

TRAFFIC

FACTSHEET

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TRADITIONAL MEDICINE IN TANZANIA

**RAPID ASSESSMENT OF WILDLIFE USED IN TRADITIONAL
MEDICINE IN THREE URBAN CENTERS IN TANZANIA:
TANGA, DAR ES SALAAM AND UNGUJA, ZANZIBAR.**

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INTRODUCTION

Traditional medicine (TM) is one of the oldest health care systems and is a major culture-bound method of healing in developing countries, particularly in Africa. TM involves the use of a wide range of flora and fauna products, the demand for which has continued to grow rapidly in recent years. The use of fauna products in TMs has received less attention than flora, yet the trade is extensive, not well understood or regulated. Many of the fauna species used in TM are protected, thus their harvest for TM has become a major conservation concern. In Tanzania, the scale and severity

of wildlife harvested and traded for TM is under-appreciated, unregulated, and not seen as a priority by law enforcement in Tanzania. This assessment provides an overview of the wildlife products used and species extracted for the TM trade. To identify the diversity of wildlife species in local TMs, the assessment was guided by the following questions (1) What wildlife species are sold in the TM shops in Dar es Salaam, Tanga and Unguja (2) What health values are attached to these species/wildlife products? Recommendations for improved regulation of the TM trade in Tanzania are provided.



most species used for TM trade are **protected**

METHODOLOGY

1



Local enumerators conducted surveys and interviews with traditional healers and TM shops located in the city centers of Tanga, Dar es salaam in Tanzania mainland, and Unguja.

2



Surveys took place from August to September 2021 in Tanga and Dar es Salaam, and in October to November 2021 in Unguja.

3



Total of 80 vendors were interviewed; 85% were men and 15% were women.

4



The age and education composition of vendors were as follows; age ranged between 18 to 60 years, in terms of education 82% had no formal education, 14% had attended primary school only, and 4% had attended secondary school.

RESULTS

38

species were revealed, over half were **terrestrial**

15

species listed on the IUCN Red List as **Critically Endangered, Endangered, or Vulnerable**

22

species listed on **CITES Appendix I, II, or III**

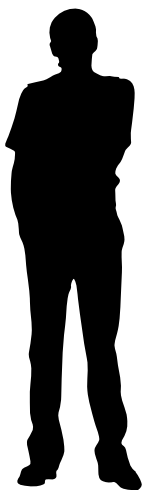


highest number of species was found in **Unguja (27)** followed by **Tanga (23)** and **Dar es Salaam (19)**.

SOURCING AND SALE

Wildlife products of protected species were highly concealed and **sold undercover to known customers**

The trade chain involves **hunters/harvesters, middlemen, shop vendors, traditional healers**, and both local and international final consumers/users. Interviews revealed that most of the TM products are supplied by **Hunters/Harvesters (95%, n=75)**, and from other **vendors (5%, n=4)**.



TM customer demographics

62%

patients
(n=49)

90%

Tanzanian
(n=72)

26%

traditional healers
(n=21)

6%

Kenyan
(n=5)

12%

general public
(n=10)

4%

Chinese & Arabs (n=3)

Wildlife for TM use was sourced from the rural areas of Pangani, Saadani, Arusha and Handeni for Tanga; Kilwa, Mahenge and Selous game reserve for Dar es Salaam; and for Unguja the products were sourced from Tanga, Mombasa and all over Unguja Island.

TABLE 1

Most recorded species and their treatment

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	LOCATION	NATIONAL PROTECTION STATUS	IUCN' STATUS	CITES' APPENDIX	PRODUCT/ DERIVATIVE	TREATMENTS/BELIEFS	% OF MENTION FROM VENDERS INTERVIEWED
Octopus	<i>Octopus vulgaris</i>	All	None	LC	Not currently listed	Carcasses	Male potency, Casting bad prayers	98
Shell	Species unknown	All	None		Not currently listed	Operculum	Removing kidney stones	78
Four-toed Hedgehog	<i>Atelerix ibiventris</i>	All	Protected	LC	Not currently listed	Skin	Love charms	73
African Civet	<i>Civettictis civetta</i>	All	Protected	LC	III	Skin	Used for making charms	71
African Lion	<i>Panthera leo</i>	All	Protected	VU	II	Claws	Defense against enemies	68
						Skin	Defense against enemies	68
						Fat/Oil	Treat paralyses, fortune in business, body massages and skin cure	68
Reunion Seahorse	<i>Hippocampus borboniensis</i>	Dar es Salaam	Protected	NE	II	Carcass	Cure infertility, baldness, asthma, and arthritis	52
Sea turtles	<i>Chelonia mydas</i> <i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i> <i>Caretta caretta</i> <i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>	All	Protected	EN	I	Fat/oil	Warding off evil spirits, skin diseases	62
Tigerfish	<i>Hydrocynus tanzaniae</i>	Dar es Salaam	None	LC	Not currently listed	Skin	Not specified	57
Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	All	Protected	LC	I	Fat/oil	Hernias, sore muscles, asthma, earache/ male potency, skin nourishing	56
						Ambergris	Heart and brain ailments, attraction for business	56
Fraser's Eagle-owl	<i>Bubo poensis</i>	Tanga	Protected	LC	II	Dried carcasses	Not specified	55
Cuttlefish	<i>Sepia sp</i>	Unguja	None	DD	Not currently listed	Cuttlebone	Treating sore skin, burnt for smoke to expel demons	53
African Elephant	<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	Dar es Salaam and Tanga	Protected	EN	I	Dung	Body energizer Male potency, cure for polio, and warding off evil spirits	51
Crested Porcupine	<i>Hystrix cristata</i>	All	Protected	LC	Not currently listed	Spines	Casting bad luck prayers, nasal bleeding	51
						Fat	Treat painful breast	
Temminck's Pangolin	<i>Smutsia temminckii</i>	All	Protected	VU	I	Scales	Mental illness, and good luck charms	48
						Oil	Good fortune	
Shortfin Devil Ray	<i>Mobula kuhlii</i>	Unguja	Protected	EN	II	Carcass	Not specified	44
African Savannah Hare	<i>Lepus microtis</i>	All	Protected	LC	Not currently listed	Bones	Cure wounds	44
White – backed Vultures	<i>Gyps africanus</i>	Dar es Salaam	Protected	CR	II	Dried carcasses	Not specified	42

Giant Manta Ray	<i>Mobula birostris</i>	Unguja	Protected	EN	II	Carcass	Not specified	40
Pancake Tortoise	<i>Malacochersus tornieri</i>	Tanga and Unguja	Protected	CR	I	Ashes	Improves eyesight for babies	39
Scalloped Hammerhead Shark	<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>	Unguja and Tanga	Protected	CR	II	Oil	Fidelity/fertility	37
Kirk's Dik dik	<i>Madoqua kirkii</i>	Dar es Salaam	Protected	LC	Not currently listed	Skin	Increases attractions in someone	37
Stingray	<i>Dasyatis sp</i>	Unguja	Protected	NT	II	Carcass	Not specified	33
Abalone	<i>Haliotis spp</i>	Tanga and Unguja	None	LC	Not currently listed	Shells/ Bowel	Good scent	32
Whale Shark	<i>Rhincodon typus</i>	Unguja	Protected	EN	II	Fat/oil	Warding off evil spirits	31
Parrotfish	Species not identified	Unguja and Tanga	Protected	VU		Liver fat/oil	Warding off evil spirits	27
African Rock Hyrax	<i>Procavia acapensis</i>	Tanga and Dar es Salaam	Protected	LC	Not currently listed	Fecal pellets	Cure convulsions	26
Common Ostrich	<i>Struthio camelus</i>	Tanga and Dar es Salaam	Protected	LC	I	Fat/oil	Knees pains	26
Terrestrial Snails	Species not identified	Unguja	None			Ashes from shells	Pain killers	25
Honey Badger	<i>Mellivora capensis</i>	Tanga and Unguja	Protected	LC	III	Fat/oil	Acquire wealth or good fortune	24
Red Knob Sea Star	<i>Protoreaster linckii</i>	Unguja	None	NE	Not currently listed	Fat/oil	Business and love charms	24
						Carcass	Warding off evil spirits	
Spotted Hyena	<i>Crocuta crocuta</i>	Dar es Salaam	Protected	LC	Not currently listed	Teeth	Not specified	23
Blackspotted Torpedo Ray	<i>Torpedo fuscomaculata</i>	Unguja	Protected	DD	Not currently listed	Fat/oil	Warding off evil spirits	23
African Rock Python	<i>Python sebae</i>	Tanga Unguja	Protected	LC	II	Fat/oil	Pain killer, strength, body massages	22
						Skin	Expels demons	
Aardvark	<i>Orycteropus Afer</i>	Tanga and Unguja	Protected	LC	Not currently listed	Claws/skin	Protects against any attack by enemy	22
Camouflage Grouper	<i>Epinephelus polyphkadion</i>	Tanga and Unguja	Minimum size set	VU	Not currently listed	Liver oil	Treatment of asthma improves appetite	21
						Skull	Migraine	
Nile Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus niloticus</i>	Dar es Salaam	Protected	LC	II	Oil	Headache/migraine	14
						Bile	Poison, Protect against enemies	
Nile Monitor	<i>Varanus niloticus</i>	Dar es Salaam	Protected	LC	Not currently listed	Fat/oil	Expel evil demons, cure chronic asthma and ear ailments	18
Snake	Species not identified	Dar es Salaam	Protected		Not currently listed	Fat/oil	Expels evil demons, body massages, Protect against dark magic	7

¹IUCN= The International Union for Conservation of Nature. LC = Least-concern; VU = Vulnerable; NE = Not Evaluated; EN = Endangered; DD = Data Deficient; CR = Critically Endangered= Near Threatened

²CITES = Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

CONCLUSIONS

Diversity of wildlife products

A wide range of wildlife derived products were identified as being part of the TM trade in Tanzania.

Illegal harvest of protected species

Many of the wildlife products are from protected species, indicating that illegal harvesting is taking place.

Rampant concealment of products by vendors

The concealment of many wildlife products by the vendors indicates awareness of the illegal nature of the products being sold.

TM trade regulation is low or absent

Regulation of wildlife products in the TM trade is low or absent and not a priority for law enforcement.



RECOMMENDATIONS

ALERT WILDLIFE AUTHORITIES TO TM TRADE

Tanzania Wildlife Authority (TAWA) needs to be alerted to the high number of protected species being sold for the TM trade.

CARRY OUT REGULAR MONITORING

Tanzania Wildlife Authority (TAWA), and the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries are encouraged to carry out regular monitoring of the TM trading shops.

ALERT TMDA TO IMPACT OF UNSUSTAINABLE TRADE

The Tanzania Medicines and Medical Devices Authority (TMDA) is to be made aware of protected species being traded for TM and the potential impact of unsustainable levels of harvesting of these species

ENGAGE WITH TM VENDORS

Tanzania Wildlife Authority and the Tanzania Medicines and Medical Devices Authority are encouraged to collaborate and engage with TM vendors to discuss sustainable and legal ways of obtaining wildlife products

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TRAFFIC is a leading non-governmental organisation working globally on trade in wild animals and plants in the context of both biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

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