

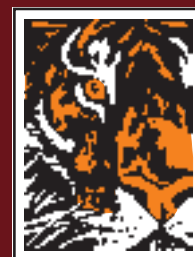


SKINNING THE CAT

CRIME AND POLITICS
OF THE BIG CAT SKIN TRADE

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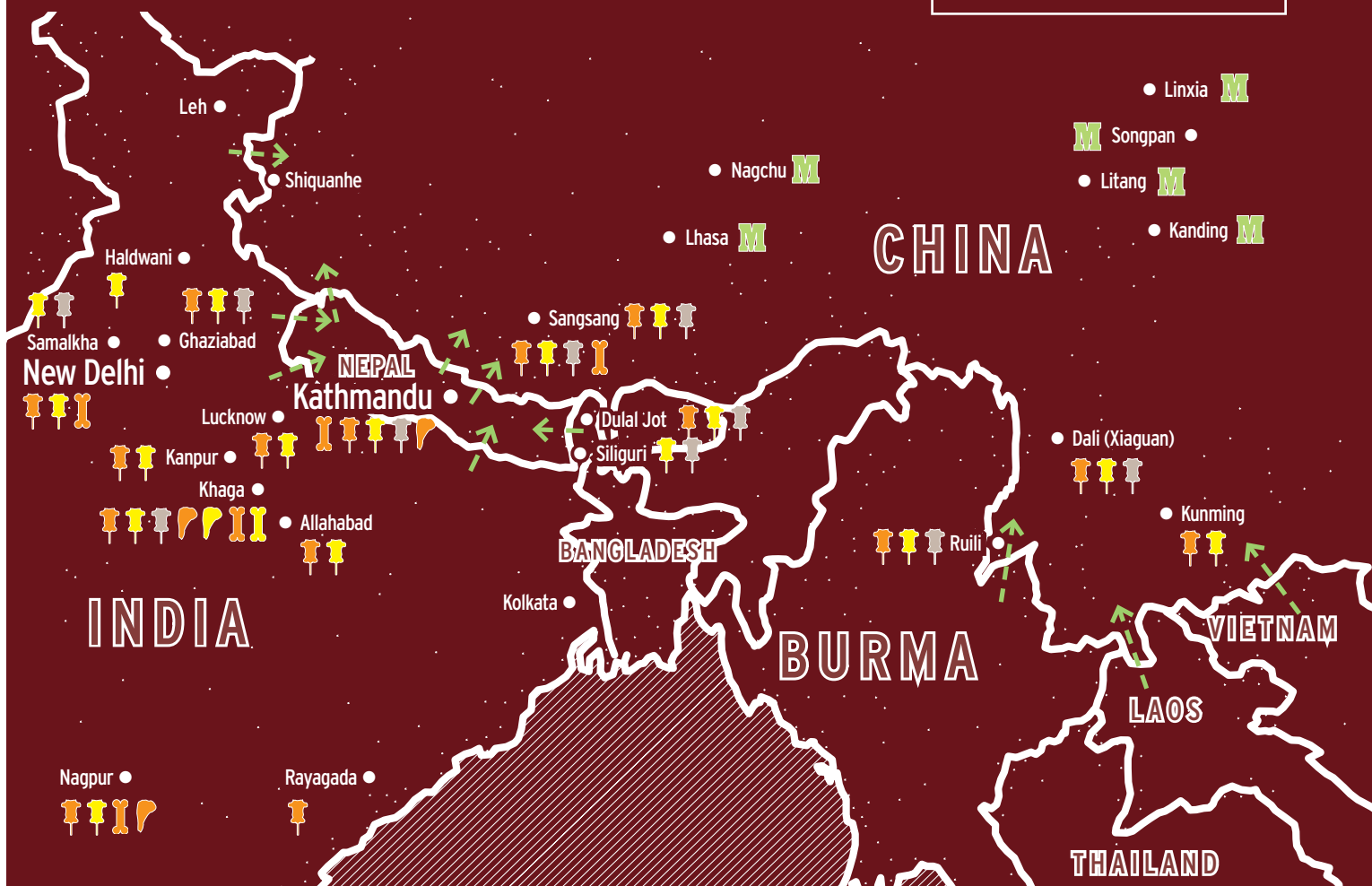
SKINNING THE CAT

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MAP SHOWING KEY TRAFFICKING ROUTES, SEIZURE HOTSPOTS AND MARKETS FOR TIGER AND LEOPARD SKINS

The external boundaries of India on this map have not been authenticated and may not be correct. Map not to scale.



The illegal trade in poached skins between India, Nepal and China is the most significant immediate threat to the continued existence of the tiger in the wild. While the importance of the problem has been recognised and plenty of information is already available, the lucrative illegal trade continues.

The fundamental reason for this is that the governments in question have failed to implement an adequate enforcement response at domestic or regional levels. Wildlife crime remains a low priority in terms of political commitment and investment, and is rarely subjected to sustained and specialised enforcement effort.

At senior political levels wildlife crime is often viewed as localised and opportunistic; a simple matter of supply and demand and an inevitable result of poverty in range states. In fact it is far more complicated. The UN recognises wildlife crime as a form of transnational organised crime of a serious nature, with significant negative economic and social implications.

India, Nepal and China are all signatories to both the UN Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (CTOC), but to stop the skin trade they need to make greater effort to convert these commitments into action.

Since 2000, the Parties to CITES have repeatedly called for the urgent creation of new enforcement mechanisms to combat the illicit trade in skins, bones and other products of tigers and those of other critically endangered Asian big cat species. These recommendations were made following in-depth missions to the relevant countries conducted by the CITES Secretariat with enforcement and trade experts.

But while the CITES Management Authorities of India, China and Nepal have already agreed that more effective enforcement is needed,

they appear to have inadequate support from their respective governments.

While there have been several significant skin seizures over the last decade, neither India, Nepal nor China have shown the political will at the highest levels needed to combat wildlife crime. Questions must now be asked over how seriously these national governments treat CITES compliance and enforcement.

In the context of other threats facing the endangered big cats of Asia, enforcement is not controversial nor is it the subject of scientific debate, it is quite simply essential. Time is running out for species like the tiger and there is only so much more talking that can be done. In the present scenario we will soon be in an indefensible position explaining why wild tigers were allowed to go extinct.

This isn't just about saving wild tigers, leopards, snow leopards and other species threatened by trade in the region. It is about good governance and stamping out transnational organised crime. What government does not want that?

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September 2006



TRANS-HIMALAYAN SKIN TRAIL

The trans-Himalayan skin trade is not an overnight or opportunistic phenomenon. It is a well established criminal business bearing all the hallmarks of transnational organised crime.

With the outlawing of tiger hunting in India in 1972, and the prohibition on international trade in tiger and leopard parts entering into force in 1975 under CITES, traditional skin dealers in India found themselves falling foul of the law. Most of them shut down their skin businesses; some did not. One such dealer was Sansar Chand, who has been implicated in a string of criminal activities, starting with a 1974 arrest for 680 skins including a tiger, three leopard and 85 otter skins.⁽¹⁾

In the subsequent 31 years, Chand and his rivals have established complex, interlinking smuggling networks to satisfy the demand for tiger and leopard parts and otter skins outside India's borders. Over time, occasional seizures in India have revealed the identities of many key players. But it was not until 1999, with the seizure of three tiger skins, 50 leopard skins and five otter skins in

Ghaziabad, northern India, that the world was first alerted to the volume of skins being trafficked and the sophistication of the criminal networks involved.

THE SANSAR CHAND GANG ARE AMONG THOSE ACCUSED IN 57 WILDLIFE CASES BETWEEN 1974 AND 2005

The Ghaziabad seizure signified a turning point in the trade and was the first time that signatures were found on the backs of skins. The paper-thin tanning and the precise folding of the skins that allowed a large number to be packed into relatively small bundles, pointed to a level of organisation that had not been seen before.

Emboldened by the absence of significant enforcement, the criminal skin-trade networks heralded the new millennium by shifting larger and larger consignments, signed or marked by buyers or their representatives. The evidence from a series

ASIAN BIG CATS UNDER THREAT

Just over a century ago there were an estimated 100,000 wild tigers worldwide. Today there are probably fewer than 5,000.⁽⁵⁾

Across their range, tigers are seriously threatened by poaching (to cater for the illegal trade in skins and bones), habitat destruction and the decline in natural prey populations. Tigers (*Panthera tigris*) have been listed on Appendix I of CITES since 1975, with the exception of the Siberian subspecies, which was added in 1987. Thus all international trade in tiger

parts and products is prohibited. Despite this, the demand for tiger bone for traditional medicine and the burgeoning demand for skins has led to a continuing decline in wild tiger numbers.

In India, home to nearly half of the world's remaining wild tigers, the current population is officially estimated to be 3600, though leading experts claim that the figure is likely to be closer to 1500 – 1800.⁽⁶⁾

Asian leopards (*Panthera pardus*) and snow leopards (*Uncia uncia*) face the

same threats. There are no reliable estimates for leopard populations across Asia but several Asian subspecies are listed as endangered or critically endangered by the World Conservation Union.⁽⁷⁾ It is thought that there are currently 3500 to 7000 snow leopards spread across the central Asian mountain ranges from Afghanistan to Mongolia.⁽⁸⁾ Leopards and snow leopards have both been on Appendix I of CITES since 1975.



of seizures in India, Nepal and China following Ghaziabad, pointed to Lhasa in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) as a primary destination and distribution point.

Ancient trade routes for salt, spices and wool are used to smuggle skins, as are the trading communities in the region. A number of these routes are pictured on the map in the inside cover of this report. This kind of information has been widely publicised in individual seizure reports and in EIA's 2004 report, *The Tiger Skin Trail*.⁽²⁾

Over the last three years, EIA and WPSI have documented traders in Lhasa offering tiger, leopard and otter skins to local people, western tourists and Chinese buyers.⁽³⁾ From Lhasa, skins are dispatched to other trade hubs including Nagchu, also in TAR, and Linxia in Gansu Province.⁽⁴⁾

While Chinese and western tourists buy skins for home décor and Chinese people may also buy skins for good luck, Khampa Tibetans (and other Tibetan communities) buy skins to decorate their chupas (traditional costumes). The sheer scale of the Tibetan market and its significance as a driving force behind poaching and trade was not documented until 2005. By this time the wearing of tiger and leopard skins had reached epic proportions. It was not just a handful of people wearing tiger, leopard and otter skins as a fashion statement and a symbol of wealth, but hundreds of people at a single festival.

The growing threat posed by organised networks in the skin trade has been discussed at CITES since 2000. EIA and WPSI have provided reports of investigation findings to the relevant authorities in China, India and Nepal; at the 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES in 2004; to the CITES Tiger Enforcement Task Force in May 2005; and at the Silk Road CITES Enforcement Seminar in August 2005.

Whilst efforts to raise awareness among the Tibetan consumers of skins have had an impact on the number of people wearing skins, the sad truth is that in 2006 - seven years after the alarm was initially raised - the trade continues. The criminal networks have invested too much in the business to let it go. In the absence of targeted and sustained enforcement they continue to ply their trade, encouraged by increasing interest from customers from Beijing, Chengdu and Hong Kong.



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LAWS, BUT LIMITED ENFORCEMENT

INDIA

Under The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (WPA),⁽⁹⁾ most recently amended in 2006, the penalties faced by tiger, leopard and snow leopard skin traders is three to seven years imprisonment and a minimum fine of INR 50,000 (~US\$440). For subsequent offences the fine rises to a minimum of INR 500,000 (~US\$4,400). Property derived from illegal trade can also be confiscated. The recent amendments to the WPA provide a legislative basis to establish a multi-agency enforcement unit and a National Tiger Conservation Authority to ensure better protection and management. A draft amendment to incorporate CITES provisions is pending.

NEPAL

A fifth amendment to Nepal's National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1973,⁽¹⁰⁾ is in process, through which it is hoped that the leopard will be added to the Schedule of protected species. In the meantime, trading in tiger, snow leopard and other endangered cats carries a fine of NPR 50,000 to 100,000 (~US\$700 – ~US\$1420) or a prison term of five to 15 years or both.

CHINA

The Criminal Law (amended in 1997), Wildlife Protection Law (amended in 2004), Customs Law (amended in 2000) and the new Regulation on the Administration of the Import and Export of Endangered Species, provide for severe penalties against those engaged in the trafficking and sale of tiger, leopard and snow leopard skins. Depending on the scale and nature of the offence, traders can face fines, confiscation of property, five to ten years imprisonment, or even the death penalty.⁽¹¹⁾

TIGER AND LEOPARD SKIN MARKETS IN CHINA

BELOW:

In 2004, tiger traders in Lhasa reported a trend among rich Chinese in the industrialised east of the country for tiger skins as status symbols in the home. In 1999, police recovered a tiger skin from the home of a major crime boss in Xiamen, Fujian Province. More recently, a dressed tiger skin has been advertised on the internet for sale in China, as a decorative piece.

There was never any doubt that skins were entering China, but where the majority went from there was open to speculation. In 2002, EIA and WPSI joined forces to build a more coherent picture of the main consumer markets and final destinations. Between 2004 and 2006, EIA and WPSI investigators travelled to TAR, Sichuan Province and Gansu Province, to document the nature and dynamics of the trade. We visited both major and remote markets and attended horse festivals where skins were being openly worn and sold.

In the last two years, we have seen more dead tigers and leopards than any of us will ever see alive. The following section provides an account of our findings.

THE SKIN TRADE

The relatively open and accessible markets for tiger, leopard, snow leopard and otter skins are ultimately responsible for driving the poaching of these endangered species in the wild.

Traders in Lhasa, TAR, Linxia and Gansu Province told investigators that all of the tiger and most of the leopard skins had come from India, usually via Nepal. Most of the traders also claimed to have connections in both countries, while at least one trader claimed to have visited India personally to liaise with dealers there. Most of the skins were also well tanned, and some bore stretch and tack markings strikingly similar to those seen on skins seized in India.

According to the traders interviewed in 2006, skins are now trafficked in small consignments across mountain passes and official border crossings through a chain of couriers to avoid detection. Some of the traders in Lhasa claimed they had good contacts among customs officials on the China-Nepal border, particularly at one named crossing, to facilitate safe passage of the skins. One trader indicated that companies regularly trading other goods between Nepal and TAR smuggle skins on behalf of Lhasa traders.

“I CAN GUARANTEE GOODS BECAUSE I HAVE A PASSPORT, HAVE GOOD CUSTOMS CONTACTS AND ALSO I HAVE ACCESS TO COOLIES WHO CAN SMUGGLE THEM OVER”

Lhasa trader with six whole tiger skins, July 2006.

Local traders will sell the skins to anyone with money, but their main markets include foreigners looking for souvenirs, Han Chinese visitors buying skins for prestigious gifts or home décor, and Tibetans, mostly Khampa Tibetans, purchasing skins to decorate their chupas.



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One trader stated that 80 per cent of his customers were mainland Chinese, while others said local government officials and army officers are among their Chinese customers. Another trader claimed that a businessman from Nagchu in TAR recently bought 60 pieces of tiger skin as gifts for his staff.

Most of the traders EIA and WPSI met offered advice on established methods by which skins could be smuggled out of the country. Some suggested concealing in passenger luggage, including sleeping bags. Others said they could arrange delivery through the postal system, including overseas, while others said they could easily arrange transportation to towns like Chengdu and Beijing.

The traders in Lhasa interface with their customers primarily through the shops in the Barkhor area. While leopard skins are often kept on the premises, most of the tiger skins shown to EIA and WPSI were kept at residential or business premises elsewhere. Some skins were owned by the shop owners themselves, while others claimed they were selling the stock on behalf of another trader. Arrangements were made with the traders to bring skins to a shop premises, or an appointment made for the customer to



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meet the trader to go to another location to view the skin.

While the traders appear to run separate businesses and have their own stocks, there was also evidence of co-operative networks, with traders sharing commodities, pooling resources and hoarding stockpiles from which other traders, often from out of town, would select the skins.

Traders were aware of the illegality of their operations but were unconcerned about the threat of arrest or of disruption by the local authorities. The business was certainly not underground, closed or inaccessible: one trader even joked about being quite comfortable carrying a tiger skin in a bag from his house to his shop. In a recorded

ABOVE (left to right):

The majority of shops through which EIA and WPSI met traders selling whole skins were in the Barkhor area of Lhasa.

In 2006 EIA and WPSI investigators were shown 11 whole tiger skins and eight whole leopard skins. In 2005 investigators were shown three whole tiger skins and seven whole leopard skins. Prices for whole skins have increased since 2005.



ABOVE:

Linxia, just south of Lanzhou in Gansu Province. There are over 90 shops in this one street openly selling fur of CITES Appendix I species; snow leopard, leopard, otter (Eurasian & Smooth-coated), and clouded leopard.

In 2005 investigators documented over 160 whole fresh leopard skins for sale in Linxia, with three large stocks of 36, 33 and 28 skins held by separate traders. They had become more hostile towards non-Tibetan visitors in 2006 and it was not possible to conduct a full survey, but EIA and WPSI still saw or were offered 42 leopard skins and one tiger skin.

TOP RIGHT (top to bottom):

Leopard and snow leopard skin made into rugs were openly displayed for sale in a shop window in Kanding, Sichuan Province in July 2006.

Traders in Lhasa and Litang confirmed that skins are signed at the time of selection from a stockpile. More than one signature or marking indicates that the skin has moved through more than one trader, starting from the source country, India.

conversation he told investigators that “These past two years, enforcement has slacked off”.

Though the traders showed no more than one or two tiger skins each, they all claimed they had more in stock, while one trader claimed that he sells five to six tiger skins every two months. Only when a buyer actually pays for a skin will they show the rest of their stock.

The absence of effective enforcement in Linxia means that the sale of leopard, otter and snow leopard skins remains easy for ethnically appropriate investigators to document. Leopard and otter skins were often pre-cut as trim for chupa. Whole leopard and snow leopard skins were also available in significant quantities in Linxia, which is a well-established fur market with large quantities of legal fur as well as endangered species.

The shop owners in Linxia are predominantly from the Hui Muslim-Chinese minority and are highly skilled tanners with generations of experience in turning out soft, pliable skins. Most of the skins that were ready for sale were far better tanned than the ones on offer in Lhasa, or than skins recovered in seizures in India and Nepal.

EIA and WPSI learned from traders that dealers from Lhasa bring tiger, leopard and otter skins to Linxia to sell to the Hui, who in turn sell these to Tibetans in Sichuan, Gansu and Qinghai provinces for whom Linxia is more accessible than Lhasa.

On more than one occasion, traders in Linxia claimed that there are special provisions under the law that allow ethnic Tibetans and Hui Muslim-Chinese to trade in smaller pieces of skins, although whole skins are still prohibited. Investigators were informed that one method used to avoid prosecution is to ensure that the paws are cut off so that traders can argue that the skin is a fake.

However, there also appears to be a market for claws attached paws – to prove that the claws are genuine. In a seizure in India in 2005, 60kg of tiger and leopard paws were recovered along with skins of tiger, leopard, otter and snow leopard at a warehouse run by the Sansar Chand gang.

Whole leopard skins were also documented for sale in Songpan, Kanding and Litang in Sichuan, and Nagchu in TAR. As with the Lhasa traders, the sellers of leopard and snow leopard skins in Linxia and elsewhere were not particularly concerned about market officials or enforcement officers.



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OTHER WILDLIFE PRODUCTS

During investigations in 2005 and 2006, EIA and WPSI also witnessed other wildlife products available for sale in Lhasa, Linxia and at the horse festivals. In Lhasa, large quantities of African and Asian elephant ivory were openly on sale. The items were mainly worked ornaments and jewellery but traders told investigators that unworked ivory is imported and carved in Lhasa.

Several leopard and snow leopard paws, sixty leopard and snow leopard

claws, one tiger skull and one leopard skull were also seen in Lhasa, while in Linxia, several leopard skulls, a few pieces of ivory and the skins of various other cat species were documented including clouded leopard and lynx.

While otter skins were seen for sale in Lhasa and at all the horse festivals visited by EIA and WPSI, the biggest market appeared to be in Linxia, where over 1800 otter skins of different species, including Eurasian and smooth-coated otter, were documented.



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SNOW LEOPARD SKINS IN CHINA

In Linxia in Gansu Province of China, local Hui Muslim-Chinese traders control the trade in snow leopard skins. Most of these skins are bought by local people, including whole skins complete with paw pads and claws, as well as skins cut and made into rugs and clothing.

Traders reported that most of the snow leopard skins had arrived via Xinjiang Province in the northwest, but could not confirm the source. The price for a single snow leopard skin in 2005 and 2006 was as little as Yuan 2000 (~US\$ 250).

In 2005 EIA and WPSI documented sixty snow leopard skins and four snow leopard waistcoats on sale in Linxia.

In August 2006, EIA and WPSI found that the trade was less open than the year before, and traders more reluctant to engage with non-Tibetan visitors. Nevertheless nine skins were seen on sale in only a partial survey and additional snow leopard skins were documented in Songpan and Kanding in Sichuan Province of China.

Snow leopard skins are also traded between Mongolia and China. A recent study into the illegal wildlife trade in Mongolia documented 13 fresh snow leopard skins for sale in a small western border town in China. The animals were reportedly poached in Mongolia.⁽¹⁵⁾



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SKIN CHUPAS

Until early 2006, the primary market for tiger and leopard skins was for decorating chupas. The Losar (Tibetan New Year), summer horse festivals and weddings are the occasions when people are most likely to wear them. Fortunately, the impact of awareness campaigns has resulted in a significant decline in the number of skin chupas openly for sale in the markets investigated by EIA and WPSI in mid-2006.

EIA and WPSI investigators saw only one tiger skin chupa, three leopard skin chupas and 38 otter skin chupas in the Barkhor area of Lhasa. This is in contrast to August 2005 when 24 tiger skin chupas, 54 leopard skin chupas and over 300 otter skin chupas were openly displayed for sale in shop doorways and on mannequins outside shops.

Though far fewer leopard skin chupas and no tiger skin chupa were observed in Barkhor in 2004, it is possible this is due to the impact of seasonality on supply and demand; the 2004 survey was conducted in May, after the Losar celebrations and before the horse festivals.

ABOVE:
Litang Horse Festival, Sichuan, 2005

RIGHT:
Chupas decorated with skin, whole skins and pieces of skin cut into trim for decorating chupa were also seen in Linxia, Songpan (Sichuan) and in markets associated with the festivals in Litang (Sichuan), see far right, Nagchu, Koluk and Sangshung (TAR).

When EIA and WPSI investigators surveyed Barkhor in July 2006 they found whole tiger and leopard skins but did not see any skin chupa. When they returned in August 2006, a few of the shops previously surveyed had put tiger and leopard skin chupa on open display, perhaps in time for the summer horse festivals.



FESTIVALS

The summer festivals are annual gatherings where people meet to trade and race horses, compete in horse riding stunts and celebrate their culture with music and dance. They are also opportunities for people to meet future husbands and wives and display their wealth.⁽¹²⁾

In August 2006, EIA and WPSI attended the Litang Festival in Sichuan Province and the Koluk, Sangshung and Nagchu Festivals in TAR. Between all four festivals, over 50 tiger skin chupas, over 200 leopard skin chupas and several hundred otter skin chupas were seen.

According to the tiger and leopard skin wearers that EIA and WPSI spoke to in 2005, they had bought their skins within the previous 18 months. Only a few were aware that the skin originated in another

country and when asked, they simply stated whether they bought the skin in Lhasa, Litang or Linxia.

In 2006, EIA and WPSI investigators returned to the Litang festival and found a significant decline in the number of people wearing skins. Nevertheless, 32 people were still seen wearing skins: five people wearing tiger, 16 leopard and 11 otter.

A local source in Litang reported that following awareness campaigns launched in 2005, hundreds of



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Litang Horse Festival, Sichuan, 2005



people from across the region had gathered to burn their skins at a well-organised event in February 2006. As a result, prices for whole skins has declined locally and the market has physically shifted to towns like Kanding and Batang in Sichuan where previously skins were too expensive for local buyers.

EIA and WPSI spoke to a number of skin wearers in August 2005 and non-skin wearers in August 2006, including one individual in Litang who had burned his tiger skin earlier that year. These conversations revealed a much greater awareness among festival participants regarding the source of the skins and the impact on wild populations.

FAR FEWER PEOPLE WERE WEARING SKIN CHUPAS AT THE FESTIVALS IN 2006, COMPARED TO 2005. MOST WORE THEIR FINEST SILKS AND BROCADE.

LEFT and BELOW:

This skin wearer in Litang 2005 burned his skin in 2006.



A number of skin wearers and former skin wearers also reported that they had been encouraged to wear skins at the behest of local officials who, directed by their superiors, are keen to promote an image of Tibetans prospering, economically and culturally.

At the Litang Festival in 2006, the EIA and WPSI team also documented a ceremonial tent constructed from approximately 100 tiger skins. Although it is claimed to be antique, it is apparent that many of the skins are relatively new. This implies that the replacement skins have been procured whilst the tent was in the possession of the local Chinese authorities. The tent was being shown at the festival by the Litang Cultural Tourism Board.

The Koluk and Sangshung festivals were not held at the time of the EIA and WPSI visit in 2006, but the team did return to the Nagchu Festival and documented five people wearing tiger skin chupas 33 wearing leopard skin chupas and dozens wearing otter skin chupas – roughly fifty per cent less than a year earlier.

While awareness campaigns have had an impact on one particular group of consumers, the skin trade is clearly dynamic. Tigers and leopards continue to be poached in India and other range states. Seizures of skins continue to be made in India and Nepal, and fresh skins are still available in the market place.

A number of factors could be at play, independently or combined, including an increase in the number of Chinese or foreign



LEFT:
Among the wearers of skins at the Litang festival in 2006 were officials working for local government departments.

BELOW:
Tiger skin tent at Litang Horse Festival, 2006





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buyers, a delay in communicating the collapse of the Khampa market to dealers and poachers, and a criminal network with too much invested to let the trade go.

For a criminal, there is little incentive to get out of the trade or switch to another form of crime. Enforcement efforts at a domestic and regional level are patchy and uncoordinated. Seizures are isolated and rarely followed up with cross reference, analysis or investigation. Border officials can often be persuaded to look the other way when illegal consignments go through. The judicial process in India is slow and it is a widely held view that with cases pending in the courts for up to 15 years, it offers little deterrent to wildlife criminals. Those involved are free to re-offend whilst out on bail. A combination of these factors means the key criminal figures operate with little fear of being caught, and are able to smuggle enough skins successfully to compensate for the consignments that are seized.

Putting an end to this trade will require more effort than the current practice of confiscating skins en route to, or in the market place. More sophisticated and intelligence-led operations are essential. This will only happen if the political will exists to invest in a professional enforcement response.

LEFT:
Litang Horse Festival, 2006

AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

There have been a number of awareness initiatives undertaken by NGOs and government administrations targeting the consumers of tiger and other endangered Asian big cat skins across the Tibetan Plateau.

These initiatives illustrate the impact of the market on wild tigers and other endangered species, and often incorporate Buddhist teachings which highlight respect and reverence for all life forms. Information has been distributed across the region through posters and leaflets, awareness films, appeals by religious leaders and by direct outreach to consumers at festivals.⁽¹⁶⁾ Many skin dealers originate within Tibetan exile communities in India and Nepal, and these have also been targeted by NGO campaigns.

In January 2006 there was a significant outreach effort by NGOs at the Kalachakra Buddhist festival held in south India. The event attracted over 100,000 Tibetan Buddhists from around the world including many from Tibet itself. A number of international and Tibetan NGOs hosted stalls and information tents where awareness materials were distributed. During the festival, the Dalai Lama made a speech that called upon Tibetans to “neither use, sell or buy wild animals, their products or derivatives”.⁽¹⁷⁾

These awareness campaigns have had a positive effect across the Tibetan Plateau and amongst Tibetan

communities in India and Nepal. Large groups of people voluntarily burned their skin-decorated costumes on huge bonfires. The awareness has also resulted in fewer people wearing skin decorated costumes at Tibetan horse festivals in 2006, compared to 2005, and a decline in the open display and availability of skins in markets.⁽¹⁸⁾



© Kangmusang Meiduo

THE HISTORICAL USE OF SKINS

The historical use of skins in inner Asia can be traced through religious and cultural practices over the centuries.

- The Chinese god of wealth, Cai Shen Ye, traditionally rides on the back of a tiger: other deities are seen sitting on skins or wearing them.
- Traditional wealthy marriage rituals in Tibet required the bride to step down off her horse onto a tiger skin.⁽¹⁹⁾
- Between the 2nd and 9th centuries, the Yarlung Kings presented victorious war commanders with patches or strips of skin to adorn their chupas. The tiger carried the greatest merit, followed by leopard, but there are no records of this practice being extended beyond the political and military elite during this time.
- In the 1980's reports started filtering out of China that some Khampa Tibetans were incorporating whole leopard and otter skins into their chupas.⁽²⁰⁾ Photographs from Baldizzones' "Tibet, On The Paths of The Gentleman Brigand" show Khampa men in their festival attire decorated with whole tiger and leopard skins.



ABOVE:

EIA and WPSI observed fake skins whilst travelling across the region, but most of these were very obviously painted dog and cow skin or printed fabric.

CASHING IN ON CATERPILLARS

Wildlife products, including tiger bone and skins, were once bartered for shahtoosh (the under fleece of the Tibetan antelope) and other items at the borders between India, Nepal and Tibet. Today, a healthy cash economy is also involved at all stages of the wildlife trade.

Some of this cash comes from direct investment in the region. According to the Chinese media, the TAR has been the recipient of large amounts of both domestic and foreign investment in a variety of sectors, including mining, manufacturing, construction and tourism. But perhaps the largest and fastest-growing source of cash on the Tibetan plateau today is the harvesting of a caterpillar fungus.

Every year between April and July, a curious event takes place. Children are given special holidays and thousands of Tibetan nomads and farmers, as well as some city dwellers, set out on foot, or on horseback, to search for the highly coveted yasa gombe (*Cordyceps sinensis*), known as *dongchong xiacao* in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). In some areas, hordes of temporary pickers from outside the region invade the grasslands resulting in violent confrontation with locals.

Yasa gombe, 'summer-grass winter-worm', is the result of a parasitic fungus which feeds on ghost moth larvae lying dormant in the alpine soil. After infecting the larvae, the fungus steers the mummified caterpillars to the surface where it is then able to spread its spores. The yasa gombe harvest provides large numbers of Tibetan nomads with as much as half of their annual cash income.

The medicinal use of *Cordyceps sinensis* as a strengthening tonic has been documented for over 500 years, and the collection and trade of caterpillar fungus from Tibet to China – often in exchange for tea or other luxury goods

- has been going on for centuries. But the demand and the amounts of money involved have risen dramatically in recent years.

A decade ago a kilo of yasa gombe fetched 3,000 Yuan (~US \$370); today a kilo can sell for anywhere between 20,000 to 50,000 Yuan (US\$2,500 – US\$6,000). One trader in Litang claimed to have a stock of 100 kg valued at approximately US\$377,000. Increasing numbers of people are being attracted to the harvest every year, and it is now one of the most important sources of revenue on the entire Tibetan plateau.^(21,22)



TRANSNATIONAL ORGANISED CRIME

“THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY is “strongly convinced”

that the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime will constitute an effective tool and the necessary legal framework for international cooperation in combating, *inter alia*, such criminal activities as... illicit trafficking in endangered species of wild flora and fauna... and the growing links between transnational organised crime and terrorist crimes”.⁽²³⁾

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime states that: an **ORGANISED CRIMINAL GROUP** is “a structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences established in accordance with this Convention, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit”.

SERIOUS CRIME is “conduct constituting an offence punishable by a maximum deprivation of liberty of at least four years or a more serious penalty”.⁽²⁴⁾

To date, the response to the illegal trade in tiger and leopard skins has been mostly restricted to chance seizures, awareness campaigns and the prosecution of poachers and couriers. But it is the transnational organised criminal networks that have allowed the trade to persist and flourish. The key individuals who control the trade from urban and cross border areas are largely unaffected by existing enforcement effort.

If regional governments are to combat the illegal skin trade, they must acknowledge the existence and role of such networks and direct their enforcement teams to adopt an intelligence-led, pro-active response. Tackling organised crime is a priority for all governments in the region, and the key Parties to CITES are also Parties to the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime (CTOC).



It is common knowledge that those in control of organised criminal networks are attracted to wildlife crime because it offers high profit with little risk of detection and prosecution. A poacher in India could be paid US\$1,500 for one tiger skin, whilst a trader in China may offer the same skin for as much as US\$16,000 - a profit margin of over 900 per cent. This profit greatly outweighs the potential financial penalties upon prosecution. Fines in India can be as little as US\$440 and even the maximum fine of US\$1,420 in Nepal is less than the value of a single skin.

WITH PROFIT MARGINS OF OVER 900 PER CENT, THE ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE ATTRACTS SERIOUS CRIMINALS

The CITES Secretariat, concerned governments and NGOs have urged India, Nepal and China to work more closely together to track, target and break the criminal networks that control the trade. Analysis of how some of these networks have operated in the past provides an insight into the types of valuable historical, actionable and developmental intelligence that governments should be sharing.

The case study on page 16-17 offers an example of a transnational organised criminal group that was engaged in the poaching and trafficking of tiger, leopard and otters skins over a long period of time, with links to a number of key skin cases, all of which show an agonisingly slow rate of prosecution. Those convicted and those on trial have

connections in India, Nepal and China. Other members of the network are out on bail, their whereabouts unknown. With numerous examples of criminals committing offences whilst on bail, it is essential that authorities track and monitor them.

There is a wealth of existing data already available in police and court records which could be analysed to begin the process of shutting down these criminal networks. At the time of writing however, there is neither a national nor a regional agency dedicated to collating, analysing and acting upon information and investigating known and suspected offenders. NGOs try to fill this gap, but without the enforcement capacity there is only so much that can be done.

INDICATORS

The CITES Secretariat has identified key indicators of organised crime⁽²⁵⁾ to facilitate more targeted and specialised enforcement responses against wildlife crime. Some of these indicators were illustrated in an enforcement training film on the Asian big cat skin trade distributed by the CITES Secretariat to the CITES Management Authorities of India, Nepal and China in May 2006. The following are prevalent in the skin trade:

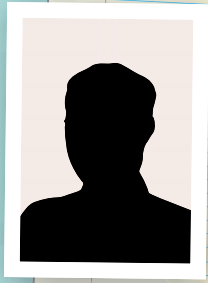
- Organised structure to poaching: use of gangs, supply of vehicles, weapons and ammunition
- Exploitation of local communities
- Provision of high quality lawyers
- Violence towards enforcement personnel
- Corruption of law enforcement personnel
- Exploitation of civil unrest
- “Inviolability” displayed by those involved
- Sophistication of smuggling techniques and routes
- Use of “mules” and couriers
- Huge profits

FAR LEFT

Tigress in a trap, central India.

Postmortem being conducted on a tiger in India.

*** AMEEN AHMED**
 Lucknow, India
 Co -accused with Tamang in ongoing 2003 case.
 ○ Case still open.



*** TSERING ATUP TAMANG**
 Humla, Nepal
 Chand claims to have supplied him with 300 tiger skins, 2000 leopard skins and 3000 otter skins.
 Main accused in cases in Kanpur and Lucknow in 2001 and 2003 (see left)
 ● Case pending.
 TAMANG'S WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN.

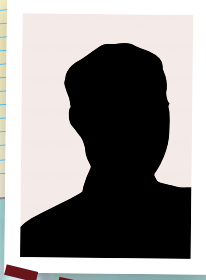


*** SARFARAZ AHMED**
 Son of Shabbir Hasan Qureshi
 ● Accused in Ghaziabad 1999 case. Booked consignment for delivery to Moti Lal.



Kanpur and Lucknow, India 2001
 24 Leopard Skins.
 1 Tiger Skins.
 10 Tigers claws.
 Firearm.
 US\$10500

*** MOTI LAL**
 Brother-in-law of Sansar Chand's sister
 ● Accused in Ghaziabad 1999 case and two other cases in 1989 and 1996 involving recovery of tiger, leopard and otter skins.
 ● Case pending.



*** JASSU**
 Poacher and supplier of skins to Chand and Tamang
 ● Co-accused with wife and son of Sansar Chand in 2004 case involving recovery of leopard paws and claws.



co-accused

Sarfaraz associated with Moti Lal via Ghaziabad case

SUPPLIED 300 TIGER SKINS - 2000 LEOPARD SKINS & 3000 OTTER SKINS

2nd Cousins

connected as former associate and non-blood relative

supplied skins

* WPSI Wildlife Crime Database

CASE STUDY

co-accused

* **GOPAL GURING**
Humla, Nepal

Co-accused with Tamang in 2001 case.



associates



© Patanjali Forest Dept.

Khaga, India 2000

4 Tiger Skins
70 Leopard Skins
221 Otter Skins
18,080 Leopard Claws
132 Tiger Claws
175kg Tiger Bones

* **SANSAR CHAND**

Delhi, India

One of India's most notorious tiger and leopard skin dealers.

Accused or co-accused in 20 wildlife cases since 1974.

Family members and associates involved in a further 37 cases.

Currently held in custody, wanted by several agencies for cases pending in Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Haryana. (25a)



* **KONCHOK LAMA**

Kathmandu, Nepal

Number called six times from Manjoor's mobile during time of Khaga seizure.



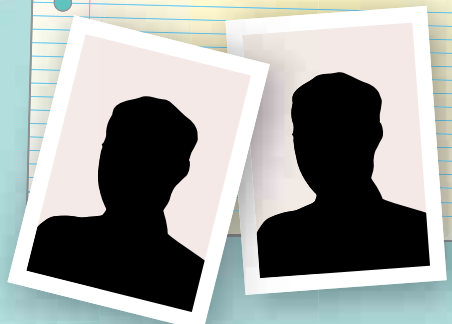
associates

* **SHABBIR & MANJOOR HASAN QURESHI**

Allahabad & Delhi, India

Uncles of Ameen Ahmed.

Main accused in Khaga 2000 case. All accused out on bail. Case pending before the designated CBI court in Lucknow.



Ghaziabad, India 1999

3 Tigers Skins
50 Leopard Skins
5 Otter Skins

Family



© WPSI

HOW THE TRADE OPERATES

BELOW:

Keeping it in the family. Ashok Sharma, the son of known wildlife trader Ratiram Sharma, was arrested with one tiger skin and three leopard skins on 25 July 2006. (26a) Ratiram had been arrested on 14 July with four leopard skins, 11kg of tiger bones and other wildlife parts, and is also one of the main accused in a 1995 rhino horn case that is still going through the courts. The family case is a classic example of organised criminals running operations with family members over a long period of time and reoffending.

Detailed statistics on the skin trade in India have been maintained through WPSI's Database on Wildlife Crime. A glance at the figures reveals a staggering trade. As with other contraband, these statistics probably represent a fraction of the actual trade.

IN THE TWO YEARS SINCE THE RELEASE OF "THE TIGER SKIN TRAIL", THERE HAVE BEEN 230 SEIZURES OF TIGER, LEOPARD AND OTTER SKINS IN INDIA



© Bhattacharya / WPSI

From the poacher to the buyer there is a well-oiled system that is nonetheless penetrable given the vast amount of information that exists on the dynamics of the business.

While some poaching may be opportunistic or in response to human-animal conflict, there are also well-organised gangs of professional poachers, who move from place to place, setting up camps in vulnerable areas. In 2006, evidence was gathered of established poaching gangs from India expanding their activities into Nepal and engaging directly with buyers.

Gangs of poachers will not think twice about using violence against unarmed, under-resourced forest guards. Numerous people have been killed or injured in the line of duty.

There is an established network of tanning centres in India, to which skins that are rough-cured in the field can be sent by dealers to be stretched and treated. Buyers or their representatives either choose their skins from the main dealers or from tanneries, marking them to ensure that their selected skins are delivered. The main dealers and buyers avoid taking risks and rarely handle the skins themselves.

The Trade in Numbers, India, 1994 to 31st August 2006⁽²⁶⁾

Cases in India where the skins of tiger, leopard or otter have been seized: **978**

Individual animals represented by these cases and additional poaching reports: **783 tigers**
2766 leopards
777 otters

People accused in connection with these cases: **1898**

People confirmed as having been convicted and sentenced in association with these cases: **30**

Individuals that have been caught re-offending: **49**

Wildlife seizures involving recovery of firearms: **95**

Seizures involving recovery of cash: **13 totalling INR 1,347,650 (~US\$29,370)**

SARISKA TIGER SLAUGHTER

In January 2005, news of the elimination of every tiger in Sariska Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan, India, flashed across the world. The immediate response of government officials at the State and Central level was denial and suggestions that the tigers had simply remained in the hills after the monsoon.

Ultimately, the State Empowered Committee (SEC), constituted by the Chief Minister in February 2005, confirmed that the tigers had been poached out of existence as a result of negligence. After examining reports from the Forest Department, Wildlife Institute of India, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and NGOs, the SEC reported a depressing series of events.

In May 2004, the Field Director (FD), of Sariska reported a reduced census figure of 16 to 18 tigers, compared to 26 in 2003 (though it is now believed that both these figures were unrealistic), and called for urgent assistance. The Chief Wildlife Warden of the State ignored his plea and downplayed the situation in a report to Project Tiger. The SEC found no record of a response from the Central authorities despite the reported decline in tiger numbers.

The situation continued to deteriorate. In a letter dated 27 August 2004, a local man provided the FD with details of an active gang of nine poachers operating in Sariska. Received on 2 September 2004, the letter sat for 33 days before being dispatched to the specific Range Forest Office on the 15 October 2004. The Officer did not respond until 27 February 2005.

In November 2004, the Wildlife Institute of India held a field training programme in Sariska and reported the absence of tiger pugmarks. But it was not until a private individual reported that all the tigers had “vanished” in a letter dated 16 December 2004, that the news started to spread.

The uproar that followed resulted in the police and the CBI being drafted in to detect and arrest the poachers. But it was too late for the tigers. The poignant tragedy of Sariska is that four of the poachers responsible for the recent killing spree were also involved in a tiger poaching case in 1988.⁽²⁷⁾



© Robin Hamilton

POACHING: ORGANISED AND OPPORTUNISTIC

In India, some members of traditional hunting communities that originate from Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Haryana have become full-time professional tiger and leopard poachers. Moving around the country in family groups and setting up camp, they are renowned for intensive poaching using steel jaw traps, poisoning, electrocution and firearms.

They source intelligence from local communities about protected area management status, as well as tiger and leopard activity. In contrast to their impoverished appearance, members of these communities often turn up at court with mobile phones and large sums of cash in order to obtain bail. Once released on bail they seldom appear for subsequent trial and being nomadic, are difficult to locate.

There are over 260 individuals from around Katni in Madhya Pradesh, central India, who

are known or suspected poachers, originating from just 13 villages. Of these, 142 individuals have been arrested as far afield as Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chattisgarh, Gujarat, Uttaranchal and Haryana, as well as in their home state of Madhya Pradesh. A similar nexus of more than 100 poachers from hunting communities of Rajasthan and Haryana is in operation.⁽²⁸⁾

Even opportunistic forest-based tiger poachers are encouraged and facilitated by the networks established between these communities and major traders like Sansar Chand. Though opportunistic poachers often set up live electric wire traps to kill deer and wild boar they end up killing big cats. There have been many cases of poachers poisoning kills of tigers and leopards in retaliation for cattle killed, but their skins and bones still end up in the trade, as illustrated by the Confessions of a Tiger Poacher box below.

CONFESSIONS OF A TIGER POACHER



On 4 March 2005, 35-year-old tiger poacher Rampratap Meena confessed to the Deputy Field Director of Sariska Tiger Reserve, how he had trapped and killed a tiger in the dead of night, and later sold the skin and bones to traders.

Hearing that a neighbour had lost a buffalo to a tiger, Rampratap and a friend, Loharya Meena, went to see the kill. They found the carcass next to a waterhole with fresh tiger pugmarks. Back in the village, Rampratap bought an iron spring trap for INR 200 (~US\$4.35), and armed with the trap, Rampratap's gun, a small axe and a three-cell torch, the two men returned to the kill. They placed branches around it, leaving only one path open – where the trap was laid. Loharya made a platform in a nearby chila tree, and the duo settled down to wait.

At 2 a.m., the tiger returned and was immediately trapped. The two men watched until its roars of pain stopped. They then switched on their torch and saw that the tiger's right foot was caught. Rampratap fired three times. The tiger fell back as the bullets shot through it.

At dawn they climbed down and removed the tiger from the trap. Loharya had to fetch some men from the village to lift it. They carried the tiger to a nearby ravine and there, while skinning it, they saw it was a female. The men hid the tiger's head in the forest, the flesh and skeleton in tall grass, and the skin - wrapped up in polythene - in a cornfield near the village.

The next day, Rampratap made a deal with Kalya Bawaria, a local wildlife dealer for INR 25,000 (~US\$540). Six days later Kalya and three men dressed in trousers and shirts came to Rampratap's house enquiring about the tiger's bones. Rampratap took the men to the place and they took away the bones in a cloth.⁽²⁹⁾

Once caught in a deadly trap, the animal can't escape. In this case, the tiger was shot, but there are other examples of tigers and leopards being clubbed to death or speared through the mouth to protect the skin. The telltale evidence of how the animals were killed was observed in some of the skins seen in the markets across the Tibetan Plateau.

TURNING COMMITMENT INTO ACTION

If the world wants to save wild tigers, then we have to move beyond the dialogue, accept that organised criminal networks currently have the upper hand and immediately implement more effective enforcement measures. This in no way detracts from the commendable efforts of those in government who have made significant seizures over the past decade.

EIA and WPSI acknowledge that there has been recent activity, particularly by India and China, in recognition of the ongoing trade in tiger and leopard skins. We are aware that the Prime Minister of India instructed the country's overseas missions in Nepal and China to gather intelligence on the trade. The Prime Minister also called for the creation of a multi-agency enforcement unit to be expedited,⁽³⁰⁾ ordered an enquiry into the disappearance of tigers in Sariska Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan and set up a committee to review, *inter alia*, domestic enforcement efforts.

However, in a report to the President of India in August 2006, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India cited a lack of focus, commitment and capacity at various levels of government as contributing factors to the tiger decline. The "inordinate delay" in creating specialised enforcement mechanisms, 12 years after they were first discussed, featured alongside inadequate patrolling, manpower and training as contributing factors. The CAG noted that as a result, "poaching and unnatural deaths of tigers outnumbered the natural deaths".^(30a)

The CITES Management Authority of China has recently engaged in consumer awareness campaigns and provided training on the big cat skin trade to police, customs and forest officers in TAR, Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan and Yunnan. Beijing also reports that directives were sent to provincial governments instructing them to enforce the law.⁽³¹⁾

India and China have also revived the 1995 Indo-Sino Protocol on tigers, while a 2005 bilateral agreement between India and China on security intelligence exchange provides a mechanism for exchanging wildlife crime intelligence.⁽³²⁾

Political upheaval in Nepal has resulted in posts along the border with TAR being largely unmanned. However, the authorities have continued to make seizures of skins



despite the limitations on resources as a result of other national priorities. In the dawn of a new Nepal it is hoped that enforcement efforts to combat the illegal skin trade will receive adequate political attention.

What is urgently required is straightforward and genuine commitment to turn stated intentions into effective action.

Foremost are commitments to establish specialised enforcement units and improve regional communication and cooperation. The former was a recommendation approved by the 11th Conference of the Parties to CITES in 2000.⁽³³⁾ At the same meeting the Parties approved the establishment of an ad hoc Tiger Enforcement Task Force, which drew up guidelines for specialised enforcement units at its first meeting in Delhi in 2001.⁽³⁴⁾

If these units are to be effective against transnational organised criminal networks, they must be dedicated and multi-agency, with adequate resources and authority to coordinate efforts with counterparts in the region. After 12 years of discussion, India is on the verge of establishing such a unit but at the time of writing it is still not in place. Implementation must be swift and Nepal and China should be encouraged to follow suit as a matter of urgency.

Despite the existence of formal channels of communication such as the World Customs Organisation and Regional Intelligence Liaison Officers, Interpol, CITES and bilateral agreements, these are rarely if ever used for cross-border enforcement operations against the skin traders.

CONCLUSIONS

- Investigations by EIA and WPSI indicate that tigers and other Asian big cats continue to be threatened by the international illegal trade for their skins.
- While the open use of tiger and leopard skins for Tibetan chupas appears to be in decline, traders are catering for an increasing demand for skins as home décor and prestigious gifts.
- Since 1994, under the UN Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), resolutions relating to the illegal trade in and conservation of tigers and other Asian big cats have recommended specific actions by Parties to improve enforcement against illegal trade
- By failing to implement these recommendations, Parties have left the trafficking of tiger and leopard skins in the trans-Himalayan region open to the control of transnational organised criminal networks, who are attracted by high profits and low risks.
- The UN has recognised the significant negative economic and social implications associated with transnational organised crime - including illicit trafficking of endangered flora and fauna - and provides a framework for strengthening regional cooperation to combat such crimes.
- Intelligence-led, pro-active responses by enforcement agencies in India, Nepal and China are urgently required to combat the illegal skin trade.
- More effective regional cooperation and intelligence sharing between enforcement agencies and their counterparts abroad is essential to combat transnational organised wildlife crime.
- The governments of India, Nepal and China are accountable to CITES and CTOC and should provide documented evidence of the following :
 - Implementation of new and effective anti-poaching measures in the field
 - Establishment of national databases of tiger and other big cat seizures and a regional information network
 - Arrest and prosecution of key dealers and disruption of their networks
 - Increased border security and vigilance in train stations, airports and mail services
 - Cross-border cooperation to combat trafficking, including identification and arrests of corrupt border officials, and establishment of dedicated Border Liaison Offices
 - Development of innovative enforcement tools such as DNA mapping
- Support from the highest political levels in India, Nepal and China is urgently required to ensure the immediate establishment of fulltime, well-resourced multi-agency wildlife enforcement units that have the capacity to:
 - Develop and manage a variety of intelligence sources
 - Coordinate and conduct intelligence-led, pro-active operations
 - Conduct regular and frequent high-profile patrols of known centres of illegal trade
 - Utilise legislation to seize assets and the proceeds of crime
 - Coordinate and drive regional cooperation and intelligence sharing between national agencies and their counterparts abroad

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Members of the CITES Standing Committee and other Parties should endorse the recommendations of SC54 Doc 25.1, SC 54 Doc 25.2, note the concerns in SC54 Doc 38, and provide technical and financial assistance to support the following:
 - A high-level summit between senior enforcement officials of relevant Parties, as a matter of priority
 - A series of time-bound enforcement measures to combat illegal trade in tigers and other Asian big cats
 - Targeted high-level political missions to relevant Parties
- A thorough survey should be conducted across the Tibetan Plateau to quantify the impact of seasonality on supply and demand, as well as the geographic spread of the trade in tiger and leopard skins.
- The international community should fulfil its commitments under CITES and CTOC to engage professional enforcement agencies in the fight against wildlife crime.
- The international community should support targeted consumer awareness campaigns.

TABLE OF SIGNIFICANT SEIZURES IN INDIA, NEPAL & CHINA

DATE	PLACE	SEIZED
8 Jul 1999	Ruili, China	5 tiger skins & pieces of leopard skin ⁽³⁵⁾
7 Aug 1999	Kunming /Ruilli, China	11 tiger skins & more than 100 pieces of leopard skin ⁽³⁶⁾
19 Dec 1999	Ghaziabad, India	3 tiger skins, 50 leopard skins & 5 otter skins ^(37,38,39)
12 Jan 2000	Khaga, India	4 tiger skins, 70 leopard skins, 221 otter skins, 18,080 leopard claws, 132 tiger claws, 175kg tiger & leopard bones ^(40,41,42,43,44)
6 May 2000	Haldwani, India	50 leopard skins ⁽⁴⁵⁾
21 May 2000	Haldwani, India	30 leopard skins ⁽⁴⁶⁾
21 Mar 2001	Nagpur, India	1 tiger skin, 5 tiger skeletons, 4 leopard skins ⁽⁴⁷⁾
27 Apr 2001	Kanpur & Lucknow, India	24 leopard skins, 1 tiger skin, 10 tiger claws & INR equiv. of ~US\$10,500 cash, pistol ^(48,49)
14 May 2001	Allahabad, India	2 tiger skins ⁽⁵⁰⁾
8 Aug 2001	Xiaguan, China	23 tiger skins, 33 leopard skins & 134 otter skins ⁽⁵¹⁾
5 Jan 2003	Lucknow, India	12 leopard skins & INR equiv. of US\$ 10,000 cash ^(52,53)
11 Feb 2003	Siliguri, India	20 leopard skins & 19 otter skins ^(54,55,56)
4 Apr 2003	Kathmandu, Nepal	109 leopard skins & 14 otter skins ^(57,58,59)
22 May 2003	Samalkha, India	7 leopard skins & 18 otter skins ⁽⁶⁰⁾
8 Oct 2003	Sangsang, TAR	31 tiger skins, 581 leopard skins, 778 otter skins, 2 lynx skins & 1 fake tiger skin ^(61,62)
20 Apr 2004	Kathmandu, Nepal	6 leopard skins, pieces of approximately 24 leopard & otter skins ⁽⁶³⁾
11 Jun 2004	Barota, India	15 leopard skins & 9 large steel traps ⁽⁶⁴⁾
24 Jun 2004	Katni & Shahdol, India	7 leopard skins ⁽⁶⁵⁾
26 Jun 2004	Chennai, India	2 tiger skins ⁽⁶⁶⁾
2 Jul 2004	Kanpur, India	456 leopard and tiger claws and INR equiv. of ~US\$13,000 cash ⁽⁶⁷⁾
6 Jul 2004	Chennai, India	2 tiger skins, 1 leopard skin & 84 tiger claws ⁽⁶⁸⁾
11 Jul 2004	Kathmandu, Nepal	3 tiger trophies, 11 otter skins & five sacks of tiger bones ⁽⁶⁹⁾
31 Jan 2005	Delhi, India	38 leopard skins, 1 snow leopard skin, 2 tiger skins, 42 otter skins, 3kg tiger claws, 14 tiger canines, 10 tiger jaw bones, 60kg tiger & leopard paws ⁽⁷⁰⁾
8 Mar 2005	Delhi, India	3 leopard skins & 4 otter skins ⁽⁷¹⁾
6 Apr 2005	Delhi, India	45 leopard skins & 14 otter skins ⁽⁷²⁾
Apr 2005	Tatopani, Nepal	2 tiger skins ⁽⁷³⁾
9 Jul 2005	Idukki, India	1 tiger skin, 4 tiger canines & 16 tiger claws ⁽⁷⁴⁾
8 Aug 2005	Hyderabad, India	2 tiger skins ⁽⁷⁵⁾
10 Aug 2005	Kathmandu, Nepal	1 tiger skin, 1 leopard skin, 103 pieces of bone ⁽⁷⁶⁾
2 Sep 2005	Rasuwa, Nepal	5 tiger skins, 36 leopard skins, 238 otter skins & 113kg tiger / leopard bones ⁽⁷⁷⁾
11 Sep 2005	Zhangmu, TAR	12 tiger skins, 60 leopard skins, 20 otter skins & 14kg tiger bone ⁽⁷⁸⁾
10 Oct 2005	Krishna Nagar, India	1 tiger skin & 3 leopard skins ⁽⁷⁹⁾
27 Oct 2005	Uttaranchal, India	5 leopard skins ⁽⁸⁰⁾
8 Dec 2005	Mahendranagar, Nepal	4 leopard skins ⁽⁸¹⁾
29 Dec 2005	Darchula, Nepal	7 leopard skins ⁽⁸²⁾
10 Jan 2006	Fatehpur, India	14 leopard skins & 1 otter skin ⁽⁸³⁾
3 Feb 2006	Delhi, India	34 leopard skins & 4 otter skins ⁽⁸⁴⁾
28 Apr 2006	Birgunj, Nepal	2 tiger skins & 3 leopard skins ⁽⁸⁵⁾
13 May 2006	Makwanpur, Nepal	1 tiger skin & 5kg tiger bones ⁽⁸⁶⁾
6 Jul 2006	Jalpaiguri, India	1 tiger skin & 15 tiger claws ⁽⁸⁷⁾
14 Jul 2006	Jalpaiguri, India	4 leopard skins, 1 tiger skeleton & rhino skins ⁽⁸⁸⁾
1 Aug 2006	Kanpur, India	4 leopard skins ⁽⁸⁹⁾
5 Aug 2006	Pilibhit, India	2 tiger skins & 1kg tiger bones ⁽⁹⁰⁾
23 Aug 2006	Khandwa, India	1 tiger skin & 1 leopard skin ⁽⁹¹⁾

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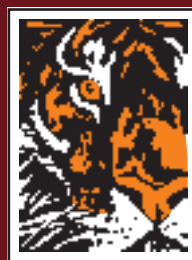
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The Wildlife Protection Society of India provides actionable intelligence and support to Indian enforcement authorities to combat the illegal wildlife trade and strengthen the implementation of wildlife laws.



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