



## About the author

**Mr. Mangal Man Shakya**, is an environmental journalist since 1992. He was born in 1969 and holds bachelors degree in management. In 1993 he was awarded as best environmental journalist of the year In 1996 he became a coordinator of Wildlife Watch Group (WWG) whose main objective is to monitor wildlife trade for public information and promote wildlife journalism. In 1997 he was elected as administrative council member of Paris based International Federation of Environmental Journalists (IFEJ) and re-elected for the same post in 2000 and in 1999 elected as regional director for South Asia of Colombo based Asia Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists (APFEJ). During 14<sup>th</sup> Congress of APFEJ, which was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 2002, he is elected as secretary general of APFEJ till year 2006. He has written hundreds of news article related to wildlife and nature conservation based on his rich travel experiences in the protected areas of Nepal. He has produced "Wildlife Media Watch" in 1997 and in 2000.

Recently he co-authored a report titled "CITES Compliance in Nepal".. In year 2000 he was a part of team in Tibet expedition that resulted "Wrap Up the Trade" report on Shahtoosh trade worldwide, with special reference to Tibet, the report is joint publication of US based International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and wildlife Trust of India (WTI). He also part of production team in couple of documentary related to wildlife.

Mr. Shakya has traveled almost all districts in Nepal and most of the protected areas of the country extensively. He has traveled widely in Europe, Americas, South and South East Asia in connection to participate various environmental journalism workshops.

He works now independently on wildlife trade in Nepal and in the region. He can be contacted through following lines:

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## Foreword



There are several ways by which a non-government individual can serve wildlife. I deliberately use the word 'serve' and not 'management of wildlife'. There is a philosophical difference between the two.

Scientific research on wildlife, advocacy of policy issues, awareness which includes journalism, still and video photography, article and books which includes coffee table books, rescue and rehabilitation of wildlife, captive breeding, eco-tourism are some of the many ways to serve wildlife.

One discipline which has had limited recognition on the Indian subcontinent, is the study of trade in wildlife (and its derivatives), and development of strategies for its regulation and control.

While habitat loss and degradation is the primary but long term process, on a shorter time scale, trade impacts wild species quickly.

Formal study of wildlife commenced in this region when a wildlife trade monitoring unit was begun in 1992, soon to be converted into TRAFFIC-India. I had the privilege to be the founder Director and was joined by Vivek Menon. The more we looked at the issue, the more we discovered was asking to be looked at. Specialised areas such as bird trade, marine species, medicinal plants, butterflies, moths, spiders, tree species needed trade studies apart from the well known mega species with tiger, as always, at the apex. My own introduction to CITES began in 1992 when I traveled to Japan to attend the Conference of Parties in Kyoto. Japanese fisherman held a demonstration outside the meeting venue to protest against probable regulations of whaling. There are always two sides to a coin.

When CITES documents began arriving in our office by the kilo, the standard joke in the office to a new comer was, " you want to do wildlife work, OK, read this and come back." Far cry from ambling along Ramganga in Corbett with binoculars, but essential work none the less.

Over these years the impact of unbridled wildlife trade in the subcontinent has been severe, stray newspaper reports spread over a period get forgotten. Systematic documentation is the only way to learn of the bigger picture. Wildlife Trust of India began a detailed collection of trade data in October 2001 under contract from the State governments of Uttaranchal and Uttar Pradesh. We have recorded a seizure of 37 tiger skins in 2001, up from 10 in 2000. Tiger skin trade is clearly a problem, and neighboring countries are equally impacted.

In this context, this report by Mangal Man Shakya was in fact overdue. The report supplements his earlier publication on CITES Compliance in Nepal. Mangal has chosen to join the select few who have made wildlife trade studies & control a distinct discipline.

I recall the words on a poster produced last year by US Fish and Wildlife Services It says- Wildlife Without Borders

There are no borders for wildlife. A tiger from Chitwan National Park can cross the border and get poached in India. Neighboring countries have to work closely together on such issues. Much more must happen than what we today. Mangal has

deep love from wildlife and problems of wildlife conservation. I wish him all success in this field which has remained somewhat neglected so far. As ever, my assistance will be available to him.

Ashok Kumar,  
Trustee  
Wildlife Trust of India (WTI)



### **Foreword - CITES BOOK**

Wildlife trade is one of the major threats for the survival of rare and endangered species which are already at a state of eking out a precarious existence confined in protected areas. Poaching of such species are propelled by international demands created by the craze of luxury consumers desiring exotic fashions or erotic functions. Although the Convention on International trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) came into operation in Nepal since 1975, the illegal trade on wildlife and their derivatives is finding ways and means to spread through out the world. Despite the country's obligations under CITES the illicit trade takes advantages of porous borders and poorer people to establish lucrative jobs for trans-border dealers and suppliers, while the Parties supported all the letters and spirits of CITES the Shatoosh from the endangered Tibetan antelope safety land at their distant destinations within the USA, Europe, Middle East countries, Hong Kong, and Australia. A number of traditional medicines of Asia (Chinese, Tibetan, Ayurvedic, and Yunani) continue to consume wildlife products like musk pods, bear gall-

bladders, tiger bones and other vital parts of the mammal. Similarly rhino-horns, ivories and crocodile skins reach wealthy consumers in the Middle East and Japan. Wildlife trade continues to be a threat for wildlife conservation.

Nepalese media have been covering a number of anecdotal stories relating to wildlife trade but there has not been a systematic pursuit to bring about factual information through investigative journalism. It is heartening to see that an active journalist like Mr. Mangal Man Shakya could create a niche for wildlife reporting and also could afford himself for formidable journeys in remote areas investigating on the trade across the borders and inside the secretive circles of trade links. This has enabled him to come up with a substantive contribution on " Wildlife Trade in Nepal". It is hoped that this publication would form an important point of reference for strategic implementation of CITES which has to operate in a real world.

Dr. Tirtha Bahadur Shrestha  
Life Member  
Royal Nepal Academy

### **Acknowledgements**

This is a first-of-its-kind study on the illegal trade of wildlife products in Nepal. This trade in Nepal can be traced as far back as the Licchabi period (A.D. 496-880). However, it was noticed only during the regime of Rana (1846-1950), when poachers began to hunt the rhinoceros and sell its horn in the then British-Indian market. A full-sized horn at that time used to fetch around sterling pound 100 (approx. Rs 1,500) (E A Smythes 1942).

Although Nepal joined the Convention on International Trade on Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES) in 1975 (on 16<sup>th</sup> of September), there is enough evidence to prove that little effort has been made by the Nepalese authorities to curb the wildlife trade in the country. Despite several national institutions dedicated to conservation, like the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) and the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC), the focus has been restricted to scientific research and general management of wild species rather than the illegal trade.

Nepal is considered to be one of the major transit routes for international wildlife trade. Yet, there is no institution that tackles these illegal transactions or government mechanism that monitors these cases. This study attempts to assess the volume of this trade and other issues that surround illegal wildlife trade in Nepal.

This is also a continuation of my first report titled 'CITES Compliance in Nepal' (April 1999) co-authored with my British colleagues, Colin Pringle and Chris Murgatroyd. The previous report focused only on the trade in southern part of Nepal and completely left out the northern parts of the country. The current report looks at the illegal trade in the country as a whole.

To get the first hand information on wildlife trade in the northern part of the country, I traveled with my colleague Mr. Mohan Mainali in 1999 up to Taklakot, an important trade centre in western Tibet via Darchula (Nepal) and Dharcula (India). In beginning of the year 2000, I once again traveled across the entire western region of

Tibet region for almost a month. This study is based on most of the data that were collected during these tours and was made possible due to the support extended by various sources.

I am grateful to Dr. Tirtha Man Maskey, director general of Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Dr. Charles MacDougal, an internationally renowned tiger biologist, Dr. Tirtha Bahadur Shrestha, a veteran conservationist and Mr. Shyam Bajimaya a senior officer of DNPWC, who have critically reviewed the study and provided practical suggestions. I must also thank all my colleagues at the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) who were instrumental in helping me focus on illegal wildlife trade issues, especially Mr. Ashok Kumar, Mr. Vivek Menon and Mr. Aniruddha Mookerjee.

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## Executive Summary

The city of Katmandu had become infamous for its trade in parts of endangered species. Shops openly sold coats made from leopard, tiger and snow leopard skins, python skin handbags and shoes, ivory carved bangles, and other similar items. It was only in the early 90's that the Government of Nepal banned the sale of furs and skins in and around the city, in an attempt to curb this trade.

Nepal had become a signatory to CITES in 1975, yet the government had not passed any bill to enact these regulations. Finally, in 1994, a notice was issued to ban trade in wildlife products, the first step taken by the Government to stem the illegal trade. However, more than eight years after the public notice, doubts still remain on several aspects, especially on the status of seized wildlife products and whether the notice has been effective in curbing the trade.

Sadly, the trade still exists, but has become an entirely underground operation. Organized gangs of poachers, middlemen who act as dealers, and businessmen closely control the trade. The illegal trade in live wildlife and its derivatives is said to be the world's second largest industry after narcotics. Nepal has taken part in the trade for years; at first forming part of the traditional silk trade route, the country acted not only as a supplier of items but also as a transit point. Goods such as shahtoosh wool were (and still are) traded for tiger bones and were transported between China, Tibet, India and Myanmar via Nepal. Later, as the trade became more intensified and lucrative, Nepal became a central component of the trade. The old barter system and traditional hunting methods were replaced with monetary transactions and large scale poaching of animals using automatic weapons. Today, most of the goods are transported via the former silk trade route, which provides a direct link between Tibet and Nepal's upper mountain region, middle hill region, and the Terai.

There exists little factual information on this illegal trade in Nepal. Several nagging questions are yet to be answered: How many tigers and black bears end up as components of medicinal products in China? How many Chiru (Tibetan antelope) are

slaughtered to meet the demand for shawls made from its undercoat? How many Musk deer are poached annually to fulfill the demand for the aphrodisiac qualities of its pods? How many live birds are trapped and exported to foreign markets?

Which agency is (or agencies are) going to take responsibility for clamping down on this bloody business?

There is also a lack of awareness about the geography of the region and the actual intensity of the trade. Although anti-poaching units have been formed in certain protected areas, the areas falling outside these zones are neglected. Porous borders in trans-frontier areas further facilitate the trade. The lack of coordination between departments as well as the lack of knowledge about CITES and the illegal trade, have made it difficult to coordinate efforts for a thorough investigation into the trade.

The report, "Wildlife Trade in Nepal" is a result of extensive fieldwork on the subject. The details and descriptions presented have been collected from various sources, including from wildlife traders themselves. The underground nature of the trade has increased the complexity of the business, thereby posing constraints to the investigation of this trade.

The report hopes to activate interest on the subject from a wide range of readers and is aimed at throwing light on the dark side of this unlawful trade in Nepal.

## **Introduction**

Illegal trade in wildlife products is a subject that has received little attention in the Kingdom of Nepal. The illegal trade of live animals and birds, or of wildlife parts, may be a major source of income for many of Nepal's low and high-income families. Having transformed from a traditional livelihood to an underground crime, this trade has reached its peak in the country. Unless serious steps are taken by the government to formulate an efficient action plan to stop the trade, many of the country's endangered species may be wiped out.

In order to understand the nature of wildlife trade, it is crucial to gain an insight into the current situation in Nepal. What is the extent of the trade? What is being traded? Where are the major suppliers of the trade located? Who is involved? It is also important to find answers to all these questions before any effective measures to control the trade can be implemented. Information on the illegal trade has, until this present document, been reported sporadically by a number of different departments. The major government departments being the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) the Department of Forests (DOF) the Department of Customs, the police, and the local District Development Committee. Officials from these organisations have recorded confiscation of illegally traded wildlife goods. The use of these records as valuable information for deeper investigation into the nature of the trade has not yet been acted upon. No regular monitoring exists by which this illegal trade may be analyzed. Although the DNPWC and the DOF together with the customs officials, the police, and the army are the leading authorities dealing with this trade, no formal cooperation exists between them. These gaps in the system provide enough scope for the trade to carry on undetected.

With the hope of generating a better understanding of the illegal wildlife trade in

Nepal, this study was carried out to find the major routes and places of trade and items being traded. The study also hopes to activate greater awareness about the trade and to encourage the Government of Nepal to take immediate measures to control the trade.

## **Methodology**

The methodology of the study involved an extensive review of literature pertaining to the wildlife protection in Nepal. The review included a basic investigation into the framework of CITES in Nepal and what is needed for Nepal to comply with these rules. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Katmandu with different officials and individuals directly responsible for the implementation of CITES. This included the Director General of the DNPWC, the Director General of DOF, the Director-General of the Customs Department, the former chief of Nepal Army and Nepal Police, the Additional Inspector-General of Police and the Chief Customs Administrator at the Tribhuvan International Airport, Katmandu.

Discussions were also held with other individuals working in institutions claiming some responsibility for or having an interest in CITES issues. These included the Vice Chancellor of the Royal Nepal Academy of Science and Technology, the Executive Director of the Ministry of Law and Justice's Forensic Science Laboratories, the Secretary of the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation and the Post Master of the Nepal Post Office.

The investigation team also spent several weeks travelling to different protected areas in the Terai region. Interviews were held with officials and individuals working/living in and around national parks and/or wildlife reserves, including chief wardens, rangers, DFOs, CDOs, police officers, local politicians, business people, jailers and individuals imprisoned for alleged wildlife offences.

Further research was also carried out in the northern region of the country, mainly in districts located close to the Tibetan and Indian borders. Most of the research here involved investigators posing as tentative buyers for shahtoosh and other wildlife products. The information collected provides valuable insight into the nature and geography of the illegal wildlife trade in Nepal.

## **Sequential Structure**

The data has been synthesised into an easily readable report. The information is presented in such a way that it provides a vivid understanding of the wildlife trade in Nepal. The initial chapter invites the reader to become aware of the trade at an international level and provides a brief overview of CITES.

Chapter 2 provides information on the wildlife protection regime in Nepal and an overview of the history of the wildlife trade in the country.

Chapter 3 focuses on the geography of the illicit trade in Nepal and also details various incidents that took place during the investigation.

Chapter 4 comprises of case studies of the illegal trade in Katmandu, while Chapter 5 looks at cases of trade in other districts.

Chapter 6 provides recommendations and conclusions. A number of case studies have been added in order to complete the information pertaining to the wildlife trade in the country.

The information presented in the report deals only with trade in live wildlife and its derivatives, and not with the trade in plants.

## Chapter 1



### What is Wildlife Trade?

The utilization of wildlife goes back to prehistoric times when man hunted wild animals for food, clothing, medicines, religious rituals, and also for use in building shelters. Gradually, during the time of the Roman Empire, traditional hunting practices were joined by commercialized hunting, which supported the beginnings of a consumer market for wildlife parts. Animal skins, furs, as well as medicines containing wild animal parts became prized commodities. With the rise of the industrial revolution, transportation improved further enhancing the trade in wildlife across regions. All this led to the beginnings of an international wildlife trade. (Bajaj 1996)

At one point trade in wildlife was thought to be an inexhaustible form of business, however, today the trade has caused major depletion of certain species. Improved hunting techniques and the growing human economy have greatly expanded the trade. Trade in both live animals and birds and their parts have become the world's second largest industry (Bajaj 1996). Asian rhino horns, black bear gall bladders and tiger bones are, for example, leading ingredients in traditional Oriental medicines. The demand for these animal ingredients remains high. Similarly reptile skins, tortoise shells, leopard paws, elephant tusks, and other such items continue to be sought in many of the industrialized countries. Consequently, the trade in wildlife has become a trade supporting greed, rather than basic needs. And has been termed "illegal," as overuse of the source has been pushed to the limits.

### The International Scenario





Trade in wildlife implies the export, re-export and import of both live wild animals and/or parts. Export of

exotic birds or import of idols made from ivory, are examples of wildlife trade. The wildlife trade has become an international industry, much of it supported by illegal capture or killing of animals. In the UK, for example, purchase of exotic birds and tropical fish continue to be favored, as well as purchase of stuffed animals. A typical shipment the UK may contain 2,000-5,000 Iguanas (*Iguana iguana*). Other reptiles such as boas, pythons, chameleons and geckos are also frequently imported and sold in pet shops. Although some of these shipments may be legal, an average of 30 per cent continues to be illegal. Frequently, illegal goods are mixed with legal shipments. "In the US alone, the US Fish and Wildlife Service has estimated that for every 10 wildlife shipments entering the country legally, one to four enter undeclared and undetected." (TRAFFIC 2001, Bajaj 1996, Green Action Internet site)

Oriental medicines, which use a high percentage of these illegal wildlife parts, are keeping the demand not only in South-east Asia, but also in Europe. With the South East Asian community growing in Europe, the purchase of Oriental medicines is gaining popularity in the continent. Other preferred wildlife items in Europe are reptile skins, wool and fabric from such endangered species as the Tibetan antelope or blue sheep, foodstuff such as frog legs, and a variety of ornaments made from the teeth or bones of animals. The musk pod from musk deer is also a prized item. The musk is extracted from the glands of a male deer and is used mostly in Chinese medicine, and in limited amounts in the homeopathic medicines and in the cosmetic industry. It is estimated that the population of musk deer has declined globally by 50 per cent in the last decade due to over-hunting. Similarly, the demand for tiger parts is also very high; bones and penis of tigers are used extensively in traditional Chinese medicines. China, South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan are the major consumers of tiger parts. Affluent customers may pay as much as \$320-2,000 for parts of the tiger (like undamaged fur or whole skeleton and for the 'floating bone' of the tiger). In order to fulfil the demand for tiger bones, other cat species are being killed as substitutes. (TRAFFIC 2001)

The extent of the market for wildlife goods in the UK is very large. For example, in 1996 alone, a total of "16,000 birds, 3,000 plants, 25,000 reptiles and amphibians, and 42,200 pieces of coral were legally imported." (Green Action 2001) These are the legally recorded imports done under the regulations of CITES. (See next section) These amounts reveal that the market for wildlife and its derivatives is high, which could reason why the illegal export of wildlife and wildlife products also continues. As long as the market exists and the demand is high, the illegal trade will also continue to exist.

It is estimated that the global wildlife trade is \$25 billion annually. A major percentage of wildlife goods are believed to come from India. Besides India, major exporters are Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Columbia, Congo, Honduras, Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and the USA. The major consumers are Canada, China, the European Union, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, UK, USA, and Yemen. The trade is carried out easily in places with "porous borders" and unless there is improved cooperation between neighbouring countries, the illicit trade will continue. At present, the global trade includes "at least 40,000 primates, ivory from at least 90,000 African elephants, over



a million orchids, four million live birds, 10 million reptile skins, 15 million furs, and over 250 million tropical fish." (Financial Express 2001)

The global demand for fur coats comes from 20 species of mammals found mainly in India. The preferred furs from the snow leopard and clouded leopard, to the desert cat, jackal, and wolf. Until the early 1990's, Katmandu was a major fur trade centre with most of the fur collection coming from India.

Worldwide trade in wildlife species affects people across different sections of society. Poaching of endangered species like tigers, rhinos, and elephants, continues to support the market of illegal smugglers and buyers. The trade has become an intricate network of dealers, and is claimed to be the second to that of trade in narcotics. Methods of smuggling both live and parts of wild specimens have become as sophisticated as any drug smuggling. With a relatively low investment and a high profit margin the illegal trade in wildlife continues to threaten many of the world's species listed in IUCN's Red Data Book. (Bajaj 1996)

### CITES and the International Wildlife Trade

Between the 60's and 70's the international trade in wildlife grew to alarming proportions. Recognizing the need to control the trade, an appeal was made by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) calling for an international convention on regulating trade of wildlife. In 1973, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna, or CITES, was held in Washington DC. The focus of the convention was to discuss ways by which the trade could be controlled at an international level. The view of CITES was that if the international markets could be controlled or removed, this could prevent complete extinction of internationally prized species. The convention also recognized that unless there was international cooperation between countries, the illegal trade in wildlife would continue to exploit the wildlife resources of supplying countries. The aims of the convention were to create awareness on the illegal trade, and to urge governments and organizations to work together and find workable solutions to overcome the excessive-exploitation of wildlife resources. Decreasing the demand for live export of wildlife, along with their skins or other parts, would control the ruthless carnage of many of the world's species.



Under CITES, a system of strict regulations were developed for both prohibiting and/or legally managing the commercial trade of biological species. These regulations were formulated in a treaty that were sub-divided into appendices. Each appendix (I-III) represented the category of species in accordance to its survival status. This representation was developed as follows:

**Appendix I** lists species that are the most endangered among CITES-listed animals and plants (see [Article II, paragraph 1](#) of the Convention). These are threatened with extinction and CITES generally prohibits commercial international trade in specimens of these species. However trade may be allowed under exceptional circumstances, e.g. for scientific research. In these cases, trade may be authorized by the granting of both an export permit (or re-export certificate) and an import permit. (See [Article III](#) of the Convention)

**Appendix II** lists species that are not necessarily now threatened with extinction

but that may become so unless trade is closely controlled. It also includes so-called "look-alike species", i.e. species of which the specimens in trade look like those of species listed for conservation reasons (see [Article II, paragraph 2](#) of the Convention). International trade in specimens of Appendix-II species may be authorized by the granting an export permit or re-export certificate; no import permit is necessary. Permits or certificates should only be granted if the relevant authorities are satisfied that certain conditions are met, above all that trade will not be detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild. (See [Article IV](#) of the Convention)

**Appendix III** is a list of species included at the request of a Party that already regulates trade in the species and that needs the cooperation of other countries to prevent unsustainable or illegal exploitation (see Article II, paragraph 3, of the Convention link). International trade in specimens of species listed in this Appendix is allowed only on presentation of the appropriate permits or certificates. (See [Article V](#) of the Convention)

Species may be added to or removed from Appendix I and II, or moved between them, only by the Conference of the Parties, either at its regular meetings or by postal procedures (see [Article XV](#) of the Convention). But species may be added to or removed from Appendix III at any time and by any Party (although the Conference of the Parties has recommended that changes be timed to coincide with amendments to Appendices I and II).

Under these appendixes, CITES attempted to create a foundation to control the illegal trade of wildlife. Today CITES has been signed by more than 132 countries that have agreed to join efforts in controlling the trade in wildlife. Members of the convention must comply with certain terms of the treaty, which are primarily concern with prohibiting illegal trade of wildlife. The member parties call meetings every two years to discuss and update the status of species.

Although the Kingdom of Nepal is a signatory of CITES, it has not yet passed a separate bill for its implementation. A look into the wildlife trade scenario in Nepal shows urgent need to initiate wildlife trade regulatory measures.

## Chapter 2



### The Country's Deals in the Wildlife Trade

#### Introduction

In focusing on the wildlife trade scenario in the Kingdom of Nepal, it is important to obtain a basic understanding of the management of forests and wildlife in the country. The country has had almost 50 years experience in managing its natural resources; nevertheless the on-going illegal trade in wildlife continues to see the poaching of some of the world's most endangered species.

### Managing Wildlife and Forests

Nepal has a range of topographical region that include the High Tibetan Plateau, the



Himalayan mountain range in the north and the fertile the Indo-Gangetic plains in the south. Consequently, it has a diverse range of habitats that support a variety of wildlife and biodiversity. The country shelters some of the world's most endangered species including the greater one-horned rhino, the Bengal tiger, the Asian elephant, and the snow leopard. More than 18 per cent of Nepal's landmass is earmarked as protected areas, including eight national parks, four wildlife reserves, three conservation areas, and one hunting reserve. In addition, the area also includes buffer zones around five national parks and wildlife reserves. Two of Nepal's national parks have also been listed as World Heritage Sites (Royal Chitwan National Park and Sagarmatha National Park). The DNPWC under the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation manages these areas.

### **Wildlife Conservation Act 1973**

Conservation of biodiversity has been an important component of the country's national policy as is evident from the various legislative measures taken. The first legislation to initiate conservation activities was the Wildlife Conservation Act 1958 (A.D.). This Act legalized the protection of the Greater one-horned rhino and its habitat in Chitwan. In 1973, the "National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act" was enacted, which provided the Government of Nepal the ability to designate the various categories of protected areas: national parks, strict nature reserves, hunting reserves, conservation areas, and buffer zones. A warden, forest officer or conservation officer and user committees manage conservation areas and buffer zones, while a chief warden manages national parks and wildlife reserves. The DNPWC controls all of these protected areas.

The NPWC Act restricts entry into national parks and reserves, unless the warden grants permission. It also controls hunting within such areas, unless official permission is granted for hunting purposes in designated hunting reserves. The Wildlife Act makes it illegal to possess any wildlife trophy without a certificate. Any



person wishing to import or export a trophy must obtain permission from the government. The Act enables a prescribed officer to arrest any person committing any offences under the Act and impose penalties. Convictions for poaching and/or dealing in trophies can sentence the offender to 15 years imprisonment. The NPWC 1973 forms the basis of wildlife protection in the country.

### **Forest Act 1993**

Protection of wildlife within designated protected areas has been managed solely by the DNPWC, while forested areas occurring outside of such areas are managed by the DOF. The Forest Act 1993 provides a comprehensive framework for the management of forests and use of forest products throughout Nepal. The Forest Act divides the forest into particular types, so as to facilitate their management accordingly. The forest types include government-managed national forest, protected forest, community forest, leasehold forest and religious forest. Different regimes apply in relation to products obtained from the forest, which are for the most part,



made up of timber and plant material. The Forest Act, however, does mention that forest products also include birds and wild animals and trophies thereof. Obtaining of forest

products requires permission from the DOF. Removal of forest products and/or damage done to forest products without permission can result in imprisonment up to five years.

Conflicts between the Wildlife Act and the Forest Act may be pertinent when wildlife leaving protected area boundaries enters neighboring national forests. In such a case, while the primary objective of the Act is to manage forests effectively, the protection of wildlife is not mentioned as an important component of forest management. This may, in some cases, make the Acts ineffective, as two different departments are responsible for them. Furthermore, the definition of "forest" in the Forest Act is "an area fully or partly covered by trees." Thus, much of Nepal could be described as being forested for the purposes of the Act. Nowhere in the Forest Act is there a distinction between forest areas inside protected areas and forest areas outside of these areas. In practical terms therefore, the Forest Act 1993 has the effect of further subdividing those areas that are not protected areas into areas of national forest and other categorized forest types. The different regimes of the Forest Act do have differing implications for wildlife management.

### **Environment Protection Act 1997**

The other Act that is relevant to wildlife protection in the country is the Environment Protection Act 1997. Although the Act is primarily concerned with ensuring that the environmental impact of all proposals is considered before any development activity takes place, the Act does contain certain provisions that may apply to the protection of wildlife. For example, it empowers the Government to establish an environment conservation zone at any place within Nepal that has rare wildlife. A ban may also be imposed on prescribed activities within this zone. The rules applying to the Act prohibit any person from buying, selling, trading in, hunting or causing harm to any wildlife in an environment conservation zone. The Act also requires the applicant to consider the impact of the proposal on wildlife. The Environment Protection Act therefore enacts certain measures pertaining to protection of wildlife.

These three principal Acts passed by the Government provide the foundation for wildlife protection in the country. Apart from these Acts, the Customs' Act is also important in relation to import and export of trophies and live specimens. (This Act will be reviewed in the CITES section, in relation to trade of wildlife in Nepal.)

## **Chapter 3**

[The Wildlife Trade Scenario in Nepal](#) | [Geography of the Trade](#) | [The Trade in Southern Nepal](#) | [The Trade in Northern Nepal](#)  
[The Trade in West Tibet](#) | [Other Districts involved in the Trade](#) | [Trade in the North Eastern Districts](#)

### **The Wildlife Trade Scenario in Nepal**



## Introduction

Hunting of wild animals in Nepal has been carrying on for many centuries. The display of hunting trophies by members of the royal family is an age-old practice symbolizing social status. During the Rana regime, (1846-1950) the state used to pay for the taxonomy and the transportation of animals to India and England as gifts. Apart from animal

trophies, the practice of selling wild elephants to India in return for land was common during King Prithivi Narayan's reign.

(1743-1775) Traditionally, wild animals were also hunted and their parts used in certain rituals, medicines and small-scale business. The people of Manang district for example, were entitled to do business in wildlife products across the country with customs duty exemptions. They mainly traded herbs, musk pods, bear gall bladders and other such products.

Trade in wildlife and its derivatives were a regular practice done amongst the ruling class of the Katmandu Valley. The first Maharaja and Prime Minister of Nepal, Jung Bahadur Rana (1817-1877), for example, tried his luck in earning money by capturing and selling wild elephants. Later on during his regime, he realized that rhino horns were being smuggled. He, therefore, declared the rhino as royal game property, which provided protection for the rhino. (Ishwari Prasad 1975).

Despite this protection, rhinos continued to be hunted. An account written in the 1940s on hunting in Nepal recounts: "The fact that the rhino horn has a very high commercial value in India, a good horn is worth over Rs. 1,500, makes it a very valuable prize for professional poachers." (Smythes 1942 pg. 48) This reveals that the trade in rhino horn continued, much of the poaching being a consequence of the high price the horn fetched. When one compares the population of the Greater one-horned Rhino in Nepal between the 1950's and the 1970's there is a sharp drop in numbers. In 1950, the population was between 600-800 while 20 years later the population had dropped to less than 100 animals.

The trade of wildlife parts in South and South-east Asia flourished during the silk trade, about 2,300 years ago. This trade saw China exchanging furs, spices, and silks, in return for ivory, tiger bone and skin, rhino horn, and bear gall bladders with neighboring India, Nepal, and Myanmar. The greatest use was for the production of traditional Chinese and Tibetan medicines. These forms of medicine used more than 1,500 animal species, of which 968 were vertebrates. The production of such medicines continues to be huge as the demand for them is high even today. Over 10 per cent of the wildlife derivatives used in traditional Chinese medicine and Tibetan medicine comes from India and Nepal. Today, the continued demand for the gall bladder of the Himalayan black bear, or the musk pods of Musk deer is severely affecting the population viability of many such wildlife species. (Sung and Yiming, Technical paper III, undated)



It wasn't until 1973 that a law was passed, which stated that trade in wildlife parts was illegal, unless permission was obtained from the government. This made hunting and trading of wildlife unlawful and made violators (if caught) of this law subject to strict punishment.

Nevertheless, the killing of certain wildlife species still continues, as the market for its parts and derivatives continues to expand.

Although the wildlife trade has been around South and South East Asia for more than 3,000

years, it is in the last 30 years that it has been termed illegal, with regard to the excessive exploitation of wildlife. (Bajaj 1996)

Nepal continues to be a major supplier of wildlife goods. Some of the most-traded commodities are, tiger bones, teeth and skin, rhino horn, elephant tusks, gall bladders of bears, shahtoosh wool of the Tibetan antelope (Chiru), musk pods from musk deer, skin of blue sheep, leopard skin and paws, and otter skins. Trade in live birds and some dead specimens, such as heads of hornbills, are also very extensive.

Although Nepal is a signatory of CITES, no bill to implement these regulations has been finalized. A structural organization for monitoring the trade has also not been initiated. Although the country's protected areas are relatively well managed, poaching both inside and outside of these areas continues to take place.

## Geography of the Trade

The wildlife trade in Nepal comprises of a large network of people and trade routes that can be divided in to two major parts:

### 1. Southern Region:

The Southern region of the country, namely the Terai, is home to the Bengal tiger, the Greater one-horned rhino, the Asian elephant, and many other smaller mammals. They are restricted to the five national parks and wildlife reserves of the region. The southern region is the most accessible part of the country, and has easy transport links to India.

### 2. Northern Region:

The Northern region of the country extends towards the Himalayas and is not as easily accessible as the Southern region. The region shelters a number of high-altitude species, including the snow leopard, Tibetan antelope, black bear, and blue sheep. Many of these species are also found outside of designated protected areas. This region has border links with Tibet, China, and India.

The Southern part of the trading route has a number of commercial centers through which the goods are traded. Since the country's major highway, (the East-West Highway) extends from eastern Terai to western Terai, it has numerous connections to Indian towns and cities located along the southern, eastern, and western borders of the international boundary. Transportation of wildlife goods from





various parts of the Terai to India is rather open. Many of the custom check posts along smaller border post towns rarely check transported goods, making it easy for traders to sell their goods to interested buyers. According to data collected in this region, the most frequently confiscated items were tiger bones, bear gall bladders, common leopard skins, and rhino horn. Other goods found coming from the Northern Himalayan region were musk pods and

shahtoosh wool. Although these animal parts are often traded along the higher Tibetan and Indian borders, transport of these goods to the Terai is not uncommon.

The primary urban centers where wildlife goods are traded in the Southern part are Nepalgunj, Kohalpur, Biratnagar, Birgunj/Raxaul, and Kakarvita. Katmandu, the capital of the country, possibly remains the largest trading center. Delhi and Motihar (in Bihar) on the other side of the Nepal border are the major cities where goods are either locally sold or further exported to other countries.

The Northern region of Nepal is less accessible due to the poor road infrastructure. This makes it easy for poachers to kill animals and transport them either on foot or by mules to the Tibetan border in the north, the Indian borders to the west, east, and northeastern boundaries. Due to the remoteness of many of these areas, the trade could be on an even greater scale than in the Southern part. Also, most of the wildlife that is hunted takes place outside protected areas, which further reduces the chances of poachers being caught. Major wildlife that is poached in this region is snow leopards, black bears, musk deer, blue sheep, Tibetan antelopes, Rhesus monkeys, red pandas and otters. Some of the major centers along the Northern region (extending east and west) for trade are at Taklakot, Kodari, Gola, and Panchthar.

In order to obtain a better insight in to the current illegal wildlife trade in both the Southern and Northern parts of the country, the major areas for poaching and trade will be described in greater detail.

### **The Trade in Southern Nepal**

The Terai region extends along Nepal's southern border. Most of the region's protected areas link to protected areas in neighboring India. The five protected areas are the Royal Sukla Phanta Wildlife Reserve, the Royal Bardia National Park, the Royal Chitwan National Park, the Parsa Wildlife Reserve, and the Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve. These areas are representative of the indigenous Terai vegetation, flora, and fauna. These areas are managed by the DNPWC with direct support of Royal Nepalese Army (RNA).

The protected areas shelter a number of endangered wildlife species within their boundaries, resulting in most of the poaching cases taking place within the parks and reserves. However, there are exceptions. In the RCNP for example, 25 per cent of all rhino poaching cases occur within the park, while 75 per cent occur in the periphery. The establishment of well-equipped anti-poaching units within the parks and reserves has been given importance by the DNPWC and other conservation organizations, in ensuring protection of the endangered greater one-horned rhino,





the royal Bengal tiger, and other cohabitant species. Greater importance may need to be placed on establishing more such units outside of the protected areas.

### **Royal Sukla Phanta Wildlife Reserve (RSPWR):**

The RSPWR is located in the western Terai district of Kanchanpur. The reserve covers a total area of 305 square kms, which includes 105 sq kms of extension area that is yet to be annexed to in the park, though the decision to add this area to the park was made several years ago. Large areas of grasslands, which are believed to be some of the largest in the Indian Subcontinent, characterize this reserve. The grasslands are home to the country's largest herd of swamp deer and many other species of antelope. The reserve also has the country's third largest tiger population. Herds of elephant from the Chure foothill forests and from neighboring areas in India occasionally migrate to this reserve. For many years only one rhino (believed to have migrated from India) resided in the reserve. More recently, four rhinos from Chitwan were translocated to this park to help o enlarge the rhino population in RSPWR.

The Mahakali River marks the western boundary of the reserve. The major town closest to the park is Mahendranagar, which also lies within four kilometers from the nearest Indian town, Tanakpur. Mahendranagar is easily accessible with the recent completion of the East-West Highway. The Indian Capital, Delhi, is only an eight-hour drive from Mahendranagar. The district comprises mostly of hill migrants from the districts of Dadheldhura, Baitadi, Darchula, and Accham. The indigenous people of this region are the Tharus.

### **Situation in and around the reserve:**

The Mahakali river, which serves as the border between Nepal and India, sees regular crossing of poachers to and from India. The area along the southwestern border of the reserve, known as Shikari Tal, (Hunter's Pond) has for long been an entry point for poachers. Tigers and leopards are the main species that are poached, however no precise records exist of poaching incidents. On the Indian side, the Thatargunja national forest has witnessed the poaching of the tallest bull elephant in the region, named Tula Hathi (Byrne 1990). Migrating elephants from India often face danger of being killed by poachers when moving through border areas that are not patrolled.

The village of Barmadev, located along the Chure foothill range, is one spot where repeated incidents of poaching have taken place. Spotted deer, wild boars and leopards are frequently killed by local poachers. The forests outside of RSPWR are relatively intact and provide temporary shelter for migrating elephant herds. Although there is little record of poaching inside and outside of the reserve, park officials believe poaching is rampant in the area.

The town of Mahendranagar is situated on a border area and near a busy Indian town, and therefore, makes for a perfect transit route for wildlife products coming from other regions of Nepal. Apparently organized gangs frequently trade musk pods, bear gall bladders and leopard bones from Darchula. Mahendranagar falls in the trade route from Darchula to Delhi.



According to surveys done in the area by the investigation team of this study, little precise data could be collected on the wildlife trade. Although certain individuals were aware of the trade, its extent could not be clearly traced. Furthermore, lack of knowledge about the trade by customs officials, resulted in an information gap in the collection of data on confiscated wildlife products in the border posts. This revealed the weakness of the regulatory regime in the region.

Continuous, follow-up research is required in this region to find out actual trading activities.

### **Kailali District**

Kailali district adjoins Kanchanpur district. A case of illegal trade in wildlife products took place in December 2000. One person, Mr. Tara Singh Dhatang, was caught with four skins. The skins were of sambar, blue sheep and spotted deer. Mr. Dhatang is a shoemaker and he intended to use the hides to make shoes. He received the skins from an undisclosed source and was unaware that these were illegal. Local police arrested him. According to the police, he was a resident of Triveni Chowk, Ward no. 1 Dhangadi, Kailali.

This is the only case wildlife trade known to the local officials here.

### **Royal Bardia National Park (RBNP):**

The RBNP is the Terai's largest national park. The park covers an area of 968 sq km with a proposed extension of 868 square meters. The park is home to the largest resident population of elephants, and the second largest rhino and tiger populations. The area includes a large portion of the Chure foothill forest. The habitat comprises of riverine floodplains, grasslands, riparian forest and mixed deciduous sal forests.

The park and its proposed extension area are located in the Bardia, Banke, and Dang districts. The East-West Highway traverses through the park and the army has established a number of check posts along the highway. These check posts attempt to control any illegal activities that may take place along the highway, and also check for any wildlife items in vehicles plying on these roads. The nearest town from the park is Gulariya, which lies near the southern border with India. Nepalganj, which is bigger, lies 60 km from the RBNP headquarter, Thakurdwara. The buffer zone area of the park comprises of hill people from Dhailekh, Doti, Accham, and the indigenous population of Tharus.

### **Situation in and around the park**

Rhino poaching incidents were frequent in the early 90's, when most of the poaching took place in a remote area of the park: the Babai valley. Prior to this, there were no rhinos in this area, but were introduced in the mid-80's. Active patrolling of the park's area by anti-poaching units and by the army has managed to control poaching to some extent. Between 1990 and 2000, 10 cases were registered against poachers and illegal dealers in wildlife products inside the park. (DNPWC Annual Report 1999-2000) The case-sheets indicate that people were charged for possession of elephant

tusks, tiger bones and skins, clouded leopard skins and bones, leopard skins and python skins.

According to the chief warden of the park many incidents of poaching take place outside the park. Mostly deer and rhino are killed when they leave the park boundary and enter nearby villages. No exact details on actual number of poaching incidents outside the park are available.

Efforts are being made to prepare these numbers by the organizations involved in the buffer zone development activities.

The village of Taratal, which lies near to the Indian border, is an area where leopard skins, rhino horns, and tiger bones are traded. Rhino horn mostly goes to India while tiger bones are sold in Nepal. It is known through local sources that the bones are crushed, concealed inside cigarettes, and then smuggled out of the country. Other incidents outside the park include:

1. In 1991, five people were arrested for killing a rhino but they managed to win the case on technical grounds.
2. In 1996, a man was convicted for poaching deer.
3. In 1997, a poacher was arrested with a rhino horn, following a long investigation into killing of a rhino outside the park. The offender came from a very poor family but was let out on a Rs. 1,00,000 bail paid by an unidentified person. This case implies that there is significant organization in terms of rhino horn supply and sale (rich buyers perhaps bailing out the poachers working for them).
4. In 1998, two people in possession of a rhino horn were handed over to the Banke District Forest Office.
5. In March-April 2000, the RBNP army and the anti-poaching units reported a major haul of wildlife products including one elephant tusk, three tiger skeletons, one leopard skeleton, one clouded leopard skeleton, one tiger skin and one python skin. Altogether six people were arrested during these months most of them were arrested from the village of Rambapur on June 12, 2000. The International Trust for Nature Conservation (ITNC) rewarded the anti poaching unit for this catch with a cash award of Rs 1,00,000.

Other wildlife items collected by local people, especially during the grass-cutting season, are deer antlers and velvet. The horn and velvet are bartered for domestic goods with Indians, who cross the border especially for this purpose. Dried venison and wild pig meat are also valued items in the local market.

Although the anti-poaching unit and the army are in control of the park, poaching incidents continue to occur. However, poaching incidents outside the park should be



tackled, especially when they could have corresponding deals with poachers operating inside the park.

### **Royal Chitwan National Park (RCNP):**

The RCNP is one of Nepal's most visited parks as it is recognized internationally as a World Heritage site. The park covers a total of 932 sq km and is home of the country's largest tiger and rhino populations. The park is easily accessible from Katmandu and is situated near the growing town of Narayanghat because of which it receives more than hundred thousand visitors annually. The park has an efficient poaching control unit, and several non-government organizations working on conservation projects in and around the park.

#### **Situation in and around the park**

According to DNPWC reports, between 1999-2000 there were 25 cases of illegal activities in the park. Out of these, 20 cases were related to poaching and the remaining five were cases of timber smuggling. Most of the poaching activities involved rhinos, with a number of people arrested for possessing rhino horn and tiger bone. Poaching of smaller mammals, such as spotted deer and wild pig are more for local consumption. Rhino horns and tiger bones are also used locally. However, the potential to trade across the Indian border exists. As Chitwan adjoins Parsa Wildlife Reserve, which lies along the Indian border, it is relatively easy to cross over. In 1995, tiger bones were seized from a truck coming from India on its way to Katmandu, indicating that the trade exists, though occasionally reported. Between 1995-1998, a total of 76 seizures of tiger bones and skins were reported. The cases were:

1. 1995: 10 seizures of tiger bones and skins; 28 people arrested
2. 1996: three seizures of tiger bones
3. 1997: one seizure of six kilograms. And another of 14.5 kilograms of tiger bones
4. 1998: one seizure of 13 kilograms of tiger bones

Little factual information exists on the state of the trade in and around RCNP. From studies done, there appears to be some awareness on the illegal trade amongst local police and customs officials.

### **Parsa Wildlife Reserve (PWR):**

PWR adjoins RCNP and comprises of 499 square meters. The reserve is home to elephants, gaur, tiger, common leopard and three species of deer. The reserve lies close to the Nepal-Indian border of Birgunj/Raxaul, and can easily be accessed from the highway.

#### **Situation in and around the reserve**



Local people frequently hunt deer and wild boar along the Indo-Nepal border and sell the meat in the local market. Fish poisoning and timber

smuggling is another frequently offence committed both inside as well as outside the reserve. Only one case has been recorded by DNPWC in this area, of a man arrested for possessing an elephant tusk (DNPWC 1999-2000). According to the chief warden, seizures of tiger, rhino, and bison parts have been reported. The last recorded incidence took place in 2000, in which a tiger was poisoned. No figures for wildlife parts that are traded across the Indian border are available. Because of the lack of interest among customs' officials and the police, it is difficult to gain an insight into the actual extent of the local wildlife trade.

The major trading and transit route between India and Nepal is the Birgunj/ Raxaul border, which lies to the south east of the reserve. The customs' and police have records of drugs and arms smuggling, as well as trade of shahtoosh (see chapter on trade in Northern region) and tiger bones. The bones usually come from India and it is believed, are traded for shahtoosh from Tibet.

Another activity at this border is the trafficking of birds. The Raxaul/ Birgunj border is well known for its bird trade. However, customs' officials and police seem to be unaware that such trade is illegal and therefore no records are kept or arrests made. The birds are captured in the state of Bihar and are sold in Katmandu. Many of them are also kept in transit en route to Pakistan, which has a thriving bird trade. Birds such as munias, mynas, sparrows, parakeets, lovebirds, parrots, falcons, and pigeons are the most widely seen birds. Although the trading of any bird species is illegal, the ongoing trafficking of birds reveals the lack of action-oriented implementation of the law in stopping the bird trade.

Further analysis of confiscated goods should be undertaken to formulate better regulatory mechanisms. This would require greater awareness among the customs' and police officials about the illegalities of the trade.

### **Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve (KTWR):**

KTWR lies further east from PWR and covers a total of 175 sq km. The reserve is primarily a wetland and riverine habitat and is known for its rich bird and aquatic fauna, including the Gangetic dolphin. The reserve has the only population of wild water buffaloes, the protection of which the reserve was designated. The nearest town is Biratnagar, which is also a major transit point between Nepal and India. Although the reserve does not directly have a border with India, there are a number of road crossings leading to the border. The southern border abuts the Koshi River Barrage, which was built by India to control the flow of water to Bihar.

### **Situation in and around the reserve**

The Koshi River flows through the reserve and is used to transport illegal timber by floating it downstream. Illegal activities are timber smuggling, fishing, poisoning and trapping birds and also killing of ungulates like deer, wild buffaloes, nilgai and freshwater dolphins. According to the DNPWC report, only one person was arrested



for killing spotted deer, while 463 people were arrested and fined for other illegal activities, such as cattle grazing and timber smuggling. (DNPWC 1999-2000)

No evidence has been collected of any wildlife trade across the Indo-Nepal border, which may require further investigation in Biratnagar for confirmation.

There exist a number of districts in the southern region where trade of wildlife has been uncovered. Many of the Terai districts are transit points for trade products coming from the Himalayan region. Although most of the existing data for the southern region are based around the protected area network of the region, enquiries were made in Jhapa district, in eastern Nepal.

### **Jhapa**

Jhapa lies in the eastern end of Terai and has a border with India on two sides, in the south and the east. The major transit point here is Kakarvitta. Between 1986 and 2000, the forest department recorded 2,293 illegal activities in the district. Although most of these were forest-related, five of the cases were related to wildlife. Three cases were for hunting of spotted deer and two cases were for the possession of rhino horn. However, upon investigation, the rhino horns were found to be fraudulent.

### **Methods of selling rhino horns:**

According to forest officials, when a trader shows a rhino horn to a buyer, the rhino horn is real. Later, when the actual transaction is carried out, a fake rhino horn is handed over, usually done in the evenings under dim lights. The buyer, therefore, is fooled into buying a fake rhino horn. The real rhino horn is used repeatedly to lure prospective buyers, and in its place fake horns sold. In this particular case, when the person was arrested in Dholabari, the major trade centre in Jhapa, the forest ranger received a call from a one Mr. Tashi in Thamel, Katmandu. Mr. Tashi wanted to bribe the ranger with Rs. 50,000 to let the arrested man go. The ranger refused the bribe, but when the horn was found to be a fake, the man was let go anyway. This event left many questions unanswered on the entire deal.

Tusks of a large bull elephant were also discovered in the office of the regional forest director's office. Apart from the tusks seven smaller sections of elephant tusks were also found. According to staff, these tusks, whose origin is unknown, were found in the 80's. The interesting part of this tusk is that the regional director didn't know the existence of the tusks in his office

Having reviewed the Southern part of the wildlife trade scenario in Nepal, we traveled to the Himalayan and mid-hill region of the country to find what the trade has to reveal there.



## Trade in the Northern Region

The northern region of Nepal comprises of high-altitude habitats, of which some are protected areas. This region has borders with China (Tibet) and India. Together, the indigenous flora and fauna of the region are covered by 10 national parks and wildlife reserves and conservation areas: Sagarmatha National Park, Shey-Phoksundo National Park, Annapurna Conservation Area, Manaslu Conservation Area (managed by King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation), Langtang National Park, Makalu Barun National Park and Conservation Area, Kanchanjhangha Conservation Area, Khaptad National park and Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve and Shivapuri National Park.

The Sagarmatha National Park is a World Heritage site, while the Shey-Phoksundo National Park is the largest park in Nepal. These protected areas shelter the world's youngest but highest Himalayan peaks, which are home to such species as snow leopards, musk deer, clouded and common leopard, red panda, Himalayan black bear and blue sheep. Although the region has a higher number of protected areas than the southern region, a significant number of wildlife species are found outside the protected areas. In the northwestern districts, there exists very little formal protection for the wildlife and their habitat.

Most of the data collected on the wildlife trade in this region are from areas outside protected areas. Some information was obtained from inside the protected areas.

### 1. Northwestern Districts

The northwest of the country comprises of the districts Dadheldhura, Baitadi, Darchula, Bajhang, Dolpa, Doti, Accham, Bajura, Humla, Jumla, Rolpa, Mugu, and Mustang. Darchula district is situated in an important location. It has borders with both India and Tibet/China and is therefore plays a significant role in the trade of wildlife goods.

The trade of shahtoosh wool has become one of the largest traded goods in this area. Although the trade and the market still exist, in the past few years, the risks to the trade have increased considerably due to the crackdown by Chinese authorities in 1999 and later by the Indian police as well. Stores and traders possessing shahtoosh were raided, goods seized, and traders put in jail. Since then, poachers and traders have been more careful in making their deals. However, it has had no diminishing effect on poaching or the trade. The market for shahtoosh shawls is estimated at 1,000 shawls per annum. It takes three to four Chirus to make one shawl, which means that 3,000-4,000 Chiru are being killed annually for production of these shawls. This could imply that the actual total being killed could be much higher. The major weaving of the shahtoosh is done in Kashmir, while one of the major transit markets for the readymade shahtoosh shawls is Katmandu.

The trade in Shahtoosh wool has been around for an unrecorded period of time. Nothing was known about the carnage of this gentle animal, until scientist Dr. George Schaller, who was studying the species in the high plateaus of the Xingxyang and Kingai areas of Tibet, realized its numbers were decreasing dramatically. The species is protected inside the Changtang Reserve, which is the world's second



largest protected area, and in the Arjinsan and Altan hilly Reserve in Tibet.

The Tibetan antelope is endemic to the region, and resides at an altitude of 3,700 and 3,500 meters. The Chirus look like the antelope types found in India and in Africa. However, studies reveal that Chiru branch from an early sheep and goat sub-family Caprinae, and not the antelope species. This makes them a rare and most unusual species. Although the females are rather plain looking, tawny in color and hornless, the males have long horns (nearly two foot long) and striking black markings on the face and legs that contrast with the gray-white color of their coat. The population of Tibetan antelope is approximately 75,000 animals, of which 50,000 are found in Tibet rest believed in Himalayan regions of India and Nepal. (Wright and Kumar 1997)

Dr. Schaller discovered that the disappearance of Chiru was related to its very soft under fleece. The fleece is known as shahtoosh, which literally means "king of wool." Shawls and mufflers made out of shahtoosh have long been in use by the elite as a class garment. The trade has reduced a large number of Chiru both outside as well as inside protected areas of Tibet. The wool is mixed in with other wool and traded easily across the Indo-Nepal, Indo-Tibet and Tibet-Nepal borders. For many decades now, the shahtoosh wool has been traded for tiger bones. The poaching of tigers is therefore linked to the lucrative shahtoosh trade

### **The Shahtoosh Trade Routes**

There are five main trade routes used by shahtoosh smugglers:

1. Taklakot-Darchula-Pithauraghar-Delhi
2. Taklakot-Darchula-Nepalgunj-Katmandu/Delhi
3. Taklakot-Darchula-Mahendranagar-Delhi
4. Taklakot-Darchula-Nepalgunj-Birgunj-Calcutta
5. Lhasa-Tatopani-Katmandu

The shahtoosh trade route links to the southern trade route, which reveals the inter-connectedness of the shahtoosh trade with the numerous outlets in Nepal. Confiscation of shahtoosh in Birgunj and other Terai towns is not uncommon. Frequently, trade deals involve the barter of tiger bones from the Terai or from India with shahtoosh from Tibet. The main supplying centers of shahtoosh comes from two places: Taklakot and Lhasa in Tibet. The town of Garaje of Tibet is said to be the center for poachers, while the other Tibetan cities of Latje and Singikabah are the transit points. From Taklakot the wool is either carried on foot or by mule to Darchula (Nepal) or Humla. From there it is flown to Nepalganj, and then transported by bus to Katmandu or Delhi. Another route is via the Mahakali River, to the Indian city of Pittoragarh and on to Delhi. It has been estimated that on average 10 quintals of shahtoosh per annum goes to Delhi via this route. Traders and porters from neighboring districts of Humla, Jumla, Bajang, Bajura, Mugu and Mustang are frequently involved in carrying the wool from various places in Tibet; none being aware that the trade is illegal, of course.





## **Taklakot**

Taklakot village is situated at a strategic junction on the border of three countries-Tibet (China), Nepal and India. It is a famous trading spot for local tradesmen living in the high altitude areas of these countries. The unlawful trade of shahtoosh and other wildlife products is an active component of people's income here. Customs check posts of Nepal rarely exist, and residing Chinese authorities rarely inspect the bags of people and their mules crossing the border.

The people of Taklakot are divided into two residential areas. The ethnic Tibetans and Nepalis occupy one area while the Chinese people occupy the area across the Karnali River. The Chinese side of Taklakot has modern communication systems, buildings, restaurants, large markets, hotels and clubs.

Wildlife products found at Taklakot are tiger pelt and bones, otter pelts, and bones of leopards. Until recently, shahtoosh used to be bartered with skin and bones of tigers, leopards and otters; now most of the dealings are case-based. According to the beliefs of local traders, an amulet from a tiger's claw will protect them from being caught. The bones of tigers are mainly traded at Mahendranagar, Kanchanpur (See southern section). The value of a single tiger bone (male tiger skeleton 15 kilograms and female tiger skeleton 10 kilograms) is worth Indian Rupees. 40,000. The bones are bought from Indian hunters.

All goods bought in Taklakot are carried down to the villages of Tinker and Chhangaru, in Darchula district. In Darchula, the goods are either stored for potential buyers or sent to Nepalgunj or Mahendranagar. According to local sources, the Khampa tribals are involved in the poaching of Chirus, who then trade the wool and the horns in exchange for the bone and skins of other wild animals (mainly tigers and leopards). All these exchanges take place in Taklakot.

Taklakot is possibly the most secure place for the wildlife trade thanks to its remote location. Traders are able to pay their way out by bribing Chinese authorities; this shows that there is no law enforcement for controlling the trade in shahtoosh or tiger parts.

### **1. Illegal trade in Taklakot**

Three kinds of goods are illegally brought from to Taklakot- furs, watches and pornographic books. According to local people, Chinese bureaucrats release animal skins and bones and watches on bribing them, however, they are much sterner with traders caught with pornographic books. Because of its remote location, everything is much more expensive in Taklakot than elsewhere in Nepal. For example, an apple costing one rupee at northern Nepal could fetch as much as eight rupees in Tibet. And traders benefit from these huge profit margins. Low-ranked government officials admit they are aware of all the illegal trade in the town but rarely report to their higher officials. They rely heavily on local people for food, shelter and water and their bosses hardly visit this region; therefore they see this as means of quid pro quo with the locals.

## **Darchula**

Darchula district is situated north of Baitadi and borders Tibet. The headquarters of Darchula is Khalanga. Darchula is more accessible from the Indian side of the Mahakali River than it is from the Nepal side, as there are no access roads from any point in Nepal. A suspension bridge connects Darchula from the Indian town of Pittoragarh. For people living beyond Khalanga, a wire has been extended across the Mahakali River. People from both sides of the river pull themselves across by using the wire. The wire is also used to transport illegal goods.

The government officials from Khalanga have little knowledge about the illegal wildlife trade or as to where the trafficking takes place. Similarly, rangers in charge of various range posts have the slightest idea of what shahtoosh is all about.

High-ranking customs' officials do not reside in Khalanga. Junior officers admit that each year the under fleece of sheep comes from Tinker and Taklakot. Every year, about two to three truckloads of wool are transported via Darchula to the Indian town of Dharchula, (which lies just above the Nepal side of Darchula and connects with suspension bridge to India) but they are not sure whether these contain the mixture of Chiru wool as well. They are aware of people and goods being transported by the wire above the Mahakali River across the border.

Further north of Khalanga, close to the Tibetan border, are the villages of Tinker and Chhangaru. These villages also have access to India by way of the Sita suspension bridge. The bridge is located one-and-a-half day's walk from the nearest Indian town of Magti. From Magti, people can travel by bus to any Indian town or city. Both Indians and Nepalis regularly use the bridge and although a small police check post and a customs' office exist, people are rarely stopped or checked. According to police, more than 200 mules cross the Sita bridge on a daily basis. Each mule carries around 50 kilograms of wool coming from the village of Tinker, although the police do not know how much of the wool is illegal as they have no way of distinguishing between sheep wool and Chiru wool.

## **Tinker and Chhangaru Villages**

Most people of Tinker and Chhangaru are the primary traders of shahtoosh. Chhangaru has about 100 households and most of its people earn their living from the trade. The village of Tinker, which is the last village on the northwestern border, also has a strong hand in the illegal wildlife trade. From Tinker, it takes about six to seven hours on foot to reach Taklakot. From there, Nepal's border ends at the Lipu Lekh Valley, which is situated at 18,000 ft. above sea level. The office of the border police lies beyond the hill of Tinker. The main road from Tinker to Taklakot passes in front of the police post, which is manned by a force of 25 policemen and headed by a sub inspector.

Most of the residents of Chhangaru and Tinker rely on the wildlife trade with the village of Taklakot in Tibet. According to the customs' officer here, almost every household in Tinker is involved with the trading of tiger parts and shahtoosh. The officers claim to be helpless in doing anything about stopping the trade.

Beyond the Tinker police post, no other law enforcement agencies exist. Beyond Tinker, there are two hill areas named Dunga and Tata. Shepherds inhabit these hills on their way to Lipu Lekh Valley. According to a shepherd from this region, payment of a bribe to the police permits them to take their goods to and fro without any



checks.

A well-known trader from the region stated that almost every family in Tinker and in Chhangaru owns a store of shahtoosh wool. Besides shahtoosh, a large amount of tiger parts are also stored. Business is mainly done in two ways: one kind of trader brings shahtoosh and tiger parts stores them until the right buyers are found. The second kind is only involved with carrying the goods from Taklakot to other places. According to the trader, Darchula is a very secure place for the trade of tiger parts and Chiru wool. Since the police reside only six months at a time in Chhangaru, they have little knowledge of the trade. (Unlike in India, where Indian police are on duty all year round.)

Goods brought from Taklakot are stored at Tinker and Chhangaru until a deal is struck with a likely buyer. Most of the residents from these regions also have houses at Khalanga; here they make deals with Indian merchants. At present, shahtoosh is worth Rs. (Indian) 20,000 per kilo at Chhangaru and Tinker. Transportation cost from Chhangaru or Tinker to Dharchula is Rs (Indian) 1,500. According to local estimates, the cost of shahtoosh will be around Rs. (Indian) 25,000 by the time it reaches New Delhi. The most widely used route is from Dharchula via Pitthoragarh to Delhi.

## **2. Trade at Chhangaru**

It takes three days to reach Chhangaru from Khalanga, when traveling on the Nepal side. When we traveled there, landslides at Tampak below Chhangaru swept away all the settlements and road as well. In the previous year, more than 300 people at Malga (India) were swept away by landslides. Due to natural disasters, people have been accessing Chhangaru via Tawakot (from the Indian side). Even Indians are not permitted here without an identity card. At the end point of the motorable road lies Magti. From here it takes one and a half day's walk to reach the Sita bridge. After crossing this bridge (and the border) one reaches Chhangaru. Here, there is a small temporary police check post that looks like more like a cowshed. There are only four personnel posted here, while at least 10 policemen should be posted. The police have to walk four hours to reach Tinker security check post for any communication linkage with the outside world. Police on duty here have never heard of the shahtoosh business being conducted in the area but they do know of expensive wool called pasam. They check each mule crossing the bridge but they have no idea how to distinguish between the cheap sheep wool and pasam. To date, they have not arrested anybody on the charges of carrying shahtoosh wool. Chhangaru village has a border administration unit. However, facilities and supplies provided by the government have reached only up to Sunsera, which is about one and half hour's walk from Darchula. The administrative office Chhangaru is only symbolic, Chhangaru residents feel. They rely mostly on the shahtoosh business and trade in other wildlife products with Tibet for their sustenance.

### **Awareness of the Illegal Trade**

Although the Tibetan antelope and the Bengal tiger have been declared an endangered species and have been listed in the Appendix I of CITES, there has



hardly been any change in the livelihoods of the traders of Darchula district and Taklakot village. Local traders are aware that it is illegal to deal in these wildlife products, but both the market and the traders are thriving. No major steps have been undertaken to control or stop the trade.

According to a trader from this region, each year 10 quintals (1,000 kilograms) of shahtoosh is sent to New Delhi. Also, skins of tigers and otters and bones of leopard arrive by the quintals in Taklakot. Until a few years ago, the sale of shahtoosh and skins were done in the open market. More recently, however, it is not sold openly, but only to confirmed buyers. Also, depending on the security at various border posts, people either travel on foot or with mules through selected crossing points between Nepal and India, and visa versa. Crossing the Mahakali River is more often difficult than easy (especially on the Indian side), but does not hamper the trade. Security lapses on the Indo-Nepal international border provide a great opportunity for the trade to carry on, uninterrupted. The goods are transported to Pittoragarh from Darchula and onwards to New Delhi by trucks, from where shahtoosh is exported to foreign countries.

## The Trade in Western Tibet

There are different ways of entering Tibet from Nepal. One way is walking through Darchula district to Taklakot, the other way is by driving from Katmandu to Kodari, along the Bhoté-Koshi river. This is the preferred trading route between Katmandu and Lhasa, as it is the only existing road link between Tibet and Nepal.

Lhasa is a major center for the trade in wildlife goods. Besides Lhasa, Sigatse is another place where this trade is thriving. Goods are sent to various destinations in Katmandu, Jammu and Kashmir. The major poaching region is in Garaje, where the Dukpa tribes are known for killing chiru and selling the skin and wool to Khampas, Chinese, and Chinese Muslims coming from Taklakot. The average price for wool is 1500 yuan/kilograms. (One yuan equals eight Nepali Rupees) The meat is a delicacy for local people and is available in local markets. The horns are sold at 500 yuan, while a head with intact horns at 5,000 yuan.

Although the trade of shahtoosh used to be an open market, after the crackdown by Chinese administration three years ago, the trade has become more restricted. The Chinese have imposed possible imprisonment for possession of shahtoosh. The affect of the crackdown was observed in a number of villages active in the wildlife trade. In Sangsang village, for example, people spoke in hushed voices about shahtoosh and some even said it was better not to talk about it. In another area, at Nun Khani of Yanhu, about 150 km east of Singikabah, a wool trader said that it was safer not to mention the word "shahtoosh" in the region. According to a Dukpa (a local Tibetan) from Pharang (about 200 km from Holy Manasrovar Lake) the price of shahtoosh two years ago could fetch Nepali rupees 8,000-9,000 for a single kilogram. He didn't mention what the price was like at present, but added that shahtoosh could still be found without difficulty. After the crack down, most of the goods are being stored in warehouses. Traders await true buyers and attempt to sell all their stored goods at a previously negotiated price.

Another area where wildlife products are found in plenty is on the Manasrovar-Kailash route near Garaje. Here the Dukpa people can be found selling wildlife articles made out of otter skins, jackal skins (especially caps), lynx skins, and snow leopard pelts. Since the crackdown by the Chinese administration, however, this has also decreased in the last three years.

The trade of shahtoosh has its links in several parts of Nepal. In 1994, shahtoosh was confiscated near Birgunj, then in Pashupatinagar, in Ilam in 1995 and twice at Tatopani in 1995 and 1998. The market for shatoosh continues to exist and will require intervention of Chinese, Indian, and Nepali authorities to crackdown on the trade.

## Encounters Along the Trade Route West Tibet



### Lalaji's Warehouse

We met a group of people on the road. Their manner of speaking indicated that they were of Nepali origin and indeed most of them are from Humla district. One of them was from Garbyang (India), but he has Nepali facial features.

We asked them directly for Chiru wool. One of them volunteered some information: "I know the warehouse of Lalaji at Thanka. I am sure he will have some Chiru wool." Then, he volunteered to leave his group and take us to the shop.

Thanka is a place allocated by the Chinese government as a limited trading place for Indian and Nepali traders. There are rows of tents and permanent warehouses where every season Nepalis and Indians pay 300-400 yuan as rent to the Chinese government to set up their shops.

Lalaji's warehouse is a permanent structure in the town. We were taken straight away to his warehouse by the youth from Humla.

Lalaji's shop is a huge, stocked with a range of products from rice to clothes. According to Lalaji, the shahtoosh business has been on the downslide ever since the Chinese government raided lots of businessmen last year. The Indian police stationed at Dharchula and Pittoragarh have also become shrewder about wildlife goods. Though Lalaji claimed that he has stopped dealing with shahtoosh wool, he claimed to know the big traders of shahtoosh from Lhasa and the Khampas of Taklakot.

However, the owner of the shop next to Lalaji's, a trader known as Dip Bohora, said that he would be able to supply goods to Katmandu if sufficient quantities of shahtoosh were ordered. He too admitted that the situation was very tense and it would be difficult to supply goods to Delhi via Darchula.

During the conversation, both of them repeatedly assured us that they have discontinued shahtoosh business, though they were willing to organize supplies through other traders. They emphasized that the trade was thriving, but were reluctant to quote the current prices for the wool.

## **The Traders at Humla**

Humla is full of people claiming they trade in shahtoosh. We were introduced a trader by the same Nepali youth we had met earlier at Humla. He claimed that he could supply us with any quantity of shahtoosh, at any place. He promised to meet us the next morning with the goods we had ordered, but failed to show up.

In the town, an old man passed on information to us that he knew someone who had 10 kgs of Chiru wool, but did not confirm a time to meet him. He also told us that last year a Thakali had brought a huge quantity of yarsa gumba (*Cordyceps Sinensis*) and panch Ounle (*Dactylorhiza Hatagirea*). According the old man, he had helped the Thakali to sell these goods for Rs.60, 000.

In the evening, we met another trader at a Chinese restaurant, totally by accident. We were having difficulties in placing our order with the owner of the restaurant, when another diner offered to help us. He seemed to be from India (as he spoke Hindi fluently). During the course of our conversation with him, we found out that he was a shahtoosh trader.

We asked him to procure some shahtoosh for us. After a long uncomfortable silence, he began speaking with ease. He admitted he had sold a lot of shahtoosh and transported them from Katmandu to Jammu and Kashmir. He claimed that he had also used the trade route from Humla via Nepalgunj and Rupadiya to Delhi. Like the others, he claimed he could supply us with any amount of the material. He promised to meet us with a few samples the next day at the same restaurant. But never showed up.

## **Jagat Singh of Garbyang**

We first met Jagat Singh in Humla town. Like the others, he did not speak too much during the first meeting. But he agreed to meet us at our guesthouse later that night.

He arrived at night and did not talk too much about the trade but agreed to come back the following day. Jagat Singh, we discovered, was one blind in one eye. The next day, he arrived on time, unlike the others. An old man accompanied him. Again, he did not talk much about the trade. However, he promised to show us sample that afternoon.

He came an hour late that afternoon. We asked him to return after a while. He kept up the appointment, but was accompanied by a Tibetan from Taklakot. He had brought half kg of shahtoosh as sample. He quoted the price of 6,000 yuan per kg and transportation charge of 4,000 Indian Rupees per kg from Taklakot to Delhi.

From our conversations with Jagat it was clear that he was well entrenched in wildlife trade. He seemed to be around 50 years of age. He was fluent in Nepali, Hindi, Tibetan and several other local dialects. Jagat is an Indian citizen and owns a house in Garbyang and Darchula (India). He claimed to travel frequently between Katmandu and Delhi. We found that Jagat had been arrested once while smuggling Kasturi (musk pod) from Bhairahawa (mid west Nepal) to Katmandu. He was arrested at Bhairahawa and imprisoned for 11 days but was let out on a bail of Nepali Rupees 48,000.

The Tibetan who came along with Jagat had a house and shop at Bouddha, Katmandu. He stayed on guard outside the room while Jagat showed us sample of shahtoosh. He wanted to sell 15 kgs of shahtoosh to us immediately and demanded to be paid in cash. But we said that we are unable to buy his goods right off. After a long conversation, he agreed to carry the shahtoosh himself to Darchula. We would meet him at Darchula and pay him half money in cash and rest after reaching Delhi. We agreed on his price (a cost of 6,000 yuan plus a transportation cost of 4,000 Indian Rupees per kilogram ), even though we knew it was a very high price. But we clearly stated that next time we would quote our price. In the beginning we felt that it is wise to agree to his terms so that we could win his confidence. He had mentioned that he was capable of supplying one quintal of shahtoosh per month. The day we were to leave for Taklakot, Jagat showed up at our place without prior notice. He wanted a written statement that we will be buying 15 kg of shahtoosh at the price he had quoted, which we agreed to. he gave his phone number and address in Dharchula. We both agreed that after reaching Darchula or Taklakot, we would call him up and he would wait for us at Dharchula with the shahtoosh. The phone number was that of his brother Durga Singh's residence at Dharchula and the other phone number was of Sera Lama of Taklakot.

### **Shahtoosh at Gartje**

The natural habitat of Chiru (Tibetan antelope) lies in the Changtang National Park of Tibet near Gartje city, which does not lie along the tourist route. George Schaller, an American biologist who studied the wildlife of the huge Pathar land of Tibet had reported in the early 90s that the locals were killing Chiru inside the Changtang National Park. We discovered that nothing has changed much since that time.

We went to one shop at Gartje. Without wasting any time we bluntly asked for shahtoosh (cho kholu, in Tibetan dialect). The shopkeeper said he could organise 15-16 kgs for sale and could also sell the hides

"Do you have them here?" I asked.

" I don't have them here but I can bring them ," he said.

When I asked him how many he had, he said, "Hundreds," and asked us to wait while he went to fetch the goods.

After a short while, he returned with a big bag. Before opening the bag, he made sure that he closed the door and windows and curtains, as a precautionary measure. He then showed us a piece of Chiru hide. There were at least 30 pieces of Chiru hide with wool in his bag..

The hides he showed us were about a year old. He was willing to deliver the shahtoosh to Lhasa or Taklakot. He claimed that during the winter he could collect 200 kilograms of shahtoosh and supply it to us.

We clearly stated our conditions: that we are interested in shahtoosh, not the skin and if the deal was made and we would buy 200 kilograms of shahtoosh during the coming winter. He quoted a price of 2500 yuan per kg but after a lot of haggling agreed to 1500 yuan per kg. We asked for a sample before we left promising to meet him in the afternoon. He told us that he would provide us with his address



and phone number at that time.

Around 4 pm, we went to his shop again. He was not there but another man at the shop asked us to wait. After a while he showed up with three plastic bags containing shahtoosh wool and hides.

The wool was very soft. I did not have the opportunity to touch wool when Jagat brought the wool at Taklakot, but this time I did. By touch alone one can differentiate between shahtoosh and other wool. He bought another plastic bag that contained fake shahtoosh, which, in the absence of pure wool for comparison, would be impossible to tell from the real shahtoosh.

He weighed 1.5 kgs of wool and gave that to us as a sample. He reiterated his price of 1500 yuan per kilogram. We said that we could not take such a huge sample and asked for half a kilo instead. However, he did not agree to that and continued to sell all the shahtoosh he had brought to us somehow.

Eventually we gave up and left before the situation turned to hot and bitter.

## Other Northwest Districts Involved in the Trade

### Dadheldhura

Dadheldhura district is the first hill district after Kanchanpur. The district is easily accessible by road. The major poaching of animals here is of the Rhesus monkey. A total of 15-20 monkeys are killed daily and the meat is dried and sold as "sukuthi." The meat costs 400 Rs/kg and is sold locally only.

### Baitadi

Baitadi district is situated in between Dadhledhura and Darchula. It has a direct linkage with the Indian city of Pittoragarh, across the Mahakali River. It acts as a potential transit area for goods being brought to the Indian side.

The major species poached here are barking deer, wild pig, black bear, leopard, and squirrel. It is not sure if these are traded with India.

### Rolpa

Rolpa district lies east of Baitadi. Traditionally, the people of Rolpa hunt the Himalayan black bear. An average of 20-22 bears are killed every year in Rolpa. The bear bile is exchanged for gold. The bile of one bear sells for 55 grams of gold. One gall bladder gives 33 grams of bile. The bile is sold in Nepalganj.

### Accham

Accham lies southeast of Dadheldhura. An interesting case of wildlife trade took place here four years ago. Two people were arrested with one fur of a clouded leopard and 300 grams of bear gall bladder. They had bought the goods in Accham, from a businessman of Delhi. The goods were sold at a cheap rate of Rs. 5,000 for the leopard fur and Rs. 2,000 for the bear gall bladder. The intentions of the two brothers (Phunjong Lama and Buddhi Lama) were to go to Taklakot via Surkhet-Humla and Jumla, and to sell the goods there for a higher price. The price these two



men intended to receive was Rs. 20,000 to 35,000 for the leopard fur and 15,000 to 20,000 for the bear gall bladder. The men were caught and penalized Rs. 50,000 each and 15 years imprisonment, but they mysteriously escaped from the jail.

An interesting note to this case was that when police went through the diary of the men they found along with other addresses, the contact address of an MP (Member of Parliament) belonging to Communist party of Moist ideology

### **Jumla**

According to the chairman of the District Development Committee (DDC) of Jumla, annually, a total of 15,000 otters are killed in different lakes and rivers in Jumla for their fur. The furs are bartered for with sheep wool in Tibet. The pelts are used to make a very thick jacket, known as "Bhatta." It takes ten otter pelts to make a single jacket. These jackets are mainly sold in Tibet. The route that is used is either from Jumla to Kalikot and Tibet, or from Bhajang and Bhajura to Tibet via Humla.

According to the DDC chairman, private aircraft are often chartered to carry wildlife goods from Jumla to Kathmandu.

### **Bajhang**

According to the District Forest Officer in Bajhang there have been two cases of illegal wildlife activities. The first case was a man arrested for having killed a leopard. Mr. Dhan Singh Dhama was arrested in 1995 and his case was finalized in 1999. He had to pay a penalty of Rs. 4,025. The second case is a man, Dubble Dhama, who was arrested on charges of wildlife poaching. He was arrested in 1990 and in 1993 the case was dismissed. The exactly nature of his offence is not clear.

### **Myagdi**

Magdi district is located near to the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP). The major wildlife goods traded here were musk pods. Exact reports of cases are not known.

### **Shey Phokshundo National Park**

Shey Phokshundo National Park is located in Dolpo district. According to a former warden of the park four to five snow leopards are killed in the region annually. Poaching of musk deer is also high here; an average of 50 musk deer are killed every year. The most common form of poaching is through the use of traps. The poachers come from the Taddi and villages of Ramecham. In the village of Kai, park officials seized two snow leopard skins in 1997. Similarly, in the Akhan area musk pods were seized from poachers coming from Taddi. According to national park officials, it is very difficult to control poaching as the traders have the support of local politicians.

### **Significance of District Information**

The information presented on the various districts involved in the wildlife trade portrays the extent of the trade in Nepal. The information reveals that there is "some" official documentation of illegal activities related to wildlife. However, these cases are not representative of the actual amount of trading that takes place in these districts. Most of the cases were obtained from first-hand sources, such as district development chairmen, police officers, district forest officers, rangers and other individuals. The case reports are kept in the local offices, where these are often left

in pending. Few of the actual reports are centralized in the headquarters in Katmandu. In this way, most of the cases are left uninvestigated and little awareness is raised amongst officials in higher posts about the illegal trade. It is self-evident then that the trade in these districts provides an alternative form of income to families of both low and high income groups.

## **2. Northern districts of central and eastern Nepal**

The major areas of Northeastern Nepal where the trade take place in wildlife goods are in Tatopani of Sindhupalchowk district, Taplejung, and Ilam district.

### **Tatopani of Sindhupalchowk**

Tatopani lies at about three hours drive from Katmandu and is situated close to the Tibetan border. Three major illegal trade incidents took place here between 1989-1999.

Elephant bone weighing 1,040 kilograms was found which had been brought from Nepalgunj. The bones were said to be from four elephants. The bones were found when porters' demanded higher wages for carrying the bones, and when the request was not honoured, they leaked the information to the police.

In another case, of 115 kilograms of shahtoosh wool was confiscated in 1995. A similar incident took place in 1998. A total of 218 kilograms of shahtoosh was taken into custody, also brought in from Tibet and into Nepal. According to customs' officers the incidents took place by accident. Forty-seven bags of wool had been found in false bottoms; had the wool been brought in openly like ordinary wool, the customs' officers would not have suspected that the cargo was fishy.

The most recent seizure in Tatopani took place in March 2001, in which the army found a 39 kgs of shahtoosh. The Government has recently deployed army personnel to major border areas in order to keep a strict check on smuggling. This seizure is a positive sign that army personnel may be more aware of wildlife products.

### **Taplejung**

The trade of wildlife goods in Taplejung takes place in Gola area, border with Tibet, and Panchthar, which borders to India. Most of the goods that are traded in this region go to Sikkim, a Himalayan state of India, and not to other local markets in Nepal.

Major wildlife products traded here are musk pods, bear gall bladder, blue sheep skin, snow leopard fur, and skin of barking deer. There are only three recorded cases of confiscated goods in Gola between the 1980's and the late 1990's. According to local sources, traps are used to kill the animals. An efficient method used to transport musk pods are in the traditional butter casks. The pods are stored inside the butter and transported across the Nepal-Tibet border. The trader can easily transport the goods from place to place as butter casks prevent to scent of musk pods from escaping.

According to Mr. Deepak Rana, a well-known licensed hunter of Nepal, at least hundred musk deer are killed every year. The major poaching areas are Ghunsa and Yampudin, which lie in the Kanchanjunga Conservation Area. Mr. Rana obtains an annual license for hunting from DNPWC. In his excursions to the Taplejung area, Mr. Rana has found a large number of traps set to kill musk deer.

It is also learnt that in recent past, one of the Asian embassies based in Katmandu has been extensively involved in the wildlife trade. The embassy used to buy wildlife products from traders' countries under diplomatic cover.

#### · **Panchthar**

In the Panchthar district, the forest office recorded a total of 147 cases of illegal activities since 1980 ; out of these cases only one case was wildlife related, in which 17 grams of musk pod was seized. A penalty of Rs 50,000 was levied on the trader. Panchthar is also known for its trade in otter skins. Most of the goods go either to India or to Sikkim.

#### · **Ilam**

Ilam district lies in the mid-hills. The district is easily accessible from the Terai. The district forest office recorded a total of 111 cases of illegal activities between 1988 and 2000. Out of these cases, two were wildlife related. One case related to the confiscation of 15 musk pods weighing 33 grams each, and 95 grams of bear gall bladder. The people arrested were from the western district of Dhailekh (far west district of Nepal). At first, those arrested were asked to pay a fine of Rs 8,000 each and had to serve one-year's imprisonment. However, the forest officer changed before the order could be given, and they were let off after they paid Rs 5,400 without any imprisonment. This shows that there is no standard practice among forest officers to penalize guilty traders.

The other cases involved a woman who had been asked to carry a leopard skin with her back to Thamel, Katmandu from Darjeeling. She was given Rs 1,000 by a certain man named Dorjee from Darjeeling to carry the fur. She was caught at Pashupatinagar customs gate and the case yet to be decided. No further information has been found on Dorjee or his role in the trade.

#### · **Dolkha**

The major wildlife goods traded in Dolkha district are musk deer pods and common leopard. There are no records of illegal cases here.

#### · **Langtang (central Himalayan region)**

In the Quiroong area of the Tibet-Nepal border over 6,000 kg of wool was confiscated. The wool was being brought to Nepal from Tibet, via the Quiroong route. According to reports, it was unclear whether the wool was mixed with shahtoosh or not. The Tibet-Quiroong-Langtang-Katmandu route is another frequently used route for the wildlife trade.

#### · **Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area**

In 1995, musk deer skin was found in the village of Cheskam. The local people who handed it over to the park authorities said they found the skin within the conservation zone.

In another case in 1996, six otter pelts were seized in a village named Tamku. Six people were caught with the pelts, including two women, a man, and three children.

In 1998, six Tibetans were caught on the way to Kimathanka area. The police seized a pheasant from their possession.

**- Sagarmatha National Park**

In 1992, 20 musk deer pods were seized from traders. This is the only recorded case in the park. No other wildlife trade case has been recorded since then.

**- Sindhu Palanchowk**

According to the District Forest Office, a total of 179 cases of illegal activities were recorded in the last 10 years. (see database appendix) of which, six were wildlife related. The cases involved penalties for persons possessing bear fur, fake rhino horn, for killing leopard, for having a turtle collection and export business, and for killing of leopard and selling its skin.

**Other Records of Confiscated Goods on Border Areas**

1989 85 otter pelts stopped at Darchula on its way to India

1989 315 kg of tiger bones and meat discovered at Darchula on the way to Tibet from India

1989 1,040 kilograms of elephant bones discovered by Nepal police near Tatopani custom office

1989-1991 10 tiger fur on the way to Tibet from India (out of which 7 were stolen by the employee of District Forest Office from its store house)

1993 130 kilograms of tiger bones seized at Humla, sent by mail from Nepalgunj.

June 1993 100 kgs of shahtoosh captured at Raxaul while on its way to India

January 1994 100 kgs of shahtoosh from Nepal seized in New Delhi

April 1994 20 kilograms of tiger bone seized at Calcutta believed to be from Nepal

May 1994 185 kilograms of shahtoosh recovered at Darjeeling, suspected to have originated from Nepal

August 1994 1 tiger, 89 leopards, and 9 otter pelts confiscated at Dhulabari on their way to India

December 1994 33 kilograms of shahtoosh confiscated near Birgunj on the way to India

1995 115 kilograms of shahtoosh confiscated at Tatopani custom office, from Tibet.

1995 13 kilograms of elephant tusk recovered at Calcutta, supposedly from Nepal



December 1995 190 kilograms of shahtoosh confiscated at Pashupatinagar on its way to India

November 1998 218 kilograms of shahtoosh confiscated at the Tatopani customs office.

1999 150 kilograms of shahtoosh en route to Nepal, seized at Khasa by Tibetan officers.

May 1999 140 kilograms of tiger bones, possibly en route to Tibet, seized at Bhairahwa by police (yet to verify).

1999 73 pieces out of which four were tiger skins (possibly from India), recovered at Bhairahwa.

These are the major trading areas for the illegal wildlife trade in the Central and North-eastern part of the country. Other information was obtained on confiscated wildlife goods from the central District Forest Office in Katmandu. As the country's capital, Katmandu, is a major trading point, and a review of reported cases reveals the extent of the trade in the city.

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In another case, of 115 kilograms of shahtoosh wool was confiscated in 1995. A similar incident took place in 1998. A total of 218 kilograms of shahtoosh was taken into custody, also brought in from Tibet and into Nepal. According to customs' officers the incidents took place by accident. Forty-seven bags of wool had been found in false bottoms; had the wool been brought in openly like ordinary wool, the customs' officers would not have suspected that the cargo was fishy.

The most recent seizure in Tatopani took place in March 2001, in which the army found a 39 kgs of shahtoosh. The Government has recently deployed army personnel

to major border areas in order to keep a strict check on smuggling. This seizure is a positive sign that army personnel may be more aware of wildlife products.

### **Taplejung**

The trade of wildlife goods in Taplejung takes place in Gola area, border with Tibet, and Panchthar, which borders to India. Most of the goods that are traded in this region go to Sikkim, a Himalayan state of India, and not to other local markets in Nepal.

Major wildlife products traded here are musk pods, bear gall bladder, blue sheep skin, snow leopard fur, and skin of barking deer. There are only three recorded cases of confiscated goods in Gola between the 1980's and the late 1990's. According to local sources, traps are used to kill the animals. An efficient method used to transport musk pods are in the traditional butter casks. The pods are stored inside the butter and transported across the Nepal-Tibet border. The trader can easily transport the goods from place to place as butter casks prevent to scent of musk pods from escaping.

According to Mr. Deepak Rana, a well-known licensed hunter of Nepal, at least hundred musk deer are killed every year. The major poaching areas are Ghunsa and Yampudin, which lie in the Kanchanjunga Conservation Area. Mr. Rana obtains an annual license for hunting from DNPWC. In his excursions to the Taplejung area, Mr. Rana has found a large number of traps set to kill musk deer.

It is also learnt that in recent past, one of the Asian embassies based in Katmandu has been extensively involved in the wildlife trade. The embassy used to buy wildlife products from traders countries under diplomatic cover.

### **Panchthar**

In the Panchthar district, the forest office recorded a total of 147 cases of illegal activities since 1980 ; out of these cases only one case was wildlife related, in which 17 grams of musk pod was seized. A penalty of Rs 50,000 was levied on the trader. Panchthar is also known for its trade in otter skins. Most of the goods go either to India or to Sikkim.

### **Ilam**

Ilam district lies in the mid-hills. The district is easily accessible from the Terai. The district forest office recorded a total of 111 cases of illegal activities between 1988 and 2000. Out of these cases, two were wildlife related. One case related to the confiscation of 15 musk pods weighing 33 grams each, and 95 grams of bear gall bladder. The people arrested were from the western district of Dhailekh (far west district of Nepal). At first, those arrested were asked to pay a fine of Rs 8,000 each and had to serve one-year's imprisonment. However, the forest officer changed before the order could be given, and they were let off after they paid Rs 5,400 without any imprisonment. This shows that there is no standard practice among forest officers to penalize guilty traders.

The other cases involved a woman who had been asked to carry a leopard skin with her back to Thamel, Katmandu from Darjeeling. She was given Rs 1,000 by a certain

man named Dorjee from Darjeeling to carry the fur. She was caught at Pashupatinagar customs gate and the case yet to be decided. No further information has been found on Dorjee or his role in the trade.

### **Dolkha**

The major wildlife goods traded in Dolkha district are musk deer pods and common leopard. There are no records of illegal cases here.

### **Langtang (central Himalayan region)**

In the Quiroong area of the Tibet-Nepal border over 6,000 kg of wool was confiscated. The wool was being brought to Nepal from Tibet, via the Quiroong route. According to reports, it was unclear whether the wool was mixed with shahtoosh or not. The Tibet-Quiroong-Langtang-Katmandu route is another frequently used route for the wildlife trade.

### **Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area**

In 1995, musk deer skin was found in the village of Cheskam. The local people who handed it over to the park authorities said they found the skin within the conservation zone.

In another case in 1996, six otter pelts were seized in a village named Tamku. Six people were caught with the pelts, including two women, a man, and three children.

In 1998, six Tibetans were caught on the way to Kimathanka area. The police seized a pheasant from their possession.

### **Sagarmatha National Park**

In 1992, 20 musk deer pods were seized from traders. This is the only recorded case in the park. No other wildlife trade case has been recorded since then.

### **Sindhu Palanchowk**

According to the District Forest Office, a total of 179 cases of illegal activities were recorded in the last 10 years. (see database appendix) of which, six were wildlife related. The cases involved penalties for persons possessing bear fur, fake rhino horn, for killing leopard, for having a turtle collection and export business, and for killing of leopard and selling its skin.

### **Other Records of Confiscated Goods on Border Areas**

**1989** 85 otter pelts stopped at Darchula on its way to India

**1989** 315 kg of tiger bones and meat discovered at Darchula on the way to Tibet from India

**1989** 1,040 kilograms of elephant bones discovered by Nepal police near Tatopani custom office

**1989-1991** 10 tiger fur on the way to Tibet from India (out of which 7 were stolen by the employee of District Forest Office from its store house)

**1993** 130 kilograms of tiger bones seized at Humla, sent by mail from Nepalgunj.

**June 1993** 100 kgs of shahtoosh captured at Raxaul while on its way to India

**January 1994** 100 kgs of shahtoosh from Nepal seized in New Delhi

**April 1994** 20 kilograms of tiger bone seized at Calcutta believed to be from Nepal

**May 1994** 185 kilograms of shahtoosh recovered at Darjeeling, suspected to have originated from Nepal

**August 1994** 1 tiger, 89 leopards, and 9 otter pelts confiscated at Dhulabari on their way to India

**December 1994** 33 kilograms of shahtoosh confiscated near Birgunj on the way to India

**1995** 115 kilograms of shahtoosh confiscated at Tatopani custom office, from Tibet.

**1995** 13 kilograms of elephant tusk recovered at Calcutta, supposedly from Nepal

**December 1995** 190 kilograms of shahtoosh confiscated at Pashupatinagar on its way to India

**November 1998** 218 kilograms of shahtoosh confiscated at the Tatopani customs office.

**1999 150** kilograms of shahtoosh en route to Nepal, seized at Khasa by Tibetan officers.

**May 1999** 140 kilograms of tiger bones, possibly en route to Tibet, seized at Bhairahwa by police (yet to verify).

**1999 (?)** 73 pieces out of which four were tiger skins (possibly from India), recovered at Bhairahwa.

These are the major trading areas for the illegal wildlife trade in the Central and North-eastern part of the country. Other information was obtained on confiscated wildlife goods from the central District Forest Office in Katmandu. As the country's capital, Katmandu, is a major trading point, and a review of reported cases reveals the extent of the trade in the city.

## Chapter 4

[Kathmandu Valley](#) | [Central Level Communication Gaps](#) | [Wildlife Trade Data](#) | [Conclusion](#)





## Kathmandu Valley

The trade of wildlife body parts and live animals in Nepal exists mostly at an international level, than at a local level. Nepal is not regarded as a consumer of wildlife goods, however, it is used as a transit point for the international wildlife trade. In the late 1980s and the early 1990s, trade

as well as selling of products was done openly in Katmandu. From studies done by different investigators (Larry Barnes 1988, Joel Heinen and Blaire Leisure 1991/2, Joanna Van Gruisen and Towi Sinkler 1992 and Vivek Menon 1993) it is evident that Katmandu was a haven for the wildlife trade. Shops in Katmandu as well as government controlled Bansbari shoe factory traded in furs

Katmandu established itself as a center for the wildlife business thanks to its large tourist population as well as due to its easy accessibility from other international cities. Readymade shawls made from shahtoosh, shahtoosh, and tiger and leopard skins were easily being sold in the city and traded across the border with India, from Katmandu. According to Mr. Biswanath Upreti, former director general of the DNPWC, in 1990 the trade in fur and other wildlife goods was banned. The department made an appeal to all former hunters to legalize their trophies with the department. During that time, one person, Mr. Tuladhar from Asan Tola came to legalize 100 pieces of rhino skins (from between 20-25 rhinos). Mr. Tuladhar also asked for an export permit, which was not given by the department. Nothing else was heard from the man and it is unclear what Mr. Tuladhar did with the rhino hides after that. In another similar case, one person, Mr. Khanal, who sought to a truckload of peacock feathers, also requested an export permit. The permit was denied, but it is unclear what happened to the goods later on.

In 1980-1981, the government made a cabinet decision to permit one person named Mr. Jatiya to export 1.2 million snakeskins. The skins were from India. In a similar case, the government allowed another person Mr. Baniya, to export 6,000 kilograms of rhino hides to Hong Kong. The rhino hides were government property coming from rhino that had died naturally or had been killed in Royal Chitwan National Park. The government had auctioned the hides at Rs. 80-100 per kilogram. Another case of government involvement in wildlife trade was the selling of a live red panda to the Calcutta zoo.

In 1990, the government officially put an end to the fur trade. However, following the legislation banning the fur trade, no further action was taken to confiscate goods from shops stocking these fur goods. Although today fur products are not seen openly in shops, the goods are available in plenty behind closed doors.

Our investigation into this business run by Nepali and Kashmiri businessmen shows that Katmandu may not only be the centre for shahtoosh but also for its readymade wildlife products such as shawls and muffle. From investigations done, it is clear that Katmandu is a major outlet center for shahtoosh, transported from Lhasa, Darchula and Taklakot, and other transit centers in the Terai. According to our investigation at least one shahtoosh shawl was being sold per month from one shop of in the industrial area market of Lagankhel in Lalitpur. The price quoted for one shahtoosh shawl was quoted at \$ 1,891.

The case story of the "Dynasty Trading Company" (See case studies in the next section) also reveals the reality of the trade. The fact that a registered trading company is seeking to do long-term export in bear gall bladder and other wildlife products with Europe, indicates that the products are easily available. This means that the supply of wildlife products is plentiful in Nepal and that it's just a matter of knowing who to get the items and whom to bribe to export the goods.

For the past 10 years, the District Forest Office in Katmandu has confiscated several consignments of wildlife goods (See appendices). The cases involve real and fake rhino horn, dried rhino meat, leopard skins

clouded leopard skin, monkey skulls, tiger bone, bear bile, otter skin, turtle shell, musk pods, and falco total of 70 cases have been recorded, out of which six cases are still pending. Penalties range from betw Rs 5,000 and 100,000 and prison terms from between eight months and five years.

Oddly enough, the records show no cases of confiscated shahtoosh. This could imply that high-ranking officials may be involved with the shahtoosh trade.

## The Shahtoosh Trade in nepal New Qualitative Information

### Introduction

The following information is based upon conversations held in Sanam Lal's, (not real name) curio shop in Patan on July 2000. The conversations took place after a week of groundwork by two British tourists posing as wildlife trader. The key informants provided information in a non-pressurized environment. The natural development in their relationship and they have every reason to believe that what was said is true.

### New Contacts

**Mr. Jeevanram :** *5'7"*  
**(Not real name) :** *Stocky (rotund)*  
*Casual dress (jeans, sports shirt – not openly wealthy)*

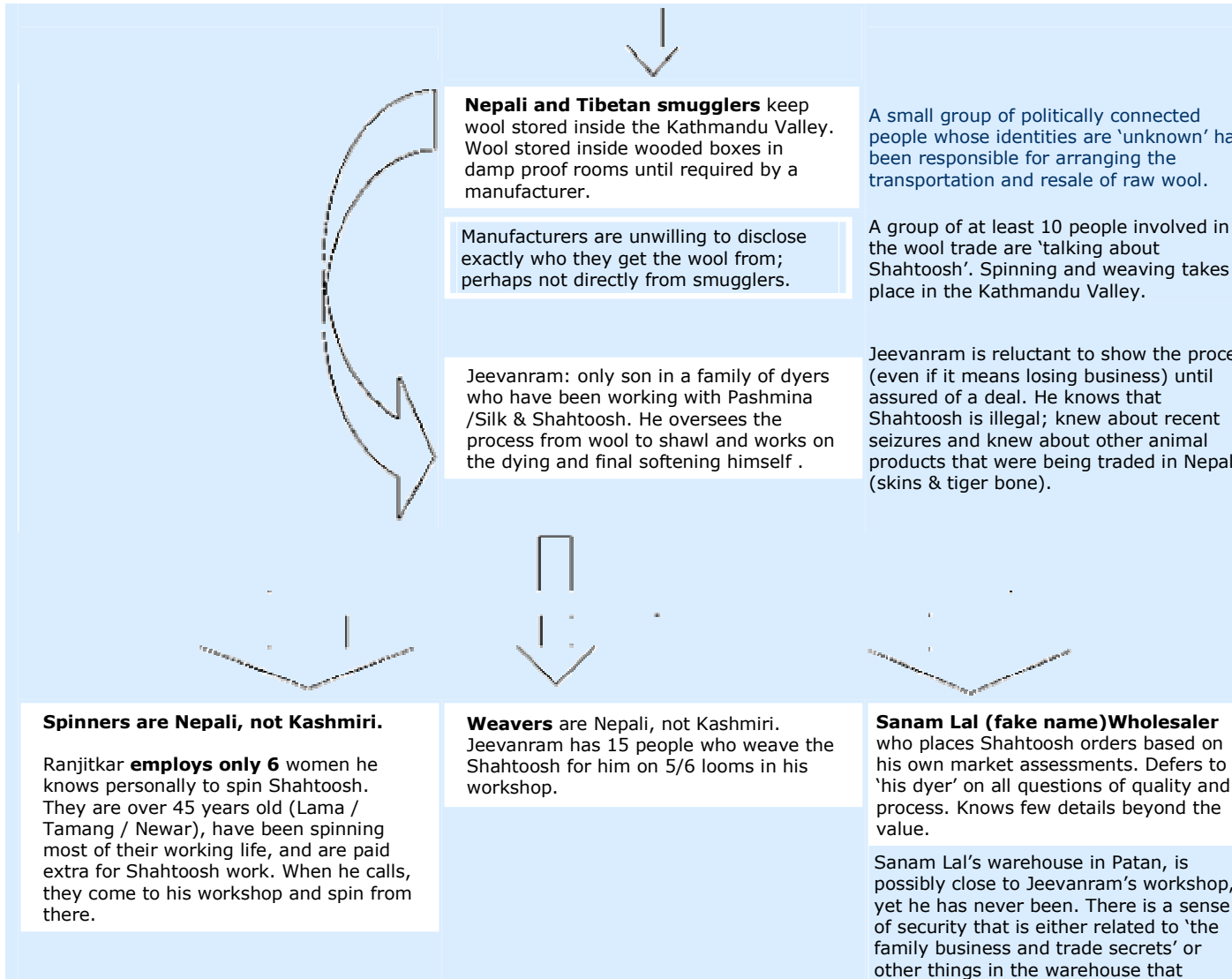
Jeevanram comes from a family of dyers. He is the only son and appears conscious of maintaining a family name. He reluctantly to allow access to the workshop that is located inside his home, as he desires to keep the trade a secret. He was very clear that the international market for Pashmina had been back for high quality manufacturers like himself. The threat of Shahtoosh expanding into a populist market was, though unrealistic, ever-present. When originally pressed that only a visit to the workshop would be enough to seal a business deal, Jeevanram appeared to consider the options "but I have to make some preparations, you can't come just like that".

There is a fairly high possibility that he is more involved in the trade of illegal animal products than he told us. He has a good recent knowledge of seizures of wildlife products, he was very conscious of Shahtoosh being illegal, he was aware of trade in tiger skins and tiger bone that still take place, "very much so". Even when they offered to wear a blindfold and be lead to the workshop, he steadfastly refused to take them there. His body language suggested that he found himself in a compromising position but wasn't prepared to let down his guard. Only if they sealed a business deal (whether this meant handing over money, or just agreeing amounts and figures was never clear) would he consider letting them see the process and the equipment.

During this first and only meeting with him by the two British tourists it was difficult to probe into details without arousing his suspicion.

Raw Shahtoosh from Tibet sealed in plastic bags and hidden within legal goods.

The main route via Kodari is possibly not being used at present due to heightened awareness of the risks. Porters moving across the border have been carrying the wool securely into Nepal.



#### 4. Manufacturing Details

##### Spinning:

The Shahtoosh is currently being spun and woven by Nepali's. There may be Kashmiri's involved in the process, but Jeevanram is not employing any and he oversees the entire procedure. This refutes the claim that only the extraordinary dexterity of female Kashmiri fingers can manage the spinning of Shahtoosh. Nepali women with 35 years experience, who are regarded as 'the best', have learned the spinning technique. Without a comparison between the final Nepali Shahtoosh and the product of Kashmir it is difficult to know with what success the wool is being spun in Nepal. But the quality remains impressively high. The fact that Jeevanram knows only six women who he trusts to spin Shahtoosh testifies that only a small number have mastered, or had the opportunity to perfect their skill.

##### Location:

The entire process from spinning to weaving to dyeing is being completed in Jeevanram's workshop, wh



possibly lies within his house, which is possibly situated in Lalitpur (Patan).

Quantity:

Even Jeevanram says he doesn't know how many people are manufacturing Shahtoosh. But as a person involved in the wool trade he is aware of about 10 other men who have been talking about Shahtoosh. Whether or not this gives an indication of numbers or size of the trade in Kathmandu is difficult to say. However what is certain, is that should the market arise there are people in Kathmandu with the contacts, the business acumen and the skills to ensure the trade continues.

### **5. Some Conclusions:**

In Nepal any trade in shahtoosh is totally market oriented. As a consequence of our investigations posed as Europeans with a foot in exclusive western markets we may have raised people's expectations of the existing business potential and have raised the size of this year's shahtoosh orders.

### **Central-level communication gaps**

According to an interview with the former Inspector General of the Police Mr. Achyat Krishna Kharel, the police are clueless about the wildlife trade and have little information about the trade since they are not directly responsible for. The Deputy Inspector General of the Police of Kathmandu Valley, Mr. Annanta Bhattarai, the wildlife trade was the responsibility of the Forest Department, since they are not in charge of protecting the forests but also have executive and judicial powers vested in them to prosecute wildlife offenders. He also stated that the lack of communication between the police, the Forest Department and the DNPWC, is another reason why the police are not aware of their responsibilities in controlling the wildlife trade.

An interview was also carried out with Mr. Dharam Pal Singh Thapa, ex-chief of Royal Nepal Army. He also stated the lack of coordination between the DNPWC and the Army as a major hurdle. In his view, the army should not be posted to protect wildlife as the army has had little knowledge about wildlife conservation and the army has other major responsibilities.

Interviews carried out with the Forest Department and details collected on hunting from the Forest Department records, further reveal a lack of organizational structure and knowledge about the illegal trade. As an example, Mr. Divya Dev Bhatt, the Director General of the Forest Department, knew nothing of the Humla case of tiger bone burning (see next section Western Case Study No.2). He stated that he was unaware of the seizure that had taken place a few years back and that the tiger bones were burned as buffalo bones recently. This reveals the lack of communication between field staff and the central Department. Another point mentioned by Mr. Bhatt, is the fact that the Forest Department has a very low annual budget allocated

to control wildlife trade. It had no monetary support to initiate more intensive measures to controlling the illegal trading of wildlife goods.



The hunting records in the department do not specify the type of hunting that was done; whether legal or illegal. Although records are kept of certain confiscated goods (see above page), most of the goods were found "by accident." The hunting records also do not specify if it was licensed hunting or poaching. The records kept between 1997 and 1999 are noted as follows:

Region	Cases of hunting
Eastern	16
Central	59
Western	25
Mid-Western	29
Far-Western	7

Source: Forest Department Records year 1997-1999

The interviews together with the case studies of the illegal trade in Katmandu clearly show a lack of coordination between the Forest Department, the DNPWC, the police, and the army. The lack of coordination has caused communication gaps, a deficient information sharing system, and the inability by responsible departments to work together in taking the necessary steps towards reducing the illegal wildlife trade.

Other records of wildlife confiscation within the Katmandu valley are as follows:

*(All the data have been are obtained from district forest offices in the valley. Data also provided by Kathmandu DFO Dhurba Acharya)*

### Wildlife cases in Kathmandu

No.	Date	Wildlife part	Offenders	Origin/district	Penalty	Brought from/remark	Local area/place of
1	90.05.25	Rhino horn	Chetang Dorji Rup Bd Shahi		16 months imprisonment and 5000 cash		Thankot
2	92.04.28	Musk pod	Krishna bd. Thapa		5000 cash	Himanchal Pradesh (India)	
3	93.01.31	Fake rhino horn	Ram saran Shama Bajagain Kumar Limbu		10,000 cash 1 year prison		
4	94.11.12	Leopard head	Phabang Recent	Chinese	10,000		Restauran
5	95.01.10	Leopard skin	Lal Bd Tamang	Dhading	10,000 cash		Thankot
6	95.07.28	Bear bile	Chandra Bd. Rai	Khotang	10,000 cash		
7	95.11.06	Fake tiger skin	Balram pahadi		500 cash		
8	95.12.23	Bear bile	Madan bd. Thapa		10,000 cash		
9	96.02.29	Leopard skin -2	Chature Sunar		10,000		Balaju
10	96.03.03	Live clouded leopard-3, leopard-1	Sarfudin Miyan	Patna, India	5-year prison 100,000 cash		Bagbajar
11	96.03.07	Leopard skin	Jivaan lama Shyam Bd.Gaha	Nuwakot Palpa	18 month 24 days prison		

13	96.03.14	Leopard bone	Shmabhu Rana magar		10,000 cash		
14	96.07.22	Leopard skin	Jayandra pandit, Parsuram pandit	Dhading	8,000 10,000 cash		
15	96.08.01	Monkey skulls	Chandra Bd. Lama, Choban lama	Sindhuli	7000 cash		
16	96.07.31	Tiger bone	RamsaranPariyar, MailaTamang, KrishnaNeupae		50,000 cash		
17	96.09.01	Bear bile	Ram bd. asthani Magar	Sindhuli	10,000 cash		
18	96.09.17	Leopard skin	Raju Gurung	Sindhupalchowk	40,000 cash		
19	97.02.26	Monkeyskulotter skin, (gohoro)skin	Bir Bd Lama	Sindhuli	8 months 5 days prison		
20	97.06.05	Rhino head	KhagendraLamaKrishna Bd. Tamang		50,000 cash		
21	98.03.24	Live turtles 57	Bhim Bd. Nepal	Sindhupalchowk	10,000 cash		
22	98.04.28	Tiger bone	BishnuKpradh	Ramechhap	50,000 cash		Maharajg
23	55.03.04	Rhino bone	Ram Kumar Biswakarma, Kedar Basnet	Dolkha	50,000 cash		
24	55.03.24	Leopard skin	Prem bd. Subedi	Syangja	15 months 26 days prison		
25	55.04.17	Leopard skin-2	Ram Bd lama, Kalu Gurung	Gorkha	1 year 2 days prison		
26	55.05.04	Leopard head	Chitra Bd. Gurung , Arjun Gurung	Dolkha Nawalparasi	10,000 cash		
27	55.05.07	Leopard skin-3	Lok Bd Joshi Tashi Wang Chu Sherpa, Kishor Koju		10,000 cash	Kakadbhitta	
28	55.05.07	Unidentified wildlife part	Gopal Gurung, Ram Bd. KC, Harishchandra KC		Only seized		
29	55.05.21	Leopard skin	Rakesh Chukka Student			Brought by his uncle, run away	
30	55.05.21	Leopard bone	Pasang lama Buddhi Bd lama Dhan Bd. Tamang		5,000 cash		Bauddha
31	55.05.24	Leopard skin	Dogla lama	Humla	10,000 cash		Bauddha
32	55.05.28	Tiger skin	Sonam Lama	Humla	50,000		Bauddha
33	55.08.25	Dead spotted deer	Ram kumar Tamang		1000		Sundarija
34	55.09.09	Leopard skin-2	Uttam Shretha, Yam Bd Shrestha		Found not guilty		
35	55.11.09	Falcon-13	Mahammad Salim	Pakistan	28,000 cash		
36	56.01.05	Leopard skin	Raju Thapa	Jhapa	10,000		Swyambh
37	56.03.16	Leopard skin	Purna Bd. Lama	Dhading	10,000		
38	56.03.20	Leopard skin	Surya Bikram KC		10,000		Balaju sq
39	56.04.09	Leopard bone	Prem bd Tharu Magar	Nuwakot	1000		Thankot
40	56.04.30	Entire leopard skin and bone	Lalit bd. Lama, Bhim bd Gurung	Nuwakot	10,000 5,000	Gurung said he will sell	
41	56.05.15	Musk pod	Puskar raj kakri	Darchula	50,000		Thamel
42	56.05.16	33 gram rhino bone	Tashi Gurung	Manang	50,000		Thamel
43	56.08.14	Musk pod-4	Khi Lama LilamanTamang	Dhading Dolpa	50,000		Thankot
44	56.09.16	Tiger bone	Nagendra Yadav	India	50,000	Nawalparasi	Satungel
45	56.09.16	Leopard skin	Chandra bd. Thapa magar	Sunsari	28,000	Arrested from his rented accomodation	
46	56.09.29	Python skin	Devendra Limbu Ait RamTamang	Panchthar Nuwakot	40,000	Now in custody	
47	56.09.30	Fake rhino horn	Shanker Bd. KC Neeraj Shrestha	Chitwan Banke	10,000 5,000		Chabahil

48	56.11.12	Bear bile	Jagat bd Budha mangar	Rolpa	14 months 3 days prison	Brought from Rolpa	Thankot
49	57.02.19	Salak Skin	Anil Limbu	Taplejung	50,000		
50	57.02.19	Fake rhino horn (not sure)	Hemlal Khadgi Sanubhai Sunar Tirtha Maharja		10,000		Dhumbar
51	57.02.20	Leopard skin	Shyam Bd Shrestha, Krishna Bd. Rijal	Dhading	10,000		
52	57.03.13	Leopard bone	Kambr Bd. Pradhan, Chabi Lal Shrestha	Panchthar	5000 25,000		
53	57.03.21	Bear bile	Jyanso Lama		10,000	Silgadhi (India)	Bauddha
54	57.3.22	Turtle <i>Khapata-24</i>	Lal Bd Syangtang	Sindhuli			
55	57.03.23	Fake rhino horn	Purna Bd. Giri	Chitwan	10,000		Thamel
56	57.03.23	Leopard skin	Badri Pathak, Kul Prasad Pathak, Madhab Pandey	Nuwakot	10,000		
57	57.03.26	Python skin	Dawa Lama		50,000		Koteswor
58	57.03.26	Bear bile	Tsring Dhrundup Lama	Indian Tibetan	10,000	New Delhi	
59	57.03.26	Tiger teeth-4 Otter teeth-8	Pema Gurung	Manang	10,000	Asaam, India	Thankot
60	57.06.04	Rhino dry meat	Ram Shrestha	Sindhupalchowk	None		
61	57.06.09	Fake rhino horn	Shyam Kakri, Nil Pd Paudel Chaywan Shrestha	Kavre	10,000		
62	57.07.04	<i>Khapate kira-253</i>	Hiroki Hayashi Khaneko Riyushi	Japan	10,000	Dhading	
63	57.07.15	Rhino bone and fake rhino horn	Jar sing Tamang Prem bd Tamang Tek bd. Tamang Nil Kumar Shakya	Dhading Dhading Dhading	5,000		
64	57.07.30	Musk pod-3	Indrajit Kami	Mugu	50,000		

### Pending cases (upto December 2000) in Kathmandu DFO office. Data listed according to case

No	Date	Wildlife part	Offender	Origin/district	Penalty	Brought from/ remark	
1	56.11.09	Bear bile	Maila Thoker	Makawanpur	28,000		
2	56.12.17	Musk pod-6	Chakra Bd Gharti	Dolpa	100,000 15 years prison		
3	57.03.30	Musk pod-2	Kile Dukpa	Sikkim		In custody	
4	57.04.05	Otter skin-36	Bhim Bd Rai		28,000 in bail	Kakabhitta	
5	57.07.24	Leopard skin	Gyan bd Tamang	Nuwakot	10,000 2 years prison		
6	57.07.25	Leopard skin	Bir Bd Lama	Nuwakot	In custody		

In **Lalitpur** there are 108 cases from 1986 to December, 2000 related to forest and within these cases are related to wildlife and trade issues: (As per data provided by DFO Govinda Kafle on January 2001)

No	Date	Wildlife part	Offender	Origin/district	Penalty	Brought from/ remark	Local arrest area
1	48.12.12	Tiger bones	Chowk B Thapa, Hum B Thapa Surendra Tamang		5000 5000 2500		Sanepa
2	53.08.25	Deer hunting	10 people		2000		Godawari
3	54.05.24	Leopard skin-2	Chen phen kuten bachen Henari Liu	China	Two years prison 10,000		Sanepa
4	55.12.28	Musk pod 18 gram	Bimal Kumar Adhikari, Pradeep Thapa	Dhapakhel	25,000	They said it bought from Mangal Bazar	Lagankhel
5	56.09.28	Leopard skin	Syang chyangbo	Sindhupalchowk	3000 and 45	Left by	Kusunti

			Tamang		days prison	somebody in their local bar at Baudha	
6	2.5 years back(2000dec)	Python skin	Rajendra Rajnhandari	Mangal bazar	30,000 in bail	4 to 5 feet length	Mangal Bazar
7	4 years back	Tiger bone	3 Tamang	Sindhupalchowk	30,000 in bail	72 peices	Gwarko

In **Bhaktapur** there are 57 cases from 1986 to December 2000 related to forests and within these, five related to wildlife and trade issues. (As per data provided by DFO Ms. Madhuri Kakki on January 2001)

No	Date	Wildlife part	Offender	Origin/district	Penalty	Brought from/remark	Local arrest area
1	54.04.30	Rhino horn	Sunder Lal Shrestha Krishna Pd Prajapati	Lamjung	55,000 50,00	Case now in supreme court	Chyamasing BKT ward no 1
2	53.11.25	Live turtle-173, dead-13	Ram Bd Tamang, Chitlang Majhi	Ramechap	3500 and 19 days in costody	Tamang bought the turtle in Kalimati @ Rs 50 per kilo. His destination is Khasa, Tibet	
3	57.03.16 file date	Python skin	Khusi Lal Sah Pema lama	Sunsari		He bought it @Rs 3000 and tried to sell to Mr. Lobsang Lama from Sindhupalchowk. He is now in custody, case yet to finalize.	Suryabinayak
4	57.03.04	Rhino fake horn made from other wildlife. Authorities fail to identify	Nanikaji Khadka Kamala Shrestha		Case not yet decided	Karna Tamang, a Khasa businessman residing in Damai Tole wanted to buy it.	Jagate
5	52.04.24	Live turtle-128	Karna B Lama Jit b Giri		5000 2500	Bought in Bhairhawa Bazar	

## WILDLIFE TRADE DATA IN EASTERN NEPAL

Total forest cases in Taplejung from 1983 to December 2000 -34

Wildlife related cases- 3. All related to bear. ( As per data provided by book keeper *Khardaar* Nar babh Subba on December 2000)

No.	Date	Wildlife part	Offender	Origin/district	Penalty	Remark	Local arrest place
1	40.03.01	Bear bile	Bhim prasad Basnet then Pradhan panch		10,000 2 years prison later only 4000	He killed the bear to sell the bile	
2	41.02.25	Bear hunting	Dane Sherpa		1500 one year prison later case dismissed	5 tola bear bile found	Lelep
3	39.	Bear hunting	Rajendra K Limbu		Case dismissed		

Panchthar as per data provided by Krishna Ballav Lal Karna ranger on December 2000)



Total Forest cases since 1980 to 2000-147

### Wildlife related-1

No	Date	Wildlife part	Offender	Origin/district	Penalty	Remark	Local arrest area
1	52.05.31 case filed 55.11.04 case decided	Musk pod-2 17 gram	PadmaKeshar Khadka Chandra Bd. Angmo		50,000	Got from a person in the Terai; bartered with rice <i>12 mana</i>	

Ilam total forest cases till end of December-111

Wildlife related-2 ( as per data provided by DFO Bijay Raj Paudel on December 2000)

No	Date	Wildlife part	Offender	Origin/district	Penalty	Remark	Local arrest area
	54.08.15  arrest date	Leopard skin  7 ft L, 2 ft B	Kumar pradhan  Nima Bhotia	  Darjeeling	28,250 in bail, case not yet finalized	The skin was given by person named <b>Dorje</b> from Darjeeling. Asked Nima to carry up to thamel, she got 1,000 by carrying the skin	Pasupati nagar, eastern gateway to India
2	42.10.14	Musk pod-15, 330 gram, bear bile 95 gram	Motilal Thakuri  Mahadev lal Karna	Daillekha	8,600 and 1 year prison. Later then Pradhan pancha benupraj Prasai (Now MP from Ilam) decided on 5400 and no prison.	Bought from lepcha tribe in dailekha. Weighed by Mahadev Lal Karna	Mane bhanjyang

### Jhapa

Total forest cases from 1986 to 2000-2293 of which 1493 have been decided and 5 are related to wildlife (as per data provided by DFO Yogendra Prasad Yadav on December 2000)

No	date	Wildlife part	Offender	Origin/district	Penalty	Remark	Local arrest area
1	48.11.18  48.12.08	Hunting	Krishna bd Tamarakar  Krishna bd Sherpa		4000		
2	48.11.20  51.07.15	Hunting	Ashok Kumar Rajbansi  Bhojraj Rajbansi  Jayaprasad  Jeevan Satar	Maheshpur-1    Sonacharan	12 people were penalized with 1000 each and a child with 500		

3	51.09.03 51.10.02	Hunting	Bom Prasad Rai Harka B Basnet	Jalthal-5	1000		
4	50.11.12 51.05.14	Fake rhino horn	Indra purna Ghimire Tek bahadur Sarki			Though no penalty levied as proved fake a person name Dorje Lama from Thamel tried to bribe ranger with 50,000 to dismiss the case against culprits.	Dhulabari
5	52.07.22 52.10.05	Fake rhino horn	Bhola Prasad Kadariaand other four people		None as later proved from RONAST as fake.		

### Lalitpur

Lalitpur has a total of seven cases of wildlife trade goods confiscated. The goods are tiger bones, leopard musk pod, and python skin and a case of deer hunting.

### Bhaktapur

Bhaktapur has a total of five wildlife cases. These are: rhino horn, live and dead turtles, python skin, and rhino horn.



### Conclusion

The wildlife trade is widely present in Nepal, but works underground. The information presented on the two major wildlife trading routes and regions speak of Nepal's involvement, yet the report may have unmasked only a fraction of the trade. It is clear that the major wildlife items that are being traded come from some of Asia's most endangered species; the greater one-horned rhino, the Bengal tiger, the Asian elephant, the Tibetan antelope, musk deer and the Himalayan black bear. The lack of resources to monitor the trade and the weak infrastructure to implement laws and regulations in dealing with violators, the wildlife trade continues not as openly as it once did but as an organized underground trade.

Although Nepal is a signatory of CITES, the trade in endangered fauna still exists. There are little chances of wildlife parts being exported across the border without the involvement of government authorities. For example, government officials in charge of the border area of Darchula-Tinker-Taklakot were aware of the illegal trading between the three countries (Nepal, India, Tibet/China). However, due to the lapses in security and also the fact that officials felt it unfair to take away a major form of livelihood from the people living in these remote areas, the officials have turned a

blind eye. This clearly shows that officials are encouraging the illegal trade. This could be the case in many other border areas as well.

Another important point, is that customs and police authorities have not been trained in wildlife trade by governing departments, neither have they been given the responsibility to control the trade. Customs officers believe their work is to check for dutiable goods, while the police have their own security agendas. Furthermore, increase in corruption amongst government authorities is another reason why the trade is flourishing in Nepal. As there exists no powerful body to check corruption, the illegal wildlife trade provides an extra source of income for the officials.

It is time for the Government of Nepal to work together with the Indian and Chinese Governments in order to set up an organizational structure that can control the illegal wildlife trade. The implementation and consistent application of effective penalties are also crucial to control the trade effectively. Unless active implementation takes place along major poaching and trade routes, certain animals such as the Tibetan antelope and musk deer may become extinct.

## **Chapter 5**

[Case Studies](#) | [Cases from Western Nepal](#)



## CASE STUDIES

### The Illegal Wildlife Trade

There are a number of wildlife trade cases that are worth studying to understand how the wildlife trade operates in Nepal. The cases also reveal that little is being done to stop the flow of wildlife goods across the Indo-Nepal and the Nepal-Tibet borders. The cases also reveal the nature of the trade in Katmandu and in other regions of Nepal. Most of the cases are declared incidents, with unresolved endings. They exemplify the state of the wildlife trade control regime in the country: insufficient infrastructure to implement actual measures to control the illegal trade. Many of the cases may be similar, such as persons arrested for possessing rhino horns or tiger bones, yet nowhere are there similar punishments involved in dealing with people who have been caught. Although the following cases are all reported incidents, no follow-ups were done to ensure appropriate punishment to the people involved. At the same time, no efforts were made to investigate the cases further or use former poachers as valuable resource persons to find out more about the network of wildlife traders in the country.

#### Case 1: Tiger bone smuggling and DNPWC employees

On March 4, 1998, a sack containing a total of 82 pieces of tiger bones was found on the roof of the warden's residence in the Royal Sukla Phanta Wildlife Reserve. The sack was found after the then warden, Mr. Sher Singh Thagunna, was transferred from the Reserve. A net and bricks were used to cover the sack. The total weight of the bones was 820 grams. The unearthing of the bag created great unrest amongst the employees, each blaming the other.

Although it is not common to find bones stored in a warden's resident, these bones clearly had been hidden. The new warden, Baburam Yadav, asked for papers and records of the bones, but none were found. Warden Surya Bahadur Pandey was deputed to the reserve to probe the case. According to his reports, he could find no government records on the 82 pieces of bones. All former rangers who may have kept records of the proceedings had been transferred, and therefore none of them were interrogated. This leaves a big question mark on the origin of the bones and who had stored them there. According to Baburam Yadav, the bones were between five and six months old. Consequently, the only one to be held responsible was the former warden, Mr. Sher Singh Thagunna.

Sher Singh Thagunna said during his interrogation that he did store the bones and had made a record of proceedings. According to him a female tiger had been killed in a fight with another tiger on May 26, 1997. The bones and the claws of three paws were dried on the rooftop of the warden's residence. The warden mentioned that another two tigers (male and female cub) had been found poisoned inside the reserve and they were buried in front of the warden's residence, with a record of

proceedings. "On January 25, 1998, since a cage had to be built in the place, the 12 kgs of bones were taken out and kept in a sack. The 820 grams tiger bone was also kept in a store with a record of proceedings." Says Mr. Thagunna. And yet, no record of proceedings had been found by either Baburam Yadav or by Surya Bahadur Pandey.

Anyone involved in killing or trafficking tigers can be imprisoned for a term of anywhere between five and 15 years by the warden. Had the bones been found in the house of a local person, he would have been jailed immediately. In the case of the warden, nothing was done to proceed against him. Instead, Mr. Thagunna was given leave of a couple months, until the enquiry "cooled" off and he resumed his post as a warden.

The whole episode has put clouds of doubt over the credibility of DNPWC and the sincerity of the conservation officers working in reserves. The incomplete closure of the case creates further gaps in the structure under which wildlife is being protected in Nepal.

### **Case 2: Tiger bones in Humla**

In 1989, 25 postal packages containing tiger bones (destined for Tibet) were seized in the local post office in Humla. The packages were sent by postal service from Nepalganj, destined to Taklakot, Tibet. The packages all contained tiger bones, which added up to a total weight of 250 kilograms. The selling price for the entire stock was Rs. 250,000 at that time. The packages had been packed by the Karnali Guest house in Nepalganj and were sent to the Humla then DDC chairman and member. The bones had been bought in Rupadiya, India. Prior to this case, according to the then District forest officer in Humla Mr. Jamak Kharki, there was a similar case of tiger bone trade using the local postal service. At that time Chakra Bahadur Shahi and Surya Bahadur Shahi, (the latter being a former Assistant Minister of Forests) had been involved, along with the Karnali Guest House.

The confiscated bones were kept in the DDC office in Humla. In 1999, reports were received that the bones had been burned. On inquiry into why the bones had been burnt without permission from the Forest Department, the then DDC chairman said that the case was old and the bones were burned as "buffalo bones."

### **Case 3: Shahtoosh trade**

Katmandu is a major market for shahtoosh export. According to a study done by the Wildlife Protection Society of India, in July 2000, most of the shahtoosh is exported to Kashmir, from where it exported to other countries. During a visit to a shop in Patan, information was collected from casual conversations with the shop owner. His workshop, which is inside his home, is the main place where wildlife products are stored. He was reluctant to take us here. He clearly stated that the international market for pashmina was not as attractive as the market for shahtoosh.

He said that in the last five months he had sold five shahtoosh shawls, while the demand was for 50 shawls. The availability of the shawls was 10 shahtoosh shawls every 15 days, he claimed. Although the raw material was hard to procure, there were various points in Katmandu where supplies of shahtoosh were kept. After the

wool is smuggled into Katmandu from Tibet, it is stored in various places in the Valley. Nepali women with many years of weaving experience also weave the shahtoosh, he said. The women were mostly over 45 years of age and were either Lama/Tamang or Newar. They are paid extra money for weaving the wool into fine quality shawls.

A foreign international fashion business dealer, however, contradicted this claim. He said the raw shahtoosh is not woven in Katmandu, but in Kashmir. The weaving of the wool has been done for many years there and the expertise is readily available. From Kashmir, the shawls are transported to Delhi onto Katmandu, from where they are sent to other foreign markets.

According to the shop owner, he knew of at least 10 other men who had been talking about shahtoosh and who were interested in the business. Although this may not give indication of the size of the trade in Katmandu, it does show that should the market rise, that there would be sufficient skill and business acumen to ensure the continuation of the trade. The shop owner knew that shahtoosh was illegal. He knew about recent seizures and also about other products that were being illegally traded in Nepal.

Such investigation is valuable for gaining a better understanding of the extent of the wildlife trade in Nepal; especially with view of the market availability in Katmandu.

#### **Case 4: Tibetan furniture store**

In Bhoudda there is a large Tibetan furniture store. The store is described as having a "fine selection of authentic Tibetan furniture, rugs, textiles, and Himalyan art." A Tibetan and an Italian market agent own the shop. Most of the goods of this shop are exported to Europe.

On a visit to the shop, we found wooden boxes with snow leopard, commom leopard and tiger skin in boxes stored on the second floor of the shop. The boxes, the shop keeper claimed, were brought in from Tibet via Tatopani.

#### **Case 5: Indian reports on trade**

In March 1997, officials from the Forest Department and the Wildlife Department of Nepal and India held a first trans-boundary conservation meeting. AK Raha, the then forest officer of West Bengal, had some interesting facts about the wildlife trade in Nepal.

#### **The seizures done by Indian Police since 1994 are as follows:**

1. In April 1994, 20 kg of tiger bones were confiscated in Calcutta coming from Nepal.
2. In August 1994, in Dhulabari, Jhapa district, Indian Police, in an operation in Nepal, confiscated 89 leopard skins, nine otter pelts, and one tiger skin. The items had been transported from Kanpur and were on their way to Delhi, when they were seized.
3. In 1995, a truck was seized in Pashupathinagar on the Ilam-India border carrying 190 kilograms of shahtoosh. The Indian police seized the truck.

In another case in 1995, 13.4 kilograms of ivory coming from Nepal were confiscated.

4. On February 7 1996, 94 otter skins were seized in Pashupatinagar..

5. In July 1996, a Japanese was caught carrying 3,000 butterflies and 33 dung beetles. He had collected these at the Singhala National Park in India and from various places in Nepal. The seizure took place in Pashupatinagar.

These cases show that the Nepal police in comparison with the Indian police reported these incidents differently. The Indian police have effected many seizures in Nepal. This blatantly exposes the extent of the trade in Nepal and reveals the lack of initiative or awareness about CITES and the trade on the Nepal side.

At the transboundary meeting the forest officer also disclosed the names of certain individuals who were actively involved in the trade. These persons were identified as follows:

1. Labshang Lama from Katmandu
2. Changkhe Lama from Kakarvitta
3. Khaje Ale and Kholsang Reke from Calcutta
4. Shonam Lama from Siliguri

Nepalese authorities conducted no follow-up investigations and the full extent of these people's involvement in the trade remains unknown.

#### **Case 6: Forgery for export**

In the 1980's, the then Director General of the DNPWC, Mr. Biswanath Upreti, received a copy of a letter from the CITES secretariat that permitted the export of musk deer to Europe. Mr. Upreti signed the letter without any verification. It was discovered much later that the letter was a forgery, the handiwork of a trader who wanted to export musk pods to Europe.

The police had a clue that pointed to a well-known trader in wildlife products, but since the police had insufficient proof, they could not prosecute him. Another well-known person involved in the trade is the owner of one of luxurious hotel in Katmandu. He is known to export wildlife goods to France. However, the police is yet to file any cases against him.

#### **Case 7: Trading rhino for "donations."**

In 1992, a news reporter of a vernacular newspaper received the minutes of a meeting arranged by the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC). The meeting discussed the sending of a gift of five pairs of rhinos to the US, Germany, and Singapore. In the minutes it was claimed that each pair they would be sold at \$250,000.

Although the sending of endangered species as "gifts" to certain countries is allowed, an actual selling or payment for the animals is not allowed. Since rhinos are national property, no other organizations aside from His Majesty's Government of Nepal is allowed to decide on sending of certain species. Since members of the Royal family support the KMTNC, the sending of the rhinos was accepted.

Based on above information the news reporter published a news article. The article raised many questions since the DNPWC was not even aware about the fact that the rhinos were not given as a gift, but actually sold for a large sum of foreign cash.

The Commission of Investigation on Authority Abuse (CIAA) investigated the case, but no further details were clarified. When media pressure mounted, some details were released. The KMTNC finally agreed to have received some money as a "donation" for the rhinos. Questions still remained about what was actually done with the money.

After further media pressure, a press release was officially written by the Member Secretary of the KMTNC in 1997. The press release stated that the rhinos had been sent to the countries as gifts and that a donation of \$5,00,000 had been received. The money was being kept on a "restricted" account as an endowment fund, and the interest accrued was being used for rhino conservation activities.

### **Case 8: Tiger bones**

On April 9, 1999, the DNPWC and the Inspector General of the Police received an e-mail from the Wildlife Protection Society of India stating that 40 kg of tiger bones had been confiscated in Bhairawa. After the news, follow-up investigation could find no trace of the confiscated bones. Where did the bones go?

### **Case 9: Secure protected areas**

In the month of February 2001, a local daily reported that the Colonel of the Army in Chitwan district had been caught hunting spotted deer. The Colonel was let off the hook without any charges pressed against him and the case simply dismissed.

### **Case 10: Trade in the Annapurna Conservation Area**

The Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) lies in the upper-hill districts of Manang, Mustang, and partially in Lamjung, Myagdi, and Kaski district. The area covers 7, 629 sq kms.

Between 1990 and 2000, a total of 50 illegal activities were recorded, of which eight were related to wildlife. Out of these 50 cases, 28 have been finalized while 22 cases are still in pending.

### **The cases are as follows:**

1. Mr. Harke Tamang was arrested together with seven other people. The group was caught hunting musk deer. Mr. Tamang was penalized with a seven-year imprisonment.
2. Mr. Kalu Tamang was arrested together with three other people. He was arrested for hunting musk deer, and was penalized with a five-year jail term.
3. Mr. Purna Bahadur Kaley was arrested together with 11 other people. They were arrested for killing barking deer. Each of them had to pay a fine of Rs. 2,000
4. Mr. Nar Bahadur Shah was caught for buying a leopard skin. He was arrested together with three other people. Mr. Shah was put in jail for six months.
5. Mr. Purna Bahadur Gurung was arrested for killing a barking deer. He was fined



Rs. 10,000.

6. Mr. Gautam was caught trying to take out a dead leopard skin from the ACAP area. He was arrested together with three other people. Each person had to pay a fine of Rs. 4,000.

7. Mr. Man Dhoj Kaley was arrested for killing barking deer. He had to pay a fine of Rs. 10,000 and was imprisoned for six months.

8. Mr. Bhim Prasad Tamang was arrested together with five other people. They were caught killing musk deer. One person was fined Rs. 5,000 while the others were sentenced to five-year prison terms.

The penalties given to each person are not similar, even though the cases may be the same. This reflects the inconsistency of the legal system.

### **Case 11: The Bansbari Shoe Factory**

Prior to the privatization of the Bansbari Shoe factory, a total of 320 pieces of illegal fur were found stored in the factory. The skins included the following:

- 58 yak skins
- 3 tiger skins
- 1 lion skin
- 2 common leopards
- 4 bear furs
- 6 blue bull furs
- 8 sambar deer hides
- 6 "jharal" (mountain goat) hides
- 1 hyena fur
- 4 musk deer hides
- 65 barking deer hides
- 70 spotted deer hides
- 35 wild cats hide
- 5 blue sheep hides
- 1 python skin

The officials of the DNPWC and the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation had no knowledge that these skins were stored in the shoe factory. In 1996, the government decided to privatize the factory. On inspection of the factory, the Ministry of Finance found the wildlife hides and fur and inquired with the Natural History Museum about the proper preservation of the skins.

Until today, this matter remains a mystery. The case raises a lot of questions:

? Why didn't the finance ministry consult with DNPWC on the source of the hides and furs?

? How did these skins arrive in the shoe factory?

? Did the factory keep the hides and furs for production purposes? If so, did the government grant permission to obtain the hides and furs?

? If the hides and furs were not kept by the factory, who brought them, and why were these left behind?

? Who could prove whether or not the shoe factory was involved in such wildlife trade?

? Since the hides and furs were found during the handing over of the factory to a private owner, could the discovery of these skins indicate that the government itself held these products illegally?



### **Case 12: Rhino horn**

In June-July 2000, the District Forest Officer in Chitwan arrested Mr. Tashi Gurung from Swoyambhu. The arrest was made following a tip-off when six persons were arrested in the Parsa Wildlife Reserve with a rhino horn. The police got information that the rhino horn was being sold by Mr. Khuga Lama from Chitwan. Mr. Lama was known to have been involved in the trade since the early 1980's. He was arrested in 2000. Although Mr. Lama claimed to have sold a total of eight horns to Mr. Gurung, according to the Royal Chitwan National Park authorities, he had sold about three horns every year since 1984. This meant that Mr Lama had sold a total of 39 rhino horns. Mr. Lama claimed that he sold the horn to Mr. Gurung in Katmandu. Mr. Gurung bought the rhino horn for N Rs 300,000- 900,000, depending on the size of the horn. Mr. Gurung then sold the horn to a Tibetan businessman for N Rs. 1,300,000. Mr. Gurung was also known to be involved in musk deer trading, however no exact details were found.

Mr. Gurung has been jailed and the judiciary has not granted his bail application. He is a well-known and active social worker in his community, and has built a number of Gompas (monasteries) around the Swoyamabhu area.

According to the DFO, the Gurung case is one of the few cases in which forest officers, with the help of police took action and arrested an important player in the wildlife trade.

## **Cases from Western Nepal**

### **Case 1: Wildlife gangs**

Information was collected on the wildlife trade from the Major of an army camp at the Royal Bardia National Park, western Nepal. The names of certain traders involved were revealed and along with price lists of items being sold on the national market.

#### **Names of Illicit Wildlife Dealers:**

1. Mr. Chyang Tsiring Lama from Humla. He owns Aarati Hotel near the airport in Nepalganj and also owns a hotel in Shimikot, the district headquarters of Humla. He is reported to be involved in the trade of otter furs between Humla and Tibet. He was arrested for possessing a tiger skin, in the buffer zone area of the RBNP. His home address is Bara Gau 2, Humla.

2. Mr. Nandoo Gurung is around 40 years of age and is part of a bigger gang of traders. He shot three rhinos and sold a piece of the horn for between NRs 50,000 and 70,000. He was arrested in the buffer zone of the RBNP with an elephant tusk. His address is Sano Shree Ward No.8, Bardia.



3. Mr. Sita Ram Rana is part of a gang of five wildlife dealers. He bought the full skeleton of a tiger from Mr. Tamang in Mahendranagar. He paid Rs. 1,000 for the skeleton and sold it to an Indian in Dhangadi for Rs. 30,000. Mr. Rana was arrested together with Mr. Phula Ram Tharu in the RBNP buffer zone area. They were arrested for possessing two pieces of fake rhino horn, 15 kilograms of tiger bone and three leopard furs. Mr. Rana's address is Ward No.5, Dhangadi, Kailali, while Mr. Tharu's address is Shreepur VDC Ward No.9, Bardia.

4. Mr. Chittra Bahadur Malla was caught transporting an elephant tusk. He claimed he had been paid Rs. 5,000 to transport the tusk. His address is Sanoshree, Ward No. 7, Bardia.

5. Mr. Lal Bahadur Khattri is also part of a gang of wildlife dealers. He has been collecting wildlife goods for the past eight years from the districts of Nawalparasi, Kanchanpur, Kailali, Bardia, Banke, Dang, and Salyan. He has been trading mostly tiger skins and tiger bones with Tibet, via Humla. So far, he has traded six tiger skins with Mr. Lama. Mr. Lama lives in Humla and comes to Mr. Khattri's house to collect the bones and skins. Mr. Khattri was arrested together with Mr. Khadga Bahadur and other involved person, Mr. Thapa Magar, in the buffer zone of RBNP. They were caught carrying 13 kilograms of tiger bones, three pieces of leopard bones, one leopard fur, one clouded leopard fur, and 13 pieces of python skin. Mr. Khattri's address is Kohalpur 5, Banke, while Mr. Thapa Magar's address is Nau Basta 2, Banke.

#### **(Source RBNP Army Office, 2,000)**

The RBNP Army has so far seized 40 bows and arrows and four rifles from these gangs as have they arrested 90 per cent of the poachers. A total of eight wildlife trade gang members have been arrested. There are a total of seven gangs. The poaching is done under these organized gangs by hiring a local Tharu people. A Tharu man is hired at Rs. 60 per day and if he is able to hunt something he is given Rs. 2,000, regardless of what he has killed. The weapons used are usually hidden within 15 minutes from the highway, so that the poachers are not caught armed. The gang leaders are wealthy people, having a home base in Nepalganj, as well as in the higher mountain region.

On interrogating these gang leaders, the Army Officer of the RBNP was able to find out the following:

The national price list of sold wildlife goods in Nepal according to the first, second, and third hand dealers.

Price list of Wildlife Goods sold Nationally (in Nepali Rs.)

Item	1st hand Price	2nd hand price	3rd hand price
Rhino horn	100,000	150,000	350,000
Tiger fur/fur	20,000	40,000	100,000
Tiger bone/kg	4,000	10,000	25,000
Leopard fur	5,000	10,000	25,000
Elephant tusk/kg	3,000	6,000	10,000
Bear bile/10 grams	4,000	6,000	9,000
Sambar horn/piece	300	400	500

Otter fur 1,000 2,500 4,000  
Python skin 1,000 2,000 5,000

The major trade routes used in the western region are from Nepalganj-Shimikot (Accham)-Tibet and from Shimikot-Nepalganj-Delhi. After Katmandu, Nepalganj is the second largest urban center for the trade.

### **Safe Poaching Trails**

Poachers of the western region use trails which are ultra safe; the trails have no customs posts and no police (this may have changed now because of the Maoist insurgency in the western region)

### **The major trails used are:**

1. Kailali-Accham-Dhailekh-Kalikot-Mugu-Humla
2. Safe Bagar ( Accham)-Martadi (Bajura)-Bhajang (Koti)-Shimikot (Humla)- Tibet.
3. Bardia-Surkhet-Kalikot-Jumla-Mugu

These routes are the original trading routes used during the 1800's and 1900's.

Although there exist numerous cases of illegal handling in wildlife products, to date there has been no major action taken on behalf of Government of Nepal to control this illegal business.

## **Chapter 6**

[Recommendations](#) | [References](#)



### **Recommendations**

#### **CITES in Nepal**

Nepal became a signatory country of CITES in 1975. To date, there exists no legislation under CITES to enforce regulations related to the treaty. DNPWC together with other departments and organizations are currently working on a bill to enact the treaty. Such a bill will merge the existing acts and create an overall CITES monitoring body responsible for controlling the trade. Although the Wildlife Act 1973 does prohibit exporting any live species or derivatives thereof, except with a license, insufficient organizational structure exists to enforce this law. Aside from the Wildlife Act 1973 and the Forest Act 1993, the Customs Act 1963 is also a crucial act in taking control of the illicit wildlife trade in Nepal. This act regulates the import and export of goods, under which the trade in wildlife goods also occurs.

Research revealed that the customs officers in most border areas were unaware of CITES. The lack of awareness about the wildlife trade and about CITES is possibly

one of the major aspects that need to be reviewed to deal with the illegal trade in the country.

As a result of the data collected on the wildlife trade in the southern and northern regions of the country, a number of recommendations have been formulated that require review, discussion and eventual implementation.

## Recommendations

### **1. Central CITES Monitoring Body:**

a) A Central CITES Monitoring Body should be set up to coordinate Nepal's efforts to comply with its obligations under CITES.

DNPWC has identified the creation of such a body, as a major need if Nepal is to meet its obligations under CITES. This implies identifying the major members of the body and their various responsibilities. Such a monitoring body would be comprised of various agencies and departments working side-by-side in their aim of reducing the illegal trade. In order to be effective, coordination at all levels is required.

b) Senior representatives of all concerned agencies and institutions should be part of the Central CITES Monitoring Body.

The precise nature and function of this monitoring body should be carefully worked out by the DNPWC and other involved agencies. For any such body to be truly effective, the heads of all relevant government departments, regulatory authorities and other interested institutions would need to be involved. This should include as a minimum (1) Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (2) Department of Forest (3) the Customs Department (4) the Department of Plant Resources (5) the Nepal Police (6) the RONA (7) the WWF-Nepal Programme (8) the IUCN Nepal country office (9) the KMTNC. The Management Authority would be represented by the DNPWC, while the Scientific Authority by RONA.

Other individuals who would be required to sit as members of the Monitoring Body, and who could be consulted on specific issues, would be the representatives of NGOs working in the field of wildlife trade, staff, such as wardens from protected areas and DFO's from various districts as well as relevant law enforcement agencies.

(c) The CITES Monitoring Body should be properly funded.

The lack of funds is a current problem facing DNPWC and DOF. Limited funds are an obstacle to the effective implementation of Nepal's obligations under CITES. Present estimates suggest that the shortfall for all the department's activities (including CITES compliance) is as much as US\$70 to \$80 million. In order to secure such funding, consideration will need to be given to methods of funding, such that funds do not come solely from the central government. A trust-type mechanism funded by bilateral and multilateral donors could be one option, while a major conservation-development project focusing on CITES-related issues, could be another. (such as the Parks and People Project funded by the UNDP)

There is potential for significant and effective donor input to establishing such a monitoring body.

(d) The development of a database for recording all cases of wildlife trade, anti-poaching, prosecution, and professional and amateur hunter incidents is necessary for securing correct information to the monitoring body.

At present, the park staff, District Forest Offices, Customs posts, and Police posts record wildlife incidents separately. There is no central collection of information and no attempt to coordinate information from the different sources. Creating a database of all recorded incidents is crucial to expanding the information available to the monitoring body.

The database would contain CITES-related issues including: recorded incidents of trade in animals and their parts, details of the activities of the anti-poaching units, figures for the numbers of prosecutions for wildlife offences (together with the nature of the prosecution, the manner of its execution and its outcome), details of all seizures of wildlife trophies and other confiscations, including current location and/or fate of all confiscated items.

The central body should also be responsible for preparing an annual report synthesizing the data, in submission to the CITES secretariat.

All relevant authorities in each district (including wildlife, forest, and customs, as well as police and other law enforcement authorities) should be required to submit information to the central database, on a regular basis. The information should be available to the public, together with reports containing discussions and/or analysis of the information.

(e) The central body should have links to relevant media for the exchange and publication of information

An essential element of the work of the Central CITES Monitoring Body would be to coordinate the work of raising public awareness. The current research suggests that significant illegal wildlife activity takes place with the knowledge of the authorities. Media and conservation bodies could help bring such issues to the attention of authorities through a CITES monitoring unit.

Part of the process of awareness rising by the Central CITES Body would be to cultivate, maintain, and develop links with relevant journalists and other media personnel. A public relations professional would be an essential member of the staff of the CITES Monitoring Body for performing this role.

(f) The central body should organize and/or conduct relevant trainings for wildlife personnel and all officials with responsibility for one or more CITES-related issue. As part of the responsibility of the body, training in wildlife protection for relevant personnel is vital to the strengthening of expertise at the field level. Some of this work could be delegated to organizations and institutions with experience in conducting such trainings.

## **2. Personnel**

(a) Training should be given on a regular basis to all officials concerned with CITES compliance issues (forestry personnel, wildlife personnel, regulatory and law enforcement personnel) and updated regularly

During interviews and field visits it was evident that very little information or training about CITES related issues was given to any wildlife-related personnel. In order for

Nepal to be able to comply fully with its obligations under CITES, proper and regular training must be given to all personnel.

Part of this process of training must be the preparation and dissemination of awareness materials to all concerned officials. Preparation of a CITES manual along with visual aids, such as posters, are crucial to the awareness raising process of the people involved. Thorough distribution of the manual is also important in order to provide the necessary awareness to personnel at all levels.

(b) Personnel with relevant experience of an issue should not be posted out of an area where that experience can be used effectively. The frequent posting of staff from one region to another hampers effective control of the wildlife trade. For consistency to be maintained and progress to be meaningful, staff with detailed knowledge of a particular area or of a CITES-related issue should not be posted more frequently than personal or professional circumstances demand.

If for any reason an official with specialist knowledge of a particular area or a CITES-related issue must be posted to another area, all steps should be taken to ensure that his successor receives the information about the area, and is well informed. Part of the hand-over process must be to ensure that all physical records of activities are available to the successor.

(c) Coordination between wildlife and forestry personnel in dealing with offenders is essential

In dealing with CITES-related issues, it is essential that there is full cooperation and coordination between the wildlife and the forest officials. In the absence of effective coordination, the responsible official could deal differently with incidents falling just inside or just outside the boundary of a protected area. The jurisdiction differences between different departments could cause opposing outcomes. Effective coordination between forest and wildlife staff, at all levels of the government hierarchy, is essential to Nepal's compliance to CITES. This should include regular meetings between relevant counterparts to discuss CITES-related issues, and to exchange information about related incidents.

(d) There should be frequent interaction between representatives of different agencies and departments including wildlife officials, forestry officials, customs officials, local government officials, and law enforcement agents.

In addition to coordination between wildlife and forest department officials, it is essential that there is coordination between local government officials and law enforcement agents. This coordination should be formed into a structured system for liaison.

Regular contact should be maintained between all agencies with some responsibility for CITES-related issues. It is also important that all officials know what is expected of them when they interact with officials of different departments. Regular meetings should be held and minutes taken. The minutes should be submitted for inclusion in the Central CITES Database.

### **3. Law Enforcement**

a) The law relating to wildlife offences should be applied equally and fairly applied in all situations.

It is essential that if Nepal is to fulfill its obligations under CITES that the domestic law relating to wildlife offences is, just as any other law, applied equally to all individuals, regardless of status. Individuals with "powerful" connections or of wealthy status should not be dealt with any more leniently than any other individual in relation to the same offences. The ability to hire and retain a lawyer should not be the difference between conviction and acquittal.

b) Guidelines must be produced for courts and other adjudicating authorities to guarantee effective implementation of the law and compliance with the rules of natural justice in hearing and deciding cases.

In sensitizing judges to issues relating to wildlife, more work is needed on educating all wildlife tribunals on the nature of their judicial and quasi-judicial powers. Awareness should also be brought on the consistency in sentencing. Training should be given to court officials on how to process wildlife cases. The cases should be passed up to the relevant District Court for adjudication and not to individual wardens and DFOs. All tribunals must also ensure that the fundamental principles of justice enshrined in the Constitution are fully applied in the course of processing alleged wildlife offenders. The fundamental rights of the individual must not be denied in the course of hearing a complaint relating to an alleged wildlife offence.

#### **4. Monitoring Activities**

(a) On-going visits should be made to accessible locations with significance for wildlife protection

Easily accessible areas should be regularly visited in order to gather information from the wildlife, forest, customs, police, and army staff about illegal wildlife activity in the immediate area. This includes customs points accessible by road, protected areas, and the majority of the districts in the Terai. Such monitoring activities could be the responsibility of the proposed Central CITES Monitoring Body, or could be set up and funded separately.

(b) Investigations should be carried out of trade in urban centers.

Investigation and monitoring of illegal wildlife activity in Katmandu and other urban centers such as Nepalganj, Biratnagar and Birgunj, should be undertaken to assess the extent and nature of the trading activities in the different areas. Such research should include tourist areas, local markets, and utilization of wildlife products by religious and medical practitioners.

Methods of research would depend partly on the nature of what is being investigated, but some undercover work, intelligence gathering, and posing as buyers would be necessary. No government organization currently has the facilities, expertise, capacity or motive to carry out such work. For this reason international and national non-governmental organizations could play a significant role, together with the full cooperation with government authorities.



(c) Follow-up investigations should be undertaken of wildlife incidents.

A number of previous incidents of illegal wildlife activity have not been satisfactorily concluded by investigation. Cases where suspects have been freed on legal technicalities or have been released on bail, could provide useful information about the trade if more fully investigated.

(d) Studies of wildlife activities in mountainous areas should be undertaken.

On-going monitoring and recording of the illegal wildlife trade in the less accessible parts of the country is essential for developing the database. Frequent and long-term field visits should be made, which include visits with relevant district officials, border officials, wardens, and other local organizations.

(e) Interviews should be conducted with former officials.

There currently exists a very weak institutional memory about past incidents and events. These experiences could be of value and could be beneficial in grasping the nature of the trade in certain areas, and in terms of dealing with involved trade persons. In order to regain some of this knowledge former senior officials of the DNPWC, Forest, Police, and Customs should be interviewed regarding their experience of the wildlife trade.

(f) An analysis of the motivation behind killing wildlife should be prepared

Evidence suggests that there are a variety of motivational factors among persons who kill wildlife. Some motives for killing could be: (1) trying to make money despite lack of awareness regarding selling the obtained articles, (2) obtaining articles for a specific demand or for an individual, (3) hunting for meat, (4) for recreation, (5) for fashion accessories, (6) for religious purposes, (7) for cultural and for medicinal purposes. It also appears that some poachers risk the very rigorous penalties of being caught without being aware of what those penalties are. It is also remains unclear to what extent wildlife activities in Nepal are influenced by international demand for products or professional traders, and also how much motivation is from local demand or individual initiatives.

In order to control the illicit wildlife trade it is important to understand the motives and expectations of those who are or who may become involved in the trade. Extensive research into the uses and the demand for wildlife articles amongst the Nepalese is essential to fill in the gaps in current knowledge.

(g) Surveys of existing wildlife trophies should be compiled.

Many of the interviewees alleged that wildlife trophies, fashion products derived from wildlife products, and other articles are frequently found in the homes of aristocrats, and wealthy and prominent people of the Nepalese society. More investigation is required in order to verify these assumptions.

In order to increase awareness about the wildlife trade, voluntary surrender of certain wildlife items by prominent individuals could assist in improving public awareness in preventing wildlife trade. Alternatively, legal action may be necessary in order to demonstrate equality in law in all sections of society regarding wildlife

products.

(h) Smuggling techniques should be studied

Police and customs officials have had little experience in confiscating illegally traded wildlife products. While this may be because such activities are rare, evidence suggests it is largely due to the inability of the officials to detect the trade. Many of those interviewed had training in techniques of narcotic smuggling, and believed that similar methods could be used for detecting hidden wildlife articles. However, special techniques used in the wildlife trade, such as concealment of musk pods in butter vats, or hiding of tiger bone in cigarettes, may be methods, which are currently eluding officials. Further study is needed of such techniques, possibly using information and experience from other countries facing similar issues.

(i) There should be liaison with officials from foreign missions.

Interviews should be conducted with officials from the Chinese, Indian, and North and South Korean, United States of America, and Japanese Embassies. All other members of foreign (governmental and non-governmental) agencies in Nepal with a responsibility for or concern for CITES compliance issues should also be interviewed regarding knowledge of the wildlife trade.

(j) Surveys of public awareness should be conducted.

Few studies have been done on the actual level of awareness amongst the public on the illegal wildlife trade. Studies should be undertaken to gather such information. The information can be useful when developing awareness raising campaigns to prevent the trade.

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