TAIWAN

On 25 June 2007, at Taipei Airport, a Taiwanese tourist returning from South Africa, was found in possession of a rhino horn in his golf club bag. The horn, which weighed 4.8 kg and was 61 cm long, was sent to the forensic lab for examination. The case was prosecuted on 17 December 2007 but at the time of writing is still being processed through the courts.

On 21 August 2007, Customs officials at Taipei Airport found two ivory tusks (total of 5 kg) in the luggage of a Taiwanese national arriving from Thailand. The suspect will be prosecuted for violating the *Wildlife Conservation Act*.

On 6 January 2008, Customs officials at the airport seized 324 ivory chops (around 9.7 kg) from the luggage of a Taiwanese national returning from Hong Kong.

<http://news.yam.com/udn/society/200706/2007062642>