

SEIZURES AND PROSECUTIONS

On 25 April 1995, 3 raids on travelling zoos were carried out by the Uttar Pradesh State Forest Department acting on information provided by the Wildlife Protection Society of India; a TRAFFIC International investigator acted as a decoy customer. Among the animals seized in the first raid, in Meerut, were 1 Lion *Panthera leo* (App. II), 1 Asiatic Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus* (App. I), 4 Golden Jackals *Canis aureus* (App. III/India), 1 Hanuman Langur *Semnopithecus entellus* (App. I); 1 Rhesus Macaque *Macaca mulatta* (App. II), 1 Slow Loris *Nycticebus coucang* (App. II), 1 Indian Giant Squirrel *Ratufa indica* (App. II), and 3 Indian Pythons *Python molurus molurus* (App. I). All were for sale and a python was 'purchased' by the TRAFFIC investigator; the accused were also willing to sell the Lion and Asiatic Black Bear and offered to procure a Tiger and a Leopard cub. Three people were arrested.

A further 2 raids, in Deoband, near Saharanpur, and, again, in Meerut, yielded 1 Sloth Bear *Melursus ursinus* (App. I), 1 Golden Jackal, 1 Assam Macaque *Macaca assamensis* (App. II), a Tiger foetus, 1 Mugger Crocodile *Crocodylus palustris* (App. I) and 1 dead Gharial *Gavialis gangeticus* (App. I). No arrests were made but all specimens were confiscated and sent to Delhi Zoo or the National Museum of Natural History, in New Delhi.

On 30 April 1995, a gang of poachers was arrested by the Chittorgarh police in Rajasthan and the skin of a Leopard (App. I), killed that morning in Sitamata Sanctuary, was seized. Three local men were arrested and 1 rifle recovered. The poaching gang, who had been operating for five years, admitted that they had been supplying the

skins and bones of Leopards regularly to two dealers in Madhya Pradesh. The police later raided a *godown* (store or small warehouse) in Madhya Pradesh owned by the dealers and recovered a further 5 Leopard skins and 1.2kg of bones. The dealers, who were also arrested, admitted supplying Leopard skins and bones to a middleman in Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh, who in turn sold these in Delhi.

On 12 June 1995, in Siliguri, West Bengal, police officers arrested five key operators of an international gang of poachers who had offered to sell 62 horns of Indian Rhinos *Rhinoceros unicornis* (App. I) to TRAFFIC International investigators. The horns were reportedly from animals killed in Assam; 2 were seized (one was of a juvenile or sub-adult), and together weighed a total of 680g.

With the arrest of the group leader, who is believed to be a Taiwanese national, international smuggling routes between India, Nepal, Bhutan and East Asia have been uncovered. The group leader, who is known to have connections in Phuntsholing, in Bhutan, claims to have supplied the 22 rhino horns found in the luggage of Princess Dekiy Choden Wangchuk, an offence that led to her prosecution and subsequent imprisonment in Taiwan (see *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, 14(3):116). The arrest of another person links him to the seizure in December 1994 of 89 Leopard skins and 1 Tiger skin on route to Kathmandu, Nepal. These two and three others who were also arrested, were remanded in police custody; four of the rhino horn traders have since been released on bail. The gang is reported to have been involved also in illegal trade of bear gall bladders and musk deer glands.

In May/June 1995, arrests of poachers of Leopards in Rajaji National Park, Uttar Pradesh, led to the arrest in Delhi on 17 July of Sansar Chand, a well-known wildlife trader with at least 14 major wildlife cases pending against him (see page 102).

*TRAFFIC International,
Wildlife Protection Society of India*

JAPAN

On 25 February 1995, police arrested a passenger who, a few weeks earlier, at Narita airport, had attempted to import in his hand luggage 3 juvenile gibbons *Hylobatidae* (App. I) that he had purchased in Jakarta, Indonesia. Two of the animals were diseased and later died; the remaining specimen is being cared for at a zoo. Toshiyuki Chiba was sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment and a 3 years' suspended sentence.

On 16 June 1995, following observations made by TRAFFIC East Asia-Japan while carrying out a survey of pet shops, police in Tokyo arrested a pet shop owner and four others for allegedly selling 1 Nile Crocodile *Crocodylus niloticus* (App. I/II) and 1 Desert Monitor *Varanus griseus* (App. I) without a permit, in violation of the *Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora*.

According to police, the same dealer had imported 5 Desert Monitors, incorrectly declared as Ocellated Lizards *Lacerta lepida*, three years earlier. At the time, he claimed that he believed them to be correctly declared as such. Because the time limit allowed for prosecution had expired, the investigation was closed.

Two Japanese nationals charged in October 1994 with illegally importing 15 Black Pond Turtles *Geoclemys hamiltonii* (App. I) and 100 Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans* (App. II) (*TRAFFIC Bulletin*, 15(2):95) have been sentenced. One of the accused was sent to gaol for 2 years and received a 4 years' suspended sentence (not served by the offender unless he commits a further offence during its currency); the other was sentenced to 1.5 years' imprisonment and received a 4 years' suspended sentence.

TRAFFIC East Asia-Japan

PHILIPPINES

On 25 March 1995, Philippines Navy patrol personnel apprehended 62 Chinese fishermen aboard 4 Chinese fishing vessels near Hasa-Hasa Shoal in the Kalayaan Islands. The vessels were ordered to stop as they were illegally in Philippine territory. An unconfirmed number of live and dead Green Turtles *Chelonia mydas* (App. I) was found on board, some of which had perished and been stuffed, probably on board the boat. Significant amounts of red and blue coral, believed to be *Tubipora musica* and *Heliopora coerulea*, respectively (both App. II), were also found, along with 20 litres of cyanide, several hundred sticks of dynamite and time-delay fuses. The fishermen were detained in the provincial gaol of Puerto Princesa City in Palawan and are to be charged with illegal fishing, possession of explosives and illegal entry. A number of them - below 18 years of age - were released on humanitarian grounds.



Hanuman Langur
Semnopithecus entellus (App. I):
one specimen was recently seized from a travelling circus in India, where it was being offered for sale.

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