



INTERPOL

ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY SUB-DIRECTORATE

Assessment on Illegal Bear Trade



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1 INTRODUCTION

Poaching and the illegal trade of bears, their parts and derivatives, continue on a large scale worldwide. According to a recent study by the wildlife trade monitoring group TRAFFIC, the illegal trade in bears has nearly tripled in Asia between 2000 and 2011. The motivations for poaching and trading in bears vary widely from live bears sourced for the pet or bear dancing trade or to stock bear bile farms, to bear parts sources for trophies, skins, meat, claws, and their gall bladders and bile. Although, largely focused in Asia, the illegal trade and exploitation of bears occurs worldwide and affects all bear species located on four continents.

The illegal trade in bears continues in spite of national laws and efforts in many INTERPOL member countries to discourage or prevent this crime type. National jurisdictions can often achieve a greater impact on the illegal wildlife trade through a coordinated law enforcement approach to addressing the source and market of the wildlife products. Coordinated enforcement efforts to combat the illegal trade in bears and their products globally are of paramount importance to ensure that the offenders are identified and prosecuted, and the illegal trade does not have a lasting impact on endangered bear species.

1.1 Scope and purpose

This assessment aims to assess and analyse the illicit trafficking in bears, their parts and derivatives, identifying the nature and scope of the criminal activity and the impact in either one or more countries. In this assessment, the INTERPOL Environmental Security Unit (ENS) will analyse different aspects of this criminality, including volume and value of legal and illicit trade, poaching, smuggling, trade, captive establishments, trafficking routes and offenders. It also identifies possible measures to reduce this crime type, and provide recommendations that could assist member countries in mitigating the threat posed by wildlife criminals. This assessment is based on information provided in response to a questionnaire sent to 55 INTERPOL member countries.

1.2 Methodology

INTERPOL provided a questionnaire to 55 member countries in June 2013 (see Appendix for full list of countries) to determine the threats to bear species globally and specifically gather information on the illicit trade in bears, their parts and derivatives. These countries were selected because they are known to have bear populations, or serve as transit or destination countries for bear parts or their derivatives. The questionnaire was sent via INTERPOL National Central Bureaus (NCBs) in each country before being transmitted to relevant government agencies charged with bear crimes of selected member countries.

Ten member countries provided detailed information on bear crimes in response to the questionnaire. This limited response may be a result of a lack of national data on the issue, represent insufficient resources dedicated to the issue, or reflect limited or no bear crime reported in their respective jurisdictions. However, even with the limited response, information gathered from the 10 responding member countries allowed INTERPOL to develop several hypotheses about bear related crime trends, while further identifying information gaps.

Information provided by INTERPOL member countries remains the proprietary information of each individual jurisdiction, and requires their permission to provide such information to other member countries. Accordingly, this report seeks to assess and analyse the scope and trends of bear related crime based on the information provided and does not include specific nominal details, which would as a matter of course, only be available only through secure law enforcement channels.

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Species

There are eight species of bears living across four continents: the American black bear, the Asiatic black bear, the Brown bear, the Panda bear, the Polar bear, the Sloth bear, the Spectacled bear and the Sun bear.

Four bear species in Asia are commonly found in illegal trade: the Asiatic Black bear *Ursus thibetanus* (also known as Asian Black bear, or Moon bear), the Brown bear *Ursus arctos*, the Sloth bear *Melursus ursinus* and the Sun bear *Helarctos malayanus*. Along with the Giant Panda bear *Ailuopoda melanoleuca*, all five Asian species of bears have suffered the effects of the illegal trafficking, as well as habitat loss or degradation. Asiatic Black bears are reported to be the most heavily traded, with the Sun Bear reportedly declining by 30 per cent over the past 30 years because of deforestation and trade¹.

Bears in Canada and the United States of America (U.S.), including American Black bears *Ursus americanus*, Brown bears *Ursus arctos* and Polar bears *Ursus maritimus* have also been targeted for poaching, smuggling and illegal trade. Although Asian bear species are the most predominantly targeted bear species for bear bile used in traditional medicine, the high demand for bear parts and derivatives driven by the Asian market, also impacts species found in North America. To meet this demand, poachers have reportedly been sourcing American black bears, Brown bears and Polar bears for use in traditional medicines.

The only species living in South America, the Spectacled bear *Tremarctos ornatus*, is also victim of hunting and habitat loss and degradation.

2.2 Nature of the legal trade

The international trade in bear species and bear products is regulated by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

As only a select number of bear species are listed in Appendix I of the CITES convention (e.g. Giant Panda, Sun Bear, Sloth Bear, Asian Black Bear and in specific countries the Brown Bear), the legal trade of other species of bears exists in many countries. CITES allows any species listed in Appendix II to be traded provided that an export permit or re-export certificate is issued by the relevant CITES authority. This is in contrast to those species listed in Appendix I in which all trade is prohibited. This system is intended to allow CITES to effectively ensure that any trade of the species is not detrimental to the survival of that species.

¹ TRAFFIC. "Pills, Powders, Vials and Flakes: the bear bile trade in Asia". May 2011

Captive bred animals listed as Appendix I of CITES can be traded under license, and treated as if they are listed as Appendix II (of which the Brown Bear is listed, classified as “least concern”), allowing international commercial trade. Consequently, criminals have been known to declare species that were collected from the wild as “bred in captivity” in order to evade international regulatory controls. Captive breeding facilities must be registered with the CITES Secretariat. In effect, commercial trade of captive bred species listed on Appendix I is only authorized if the animal has been produced in CITES registered captive breeding operations.

Bears are usually traded legally as sport hunted trophies or for their skins/fur. In countries such as China and Japan, the domestic trade of bear bile is legal and there are strict regulations for this. The domestic trade in bear parts is illegal in Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam and so is the international trade. However, criminal groups trading in illegal bear parts have found several mechanisms to exploit loopholes in the legal trade.

First, it is very difficult for the authorities to distinguish between types of bear species once the product has been processed or removed from the animal. For instance the sale of bear skin/fur/gallbladder (used for bile) can be declared as an Appendix II species when in reality the product comes from an Appendix I species in which its trade is prohibited.

Second, some species of bears listed in Appendix II are in danger of extinction, yet the regulations do not reflect the status of that species, and it is still permitted to be hunted and traded for commercial purposes. For example, there have been sharp declines in polar bear numbers in recent years due to record low levels of ice in its natural habitat. The reduced amount of these bears has caused the value of their skins and fur to increase dramatically, which has led to a corresponding increase in hunting and poaching of this species. Despite this, trade of polar bear parts remains legal (as polar bears are categorized in Appendix II)), which, with adverse environmental factors, could further threaten this species with extinction.

One positive step many nations have undertaken to counteract the issues the enforcement of this illegal trade and the management of the legal trade of bears has been the introduction of domestic legislation to prevent the commercial trade of certain bear species not listed in Appendix I. Nations like the U.S. have banned the importation of polar bear parts and derivatives, which in turn has reduced demand for these parts and derivatives as the U.S. was a major importer. However Canada, home to two-thirds of the world's polar bears, still allows the legal hunting and international trade of Polar Bears.

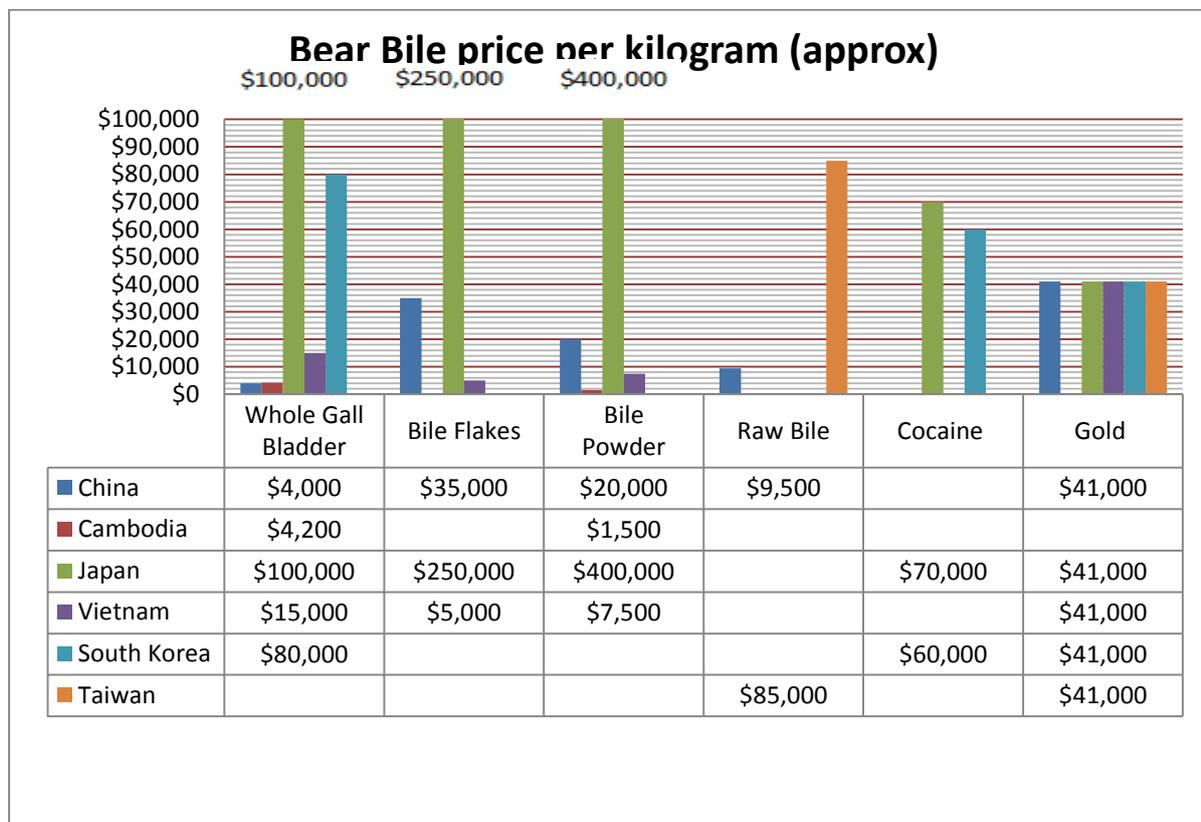
Third, there have been instances in which CITES certificates have been falsified by criminal syndicates and used to conceal illegal poaching, therefore presenting the bear parts as a

legal acquisition to the authorities responsible for monitoring the trade. For example fraudulent CITES certificates have been used to trade wildlife illegally, including the trade of polar bears as a whole, as well as their derivatives.

Fourth, for the CITES agreement to work effectively, international cooperation is paramount as the CITES agreement relies on implementation and monitoring at a domestic level. However many nations are failing to implement the controls necessary to effectively monitor the legal trade of bears. Therefore national laws and their effective implementation play a vital role.

2.3 Nature and value of the illegal trade

The annual worldwide market in illegal bear parts is estimated to be valued at USD 2 billion, though the clandestine nature of any illicit trade makes it difficult to provide a definitive figure. As bear populations decline, their parts and derivatives have become more valuable and the prices continue to rise. For instance, the price for legally imported pelts increased almost 6 times in recent years, rising from USD 5,000-7,000 to USD 30,000-40,000 in Russia.² Based on the high prices paid for individual bear products, there is a clear incentive for criminals and criminal syndicates to exploit the illegal bear trade.



TRAFFIC; Esmond Martin, Lucy Vigne

² Dr Stanislav Belikov. "In favour of greater protection of polar bears". Science Poles. Web. 9 April 2003 < <http://www.sciencepoles.org/interview/in-favour-of-greater-protection-of-polar-bears>>

Prices for bear products are lower in domestic legal markets than the international black market, where prices can be 80 times higher. For instance, a study conducted by Animals Asia in 2007 underlined that the wholesale price of bear bile powder in China was around USD 410 per kilogram. However, this same study noted that in Republic of Korea, the retail price was 25-50 times the price in China, and 80 times the price in Japan, reaching \$33,000 per kilogram. Currently, bear-bile flakes or powder in Japan are worth more than the per kilogram price of cocaine in Asia. Prices of wild bear bile also significantly outweigh that of farmed bear bile, with traders being able to demand up to 65 times the price for bile extracted from a bear caught in the wild. Often bile taken from bears in captivity is of poor quality, as the bear is of diminished health due to being held in harsh conditions for many years.³ A bear paw soup can be worth as much as USD 1,400 while a bear claw soup can cost more than USD 800 in Japan and Republic of Korea. Between 2000 and 2010 more than 10,000 bear bile products of seven or more kilograms were seized worldwide. Most of these products originated from China, though there is a recent trend of these products originating from Russia.⁴

2.4 Modus Operandi and routes

2.4.1 Poaching

The global demand for bear derivatives, coveted for their use in traditional medicine, encourages illegal poaching of bear populations. The loss of habitat is also a challenge, making bear species more vulnerable to poaching and illicit trade. Bear poaching is defined as the illegal hunting, killing or capturing of bears, violating local or international wildlife laws.

Bears can be poached for different reasons: the selling of their parts and/or derivatives (i.e. that can be used for traditional medicine purposes), for their fat and meat or adult animals can also be killed by poachers to capture the cubs for the exotic pet trade or to put into captive farms to extract their bile.

Different methods are used to poach bears, depending on the intended purpose of the animal and the region. These methods can include baiting, trapping, electrocution and shooting.

2.4.2 Smuggling

Due to the international market for bear products, cross-border smuggling is a common method of transporting the products. Information reported by countries indicates that the methods to smuggle bear products depends on the form of the bear or the parts.

³ Kim Todd. "Bear market." Legal Affairs. Web. November-December 2002 <http://www.legalaffairs.org/issues/November-December2002/story_todd_novdec2002.msp>

⁴ UNODC. "Transnational Organized Crime in East Asia and the Pacific: A Threat Assessment". April 2013.

For instance cases have shown the full spectrum of concealment methods from ad-hoc concealment of small volumes of product to more sophisticated and organized methods for larger scale shipments including coordinated smuggling efforts using retrofitted vehicles to hide and transport bear parts and derivatives.

In one case, a country reported over 200 bear paws concealed within the tires of a car attempting to cross an international border. Other techniques included the transportation of bears in vehicles carrying fake government plates intended to deter law enforcement intervention.⁵ Additionally, air transportation methods have also been used to smuggle bear derivatives and products such as medicines. Some specifically mentioned concealment methods include packaging the products in strong smelling foods such coffee to hide their smell or dipped in chocolate to disguise them as innocuous food items.⁶ There have also been isolated cases of live, drugged bears and big cats that were detected in passenger luggage, but these cases show a low level of sophistication and are unlikely to be or become a common smuggling method.

Use of false documentation is another method commonly used by wildlife traders to smuggle bear parts and derivatives. Species listed as CITES Appendix I need a permit to be imported, exported or re-exported. Bears are sometimes smuggled in a clandestine manner without the appropriate documentation or with falsified documentation. Poachers have also been reported to use falsified certificates to disguise illegally hunted pelts as being sourced from countries where hunting is legal. In some instances, wild caught bears are passed off as captive bred. Some species appearing on Appendix I of the CITES can also be re-labelled in order to be legally traded. For instance, media reports a Chinese smuggler was arrested with 22 Asiatic Black bear cubs in a car in Zhaotong, South West China. He claimed that the animals were Akita puppies. The driver was apparently transporting the bear cubs from Mohan in Southern Yunnan to Chengdu. The smuggler admitted that he had been asked to transport the bears to an address in Chengdu in southwest China's Sichuan province.

2.4.3 Trade

The questionnaires received by ENS from INTERPOL member countries indicated that there is a demand for traditional medicines worldwide and that Asia is not unique as a destination for these products. Countries such as Australia, U.S. and countries in Europe have all reported seizures, with bear gall bladders, bear bile and paws (used in soup) being the most common items seized in reported cases.

When respondents to questionnaires reported live bear seizures, these seizures occurred exclusively in source countries, and the seized bears were likely en-route to bear bile extraction facilities. A few exceptions include seized bears that were destined for the pet or

⁵ SFNC. 2003

⁶ Humane Society of the United States

entertainment trade, such as circuses, hotels or outside restaurants, or suspected to be used as dancing bears.

INTERPOL member countries reported that bear parts were predominately sold as paws, meat, furs, skins, claws, teeth, skulls, bone, genitalia, baculum (penis bone), and gall bladders by the gram or in whole form. In isolated cases, bear embryos have also been seized suspended in honey in an attempt to conceal them.

Cross border trade is widespread. A country can play one or different roles in the international wildlife trade, as source (exporter), conduit (re-exporter) and consumer (importer). For instance, the illegal bear products not only enter mainland China, but are also exported to neighbouring provinces of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), specifically Lok Ma Chau control point and Taiwan as well as Japan and Republic of Korea.

2.5 Captive Breeding Establishments

Bear farms were established in the 1980's in China, the Republic of Korea and Vietnam for bile extraction with some claims that bile farming would have a positive effect on wild populations of Asian bears as they would be less likely to be targeted to meet bile demand. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that wild bears continue to be poached and trafficked, to supply the demand from captive breeding establishments.

Bear bile extraction process sees bile from a live bear's gall bladder harvested while the bear is alive. Bile, a digestive juice produced by the liver and concentrated in the gall bladder, has been used as an ingredient in traditional medicine for centuries to treat gallstones, liver problems and other diseases. The ursodeoxycholic acid found in bile is known for its therapeutic properties as it aids in the digestion of lipids in the small intestine.

Despite the fact that the acid can be created synthetically, bear bile is still widely in demand globally. Approximately 13,000 bears are currently estimated to be housed in both illegal and legal captive establishments (Kikuchi, 2012). Keeping bears is legal with a license in China and Republic of Korea, and even though Vietnam prohibits bears to be kept for bile production, it is estimated that nearly 2,400 bears are kept in farms for this purpose in that country (Llanos, 2012).

According to a recent study the number of bears in captivity in Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) has tripled over recent years from 40 in 2008 to 122 animals by 2012. Considering there is no evidence of any breeding facilities or paperwork showing lawful acquisition, this increase in the number of captive bears likely represents bears illegally sourced from the wild.

2.6 Offenders

Relationships between the offenders are complex. There are different levels within a trade network including harvesters and/or hunters, middlemen, traders, wholesalers, consumers and users.⁷

Offenders involved in illegal bear trade are also frequently involved in other types of illegal activity. Evidence indicated that offenders involved in the poaching and trade of wildlife species are frequently also involved in other forest crimes such as illegal logging. Cases have been reported in the media of bear poaching cases identified at illegal logging sites with offenders taking the opportunity to poach bears while also involved in clearing the habitat used by the bears, making them even more vulnerable to the poachers.

The harvesters and/or hunters provide middlemen and traders with the illicit wildlife product. They can be paid in advance to kill specific animals or may be opportunistic whereby they poach an animal and have the network in place to sell the product. Middlemen can arrange hunts and sell to traders and wholesalers who smuggle the bears, their parts and/or derivatives out of the country. Traders and wholesalers can be individuals, retailers, dealers or organized criminals. The type of offenders involved in supplying wild bears and their derivatives include indigenous persons who employ traditional hunting methods, and rural poor who engage in poaching and trade to supplement otherwise low incomes. The opposing end of the spectrum is the sophisticated criminal organizers that engage in wildlife trade as a full time operation and their activities span multiple countries. What has been noted in the illegal bear trade, and also with other wildlife trade is the interconnected nature of familial links between offenders. There have been cases known to law enforcement of spouses being used to transport or sell particular products, especially if an offender is known to authorities and is likely to draw law enforcement attention.

⁷ Broad et al. 2003. TRAFFIC. 2008

3 CONTROL MEASURES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

3.1 Collection, analysis of evidence from incidents, and operational planning

Poaching and seizure incidents can provide forensic evidence and further information about the individuals implicated in wildlife trafficking. Such incidents represent a valuable opportunity to collect information to dismantle portions of the supply chain less accessible to law enforcement operations. Exploitation of the evidence and information collected and network analyses of the criminals involved can allow the identification and dismantling of syndicates and entities involved.

Exploitation of the poaching site may assist local police and wildlife authorities in targeting facilitators operating at a national and regional level, which could in turn provide further information about higher criminal tiers. Evidence and intelligence obtained from an incident site or during subsequent interviews of suspects and witnesses can help identify other poachers, their facilitators, and higher ranking individuals in criminal syndicates, including through information pertaining to *modi operandi* and trafficking routes used by particular syndicates. The building of national intelligence databases of suspected wildlife criminals including bear poachers, and traffickers of bear products, and the sharing of this information between regional and global law enforcement agencies, could assist in connecting multiple incidents, and in determining effective methods for law enforcement intervention.

Wildlife trafficking networks run by syndicates and their facilitators can include alliances with mid-level operators, and possibly payments to corrupt government officials. The targeting of middlemen by national law enforcement agencies could provide an effective intermediate response to reducing bear poaching and bear part trafficking – essentially curtailing the activities of key facilitators linking lower and higher tiers of the supply chain. Such middlemen also would have substantive information and evidence to potentially implicate both poachers and higher levels of syndicate leadership. The exploitation of communications equipment such as mobile phones of suspects arrested and laptops seized during searches of premises for instance could provide significant evidence linking multiple tiers of poaching and trafficking syndicates.

The comprehensive analysis of data sometimes can link wildlife trafficking to other serious crimes such as fraud, tax evasion, money laundering, which frequently have stronger associated penalties. The falsification of customs documents and the laundering of the proceeds of illicit bear sales can be prosecuted under laws pertaining to financial crimes, especially in transit hubs or destination countries, increasing the prospects of prosecution of wildlife crime suspects through multi-count indictments.

Police, customs and wildlife law enforcement units need to work jointly to target these syndicates. The cross-border activities of these individuals necessitate travel, financial

transactions, or telephone communication that all have some traceability across different countries in the region and globally. With a unified operational planning process, law enforcement officers can focus more fully on cooperative multinational enforcement priorities. This process enables member countries to effectively redirect officer enforcement efforts to high priority joint operations, with a focus on sharing information and intelligence among countries and across regions. INTERPOL can assist member countries by coordinating information exchanges. Non-governmental organizations are also encouraged to share information with law enforcement agencies in order to assess the validity of the information and usability in a law enforcement context.

3.1.1 INTERPOL assisted operations

INTERPOL assisted in the coordination of four operations with Asian law enforcement agencies between 2008 and 2013 to target illicit trafficking of tigers and other Asian species, under Project Predator. These operations resulted in 130 arrests and 278 seizures of big cat skins and other body parts, about 70 live Asian big cats and parts and 187 kg of cat bones. Other wildlife and parts including bear parts, rhino horns, elephant tusks, pangolins, hornbill beaks, turtles, deer, slow loris, parakeets, sea horses and protected plants were also seized.

These operations also generated additional intelligence that could be used for future law enforcement interdictions. Some of this intelligence was derived from suspect interviews conducted by law enforcement agencies that provided information concerning the identities of traffickers. As mentioned above, INTERPOL can assist member countries with processing the evidence obtained during incidents and arrests in order to prosecute the wildlife traffickers. This evidence can enable intelligence-led investigations to identify and prosecute the offenders in source, transit and destination countries. Specialized investigative techniques, such as controlled deliveries, surveillance, infiltration, online searches, analysis of computers and websites can address the level of sophistication observed in wildlife trafficking.

Operation PAWS

INTERPOL hosted a consultation for 13 Asian tiger and bear range countries in May 2014. Representatives from 11 tiger range countries, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Thailand and Vietnam attended the meeting. During the meeting, participants provided clear recommendations on what they wanted from INTERPOL operations on wildlife crime in the region, based on their needs and requirements. It was proposed that INTERPOL coordinate one operation for wildlife crime, with a focus on bear trafficking for some countries, addressing the illegal sourcing and trade Asian wild bears, their parts and/or derivatives. Based on their geographical proximity, shared international borders, illegal captive breeding establishments and known wildlife trade and transport routes, 14 countries including Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Republic of Korea, Thailand

and Vietnam will be invited to participate in this operation. Other destination countries worldwide will be invited to cooperate in this operation, for many of the illegal wildlife products sourced from Asia. ENS will assist member countries by coordinating the operation internationally; collating, analyzing and sharing information received, and also help with the identification of targets and hotspots. The information received through the questionnaires and the information already available in INTERPOL's system will be analysed to create intelligence briefings on transnational trade routes, modus operandi and criminals for the participating countries. Investigative support will be provided in case of major incidents, at the request of a country.

3.1.2 Wildlife Enforcement Networks

INTERPOL Environmental Network

The Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Committee (ECEC) includes executive leaders and decision makers from all 190 INTERPOL Member Countries to provide strategic advice and to harness global support. The first Executive Level – ECEC meeting was held in November 2013 in Nairobi, Kenya. In order to support the Committee, three working groups lead projects in wildlife, pollution and fisheries. Moreover, the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC) is composed of five major international organisations: the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Bank, the World Customs Organization (WCO), and INTERPOL. The Consortium forms a powerful alliance to fight wildlife crime effectively and delivers determined and coordinated support to law enforcement.

In order to ensure a coordinated and strategic response to environmental crimes, INTERPOL developed a national multi-agency cooperative collaboration: a National Environmental Security Task Force (NEST). This brings together police, customs, environmental agencies and other specialized agencies, prosecutors, non-governmental organizations and inter-governmental partners. A NEST provides a basis for information sharing between countries and regions, secure lines of communication, and a national focal point for environmental enforcement and operations.

Asia has been establishing intergovernmental and multi-agency Wildlife Enforcement Networks (WENs) in order to combat wildlife crime across Asia. These networks are aimed to strengthen enforcement capacity, inter-agency cooperation and national legislation and increase the availability of scientific information to guide national CITES authorities by coordinating trainings, meetings and workshops. This is the case of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) created in 2005 and the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) formally launched in 2011 that encourage their members to establish a national inter-agency task forces to strengthen

enforcement efforts at the national level. ASEAN-WEN member countries currently consist of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam and Thailand. SAWEN member countries consist of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Operation Cobra II, which targeted wildlife criminals, represented a joint one-month global operation completed on 27 January 2014. It resulted in over 400 arrests and more than 350 major wildlife seizures, including bear skins. Cobra II was overseen by an International Coordination Team, and chaired by the Lusaka Agreement Task Force and the China National Inter-agency CITES Enforcement Coordination Group, and integrated law enforcement agencies from countries in Asia, Africa, and the U.S. National representatives were assisted by investigators from the WCO, CITES, LATF, the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network, and the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network, with training provided by ICCWC prior to the commencement of the operation.

3.1.3 International tools and services

INTERPOL offers tools and services that can help member countries to collect, analyse and share information in order to enhance transnational investigations and operations.

Databases and I-24/7

INTERPOL member countries can have a direct access to different criminal databases accessible real time through the I-24/7 network connecting all the NCBs. This network is a global secure communications system enabling investigators to access INTERPOL's databases. It can be used to share or request information about crimes and criminals under investigation.

I-SECOM

Secure communications (I-SECOM) is a secure e-mail platform available to registered Focal Points to assist them in exchanging information concerning ongoing corruption and asset recovery cases.

Notices

INTERPOL can assist national law enforcement investigations through the dissemination of Notices that are initiated by a Member Country. INTERPOL Notices are international requests for cooperation that allow law enforcement officials to share critical crime-related information. Member Countries use Red Notices to seek the location and arrest of wanted persons with a view to extradition or similar lawful action. Blue Notices are issued for the purpose of collecting additional information about the identity, location, or activities of an

individual in relation to a crime. Finally, Purple Notices help Member Countries seek and/or provide information on modus operandi, objects, devices, and concealment methods used by criminals.

IST deployments

INTERPOL can, at the request of a member country, deploy an Investigative Support Team (IST) following a pertinent criminal incident. An IST is deployed to assist a country by providing operational and investigative support to national law enforcement agencies and further exploit information on wildlife traffickers.

3.2 Capacity development

Many capacity development initiatives are undertaken by national agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations for law enforcement officers. Coordination between the different agencies and organizations would avoid any overlap.

Capacity development at a regional level would standardise operating procedures and would encourage joint investigations and operations transnationally. Training in interviewing suspects and forensic evidence collection methods would enhance the value of investigations as they pertain to mid-level operators and facilitators.

In this framework, INTERPOL has developed a Standard Enforcement Training (SET) curriculum for wildlife enforcement officials. This training covers different areas, such as: note-taking, implementing information collections plans, planning and executing inspections, investigations, and searches, crime scene investigations, witness and suspect interviews, preparing a court brief and giving testimony.

ENS training strategy includes a train-the-trainer component, which allows participants to a specific training course to deliver the same course to field officers back in their organization and country. This concept multiplies the impact of ENS training activities, as per total number of field officers trained on a particular issue. ENS training is also linked to any large scale operation to occur in the country or transnationally, which makes this training practical and realistic.

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The organized and opportunistic criminals involved in the illegal bear trade are exploiting the vulnerabilities of the enforcement response to wildlife crime for the purposes of financial gain and supplying the persistent number of consumers of bear products. Improved enforcement coordination, from legislation to investigation, can have a considerable impact on a crime such as this that relies on a complex network of individuals to get the bear product from source to consumer. Only with an attempt to address the entire supply chain will the illegal bear trade show a decline. In the absence of this coordinated response, the risk to wild bear populations is considerable.

4.1 CITES

The implementation of the measures mentioned in the CITES Resolution Conf. 10.8 on the “Conservation of and trade in bears” should be adhered to by all CITES Parties, particularly bear range and consuming countries.

4.2 National Environmental Security Task Forces

There is a lack of capacity at a national level to fully collect, analyse and exchange information within all relevant government agencies. INTERPOL can assist member countries to address these issues through the establishment of a National Environment Security Task Force (NEST), which would comprise of all relevant government agencies that might contribute to addressing bear trafficking. Countries affected by bear trafficking should consider the establishment of NESTs with the assistance of INTERPOL.

4.3 Multinational Law Enforcement Information Sharing

Member Countries that seize bears, their parts and/or derivatives should share information and documentation from such seizures with countries from which the shipments originated, transited through or arrived in. INTERPOL can assist the exchange of information between member countries.

4.4 Intelligence analysis and investigations

The establishment of intelligence analysis and investigation units tackling wildlife crime within their wildlife agencies would enhance a member countries’ ability to respond to wildlife trafficking. This would provide specialised intelligence and investigative resources to criminal investigations and would ensure the effective sharing of evidence and information across all countries involved. INTERPOL can support member countries with the analysis of data and information obtained during investigations.

4.5 Capacity development

The establishment of a regional capacity development platform for Asia would enhance the mainstreaming of law enforcement standards in partnership with countries, intergovernmental organisations, universities and other stakeholders.

The incorporation of training modules on environmental and wildlife security would also allow law enforcement officers to develop skills and knowledge on wildlife trafficking.

Member countries are also encouraged to utilise the ICCWC Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytical Toolkit. This Toolkit provides a framework and comprehensive guidance through which a government can analyse and assess its effectiveness in addressing wildlife crimes. It further provides a framework to identify any gaps in the existing response to wildlife and forest offences and facilitates the formulation and development of measures to address those gaps.

4.6 INTERPOL's tools and services

The use of INTERPOL's tools and services for information sharing is recommended. The use of INTERPOL Notices is strongly encouraged in order to enhance multinational law enforcement cooperation. INTERPOL is seeking to provide additional information and forensic analysis to several Member Countries in order to increase this number. Countries must supply sufficient biometric information to request the issuance of Red Notices, reiterating the need to conduct thorough forensic analysis.

Member countries can also request the deployment of Investigative Support Teams (ISTs) that can collect information on the ground with the local authorities in order to determine key facilitators and the chain of command of illegal wildlife syndicates. These support teams are comprised of INTERPOL criminal intelligence officers, analysts and officials from other member countries. They provide on-ground technical assistance for national and/or regional needs, including mentoring and advising in investigating, interviewing, evidence collection and analysis methods.

5 APPENDIX

Countries that received the questionnaire:

Albania	Lithuania
Argentina	Macao
Australia	Malaysia
Austria	Montenegro
Belarus	Myanmar
Bhutan	Nepal
Bolivia	Norway
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Peru
Bulgaria	Philippines
Cambodia	Poland
Canada	Republic of Macedonia
Chile	Romania
China	Russia
Colombia	Serbia
Croatia	Singapore
Czech Republic	Slovakia
Ecuador	Slovenia
Estonia	South Korea
Finland	Spain
France	Sri Lanka
Greece	Sweden
Hong Kong SAR	Thailand
India	Ukraine
Indonesia	United Kingdom
Italy	U.S.
Japan	Venezuela
Laos	Vietnam
Latvia	

► **ABOUT INTERPOL**

INTERPOL is the world's largest international police organization. Our role is to assist law enforcement agencies in our 190 member countries to combat all forms of transnational crime. We work to help police across the world meet the growing challenges of crime in the 21st century by providing a high-tech infrastructure of technical and operational support. Our services include targeted training, expert investigative support, specialized databases and secure police communications channels.

► **OUR VISION: "CONNECTING POLICE FOR A SAFER WORLD"**

Our vision is that of a world where each and every law enforcement professional will be able through INTERPOL to securely communicate, share and access vital police information whenever and wherever needed, ensuring the safety of the world's citizens. We constantly provide and promote innovative and cutting-edge solutions to global challenges in policing and security.



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