

A photograph of two young lion cubs sitting side-by-side in a wire mesh cage. The cubs have thick, golden-brown fur with dark spots and stripes. They are looking towards the camera with a somber expression. The cage is made of metal wire, and the background is a plain, light-colored wall.

**TRAFFIC**<sup>®</sup>

# **ACTION ON TRADE IN WILD SPECIES**

Help change trade chains for the better, across  
oceans, forests and continents

# TRADE IN WILD SPECIES REACHES ALL CORNERS OF THE GLOBE ...

The extent and complexity of this trade are staggering: over 39,000 wild animal and plant species can be traded legally, but only if certain globally agreed conditions are met. The trade benefits billions of people. It supplies food, clothing, pets, medicine, beauty products, furnishings, cultural benefits, and vital income, especially for local communities.



Wildlife trafficking is one of the most profitable criminal activities worldwide, estimated to be **worth up to USD23 billion a year**.

This jumps to USD200 billion when illegal timber and fish are included. Almost every country in the world is involved in supply or demand. This is devastating some of the world's most charismatic creatures. For less well-known species, such as medicinal plants or marine invertebrates, the extent and impact of trade is barely understood.

Cover: Two Cheetah cubs rescued from the illegal wildlife trade and cared for by TRAFFIC partner the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) at their Somaliland facility. Credit: CCF [www.cheetah.org](http://www.cheetah.org)

Right: Between 60 and 90% of medicinal and aromatic plants in trade are wild-collected. Photo: TRAFFIC



# THE CRISIS FACING WILD PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Your support is vital to tackle this urgent and complex problem.



## Amphibians – pets, food

At least 2.4 million live amphibians such as frogs were imported to the UK between 2014 and 2018. Although technically legal, there are risks that this includes illegally harvested wild animals, threatening source populations.



## Medicinal and aromatic plants – pharmaceuticals, wellbeing

Around 3000 medicinal and aromatic plant species are traded internationally – a trade valued at USD3 billion annually. Of these traded plants, only one in five have had their conservation status assessed, but nearly half of these assessments found species threatened with extinction.



## Rhinos – status, health beliefs

Despite intensive efforts to protect rhinos in their habitats, threats will remain while there is still a demand for their horn. According to a recent survey of online advertising of rhino specimens in Viet Nam, 27% were for a new product – rhino glue – claimed to treat multiple ailments.



## Sharks – food

One-third of the world's shark and ray species are threatened with extinction. Annual reports of catch and trade are crucial for effective global regulation and protection. But TRAFFIC research into 'missing sharks' found that 51 of 74 shark-fishing countries had no relevant records for 2001–2019.



## Rosewood – furniture, ornaments

A third of global seizures of endangered wildlife products in 2014–2018 were rosewood – the largest share of any wildlife group. Despite this, rosewood trafficking is not widely known by the public.



# WHAT MAKES TRAFFIC DIFFERENT

In a complex and sometimes contentious field, TRAFFIC plays a unique role as a global specialist on trade in wild plants and animals.

We provide impartial evidence that drives positive action by governments, businesses and individuals. We develop, trial and implement innovative methods, both to end wildlife trafficking and to ensure that legal trade – from fish to timber – is at sustainable levels. Protecting habitat for animals and plants provides lasting benefits to local communities that depend on these resources for their livelihoods.

While many of our partners focus on protecting the habitat of charismatic animals, **TRAFFIC tackles the systems, structures, and drivers along wild species trade chains.** We act across continents: from source to destination, and on trade routes that span oceans and forests, vertebrates, invertebrates, and plants. TRAFFIC pioneers work on complex issues of consumer behaviour, the financing of trafficking syndicates, national, and international policy, laws and enforcement, and the unwitting involvement of e-commerce, shipping, and airline companies in wildlife supply.



“ The planet is in crisis. TRAFFIC has a key role in the global response, by scaling up expert evidence, influence, and solutions, to achieve a nature-positive future.”

Mark Halle, TRAFFIC Chair of Trustees

Shea nuts such as these, harvested near Chiana, Kassena-Nankana West District, Northern Ghana, are used in moisturisers and food around the world. Photo: Axel Fassio / CIFOR

# TRAFFIC'S MISSION, GOALS, AND PRIORITY AREAS

TO ENSURE TRADE IN WILD SPECIES IS LEGAL AND  
SUSTAINABLE FOR THE BENEFIT OF PLANET AND PEOPLE



## VIEWS FROM OUR PARTNERS

“Working with TRAFFIC has helped Cameroon Customs in our fight against wildlife trafficking. Training has raised performance of our staff, so we’ve rescaled our operations. Collaboration is stronger, with customs, police, judiciary and wildlife departments taking joint actions against perpetrators. TRAFFIC linked us to regional cooperation, to understand and curtail the complex chain of transboundary crime.”

**Commandant Menget Andang,**  
Head of Command and Transmission Division,  
Cameroon Customs Special Operations Unit

“Due to synergies in TRAFFIC’s and ANSAB’s work, our partnership has been very fruitful. TRAFFIC’s expertise in promoting responsible trade in wild plants perfectly complements our support to locally-led enterprises in Himalayan communities. This collaboration safeguards globally significant biodiversity, while generating sustainable incomes for hundreds of wild-plant harvesters in Nepal.”

**Bhishma Subedi, PhD, Executive Director,**  
ANSAB Nepal (Asia Network for Sustainable  
Agriculture and Bioresources)

A diver in a blue wetsuit and black mask is underwater, holding a large, orange, spiky sea cucumber. The background is a clear blue ocean with some small fish visible.

# IMPACT ON OUR FIVE PRIORITY AREAS

There are around 1717 known species of sea cucumber. The trade involves 70 countries, mainly to supply the dried seafood market in Asia.

**Your support can help extend these impacts to more communities, countries and species**

## ① Strengthening global policy frameworks

Global trade needs global solutions. TRAFFIC is a trusted, impartial advisor to international institutions that shape national policies and influence business practices. Since 2010, we have helped protect a huge diversity of wild plants and animals by providing 284 evidence-based assessments of proposals to amend global protections (under CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

We help countries turn ambitious global commitments into action, for example, helping Papua New Guinea manage the sea cucumber trade to support fishing communities without threatening species' survival.

## ② Improving effectiveness of national policies and regulations

Wild plants and animals can only be traded legally and sustainably if countries have suitable laws and systems in place. Since 2017, our expert engagement has strengthened the enforcement capacity or regulations of 66 countries and one regional bloc.

We not only help change national legislation but also support stronger implementation. For example, in the wake of sustained advocacy and training by TRAFFIC and partners, Thailand criminalised the sale of African elephant ivory. This led to major seizures and a huge fall in ivory openly for sale in Bangkok, from a high of 7,421 items in 2014 to just 283 products two years later – a 96% drop.

## ③ Empowering communities

Millions of producers, often in the world's most marginalised communities, benefit from legal trade in wild plants and animals. Fair and sustainable access to natural resources often means changing the systems to secure local rights. TRAFFIC supports various legal frameworks and certification schemes that apply rights-based approaches, such as helping establish the FairWild certification system for wild plants.

For example, perennial Jatamansi plants are harvested from high in the Himalayas for essential oil. We allied with harvester communities and their local partners to set up ground-breaking systems for ethical and sustainable Jatamansi trade. More than 2,000 harvesters, nearly half female, are now trained in sustainable harvesting. Renovated processing facilities and independent certification add value to their product, while local management plans and a vital change to national laws enable communities to trade at sustainable levels.

#### ④ Enabling responsible supply chains

Most legal trade in wild animals and plants takes place through companies. TRAFFIC prioritises timber, traditional medicine, seafood and wild plant sectors, directing them towards having only legal products in their supply chains.

Conversely, wildlife trafficking relies on the unwitting involvement of legitimate businesses, not least shipping companies, airlines, e-commerce platforms, and banks. During 2017-2023, TRAFFIC helped 112 companies take substantive steps to eliminate wildlife trafficking from their supply chains. For example, just weeks after attending TRAFFIC training, aviation staff in Kenya intercepted three bags of pangolin scales and Colombian staff seized 3,493 shark fins. Not only did we reach over 1,600 trainees, but at least nine airlines and three industry bodies took up our resources so thousands more employees will know how to intercept smuggled wildlife.

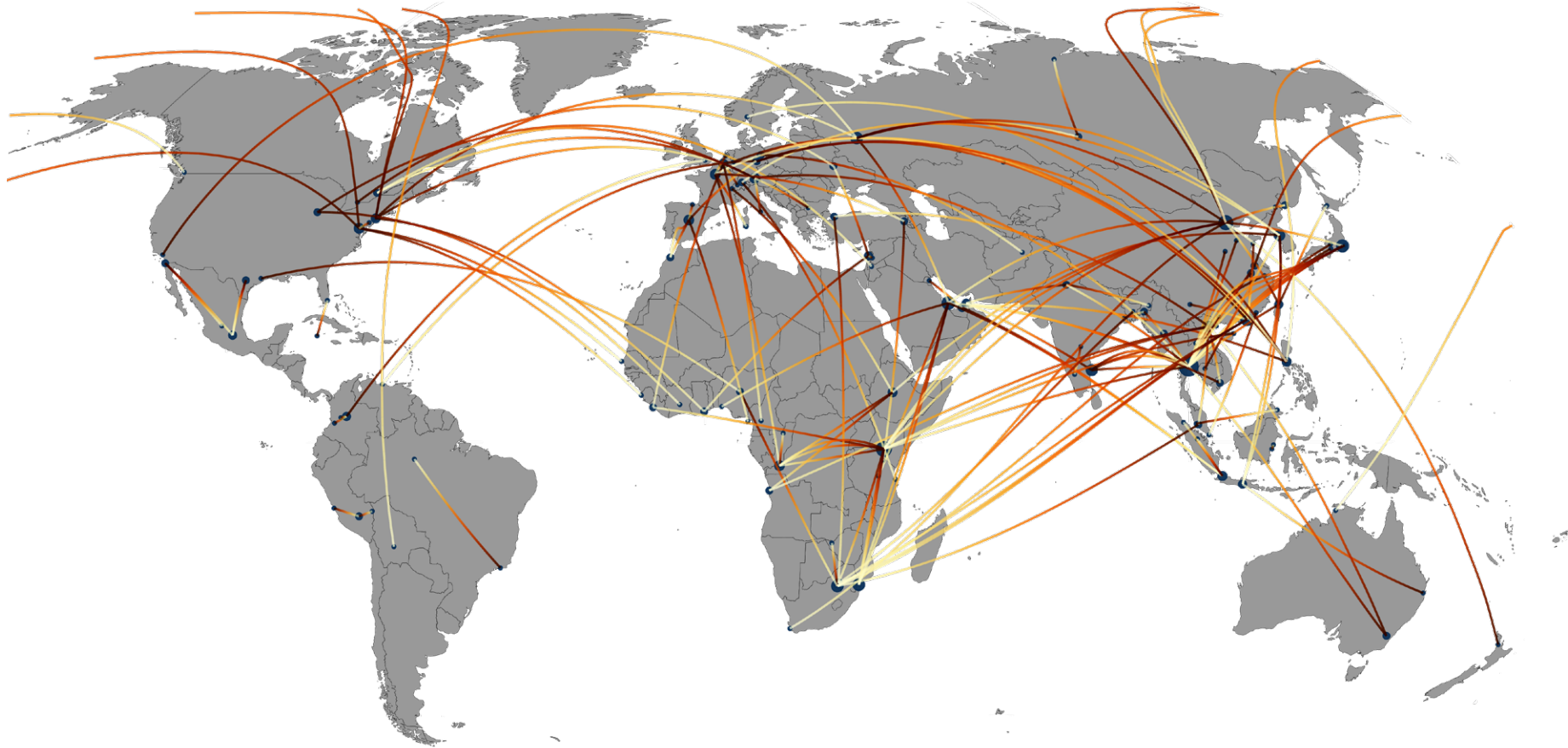
#### ⑤ Catalysing responsible consumption

Behaviour change is key to shift consumer demand away from illegal wildlife products, towards sustainable choices. Our campaigns use carefully designed and tested messaging, targeted to a consumer group's underlying beliefs and motivations. These have reduced consumer intentions to purchase wild meat, rhino horn, pangolin, and tiger products.

For example, in Viet Nam, forests are falling silent as they are emptied of songbirds. Much of the trade is legal but highly unsustainable. Building on bird keepers' motivations and beliefs, we ran a pilot campaign with positive messaging from renowned Buddhist institution partners. Promoting the belief that doing good things brings good fortune reduced the intention of the people we reached to continue keeping songbirds.

Our practical guidance to traditional Asian medicine companies has led many to commit to stop using threatened wildlife products like these Photo: Vincent Nijman / TRAFFIC





Trafficking routes involving the aviation sector, for mammals (excluding rhino, ivory and pangolin, which can be mapped separately) from [www.routesdashboard.org](http://www.routesdashboard.org)

## GLOBAL TRADE, GLOBAL INFLUENCE

Our expert staff in four continents are on the frontline across many of the world's most critical hotspots for trade in wild plants and animals.

This map shows only a snapshot of trade routes: mammals trafficked via the aviation industry. TRAFFIC's offices around the world target many more trade networks spanning wild animal and plant species. We influence more than 70 countries, including advocacy via regional blocs such as the EU. We cannot tackle these international trade chains alone; all our offices develop the influential partnerships that are essential to change global systems





# FIVE DECADES OF EXPERTISE

**1970s-1980s** TRAFFIC was established in 1976 to support the implementation of CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). In the 1970s and 1980s landmark trade studies (on seal skins, parrots and orchids) led directly to CITES regulations, and enforcement in the major markets of the US and Europe. **Our elephant ivory trade research informed an international trade ban.**

**1990s** In the 1990s, following TRAFFIC investigations, **police in London seized several hundred traditional medicines** claiming to contain endangered species, while police in India **seized a record-breaking 283kg of tiger bones**, with 8 tiger skins and 60 leopard skins.

**2000s** In the 2000s, building on research into the potential livelihood benefits from **fair and sustainable trade in wild plants**, we worked with partners to showcase sustainable harvesting of wild plants for traditional Chinese medicine.

**2010s** The 2010s saw an **expansion of online monitoring**: by the end of the decade our Wildlife Trade Information System had over **160,000 data records of trafficking incidents**, species, and persons of interest. Intelligence is shared with investigators and banks, to identify those who profit most from wildlife trafficking.

**2017-2022** As part of our strategy for 2017-2022, we set quantified targets and successfully **influenced governments, companies, individual consumers, and global processes to change trade in wild species for the better.**

**2023** In 2023 we launched a new 2030 Strategy. This builds on all our knowledge of what works and our influential partnerships. We are **scaling up action across species, sectors and continents, for the benefit of planet and people.**





TRAFFIC's Leadership Team from across Asia, Africa and Europe

## OUR ORGANISATION

The TRAFFIC 2030 Strategy provides the framework to scale up our impact. This will be led by the people who know the challenges best: **Over 90% of our regional and country-level directors are from the countries and regions they represent.** Our staff have the skills to address diverse drivers and solutions related to trade in wild species, with expertise not only in conservation, but also law, sustainable livelihoods, financial crime investigations, policy advocacy, social and behaviour change, law enforcement, and the private sector (including fisheries, forestry, wild plants, and retail sectors).

Our annual report and accounts are available on our website and via the UK Charity Commission. These show that TRAFFIC spends a significantly smaller proportion on fundraising than many others. **We focus on maximising our impact.**



### Annual Report, June 2023

98% of our revenue is dedicated to charitable purposes

- Raising funds (**£247K**)
- Charitable activities (**£12.7 million**)

**180+** members of staff across the globe

**50+** projects active worldwide

**60+** countries where we have impact

# THE IMPACT OF PHILANTHROPY CASE STUDY

Arcadia partners with TRAFFIC on the project Reducing Trade Threats to Africa's wild species and ecosystems (ReTTA). Its outcomes show the difference that major gifts can make, while illustrating the range of TRAFFIC actions.



**Disrupting international gangs:** our data and actionable intelligence have led to arrests, seizures, and helped identify criminal networks smuggling timber, ivory, shark fins, abalone, rhino horn, reptiles, parts from big cats, and even weapons.



**Tackling financial crime and corruption:** we train banks and financial investigators to apply 'follow the money' techniques, which is crucial to identify criminals that control trafficking syndicates. ReTTA provides banks with over 1,200 traffickers' names annually, and banks use our analysis to rewrite algorithms to detect suspicious activity.



**Increasing traceability** is vital to ensure legal supply chains are not exploited to 'launder' illicit products. Our Timber Tracker device makes it harder for illegal logs to be added to legitimate exports. This has led to reduced illegal timber shipments at checkpoints in Tanzania.



**Law enforcement officials** have new skills and access to information - from police and customs, to the judiciary and agencies for forests and fisheries. Innovative resources include 3D-printed replica shark fins to help officials identify fins cut from different species.



**Private sector partnerships:** ReTTA is scoping traditional medicine markets in East Africa (building on many years of TRAFFIC's practical guidance on sustainability for this sector in Asia). We also work with e-commerce and social media platforms to remove millions of posts for the illegal sale of wild species.



**Providing the evidence base for global action:** ReTTA has enabled the entry of thousands of records of wildlife seizures into TRAFFIC's Wildlife Trade Portal, which is now the largest open-access seizure database available online.

A scan of a Shortfin Mako dorsal fin. We developed 3D-printed fins to train enforcement agencies in shark fin identification. Photo: TRAFFIC



TRAFFIC supports wildlife forensics labs, including here in Zambia, to gather vital evidence for investigations (funded by Peoples Postcode Lottery). Photo: TRACE

# TAKE ACTION TODAY

Unsustainable trade in wild plants and animals threatens species and livelihoods. Your support can help protect endangered animals and plants, and help local communities to benefit from sustainable trade in wild species for years to come.

Please donate, or contact the Development Team to learn more about the transformative impact of your gift.

 [traffic.org/donate](https://traffic.org/donate)

 [philanthropy@traffic.org](mailto:philanthropy@traffic.org)

“Your generous support helps secure a brighter future for threatened species, and for communities dependent on biodiversity.”

Richard Scobey, TRAFFIC Executive Director

Poaching for wild meat is the main threat to Gorillas, which are now Critically Endangered.  
Photo: Naturepl.com / Andy Rouse / WWF

The impacts described here would have been impossible without many partners, including the Arcadia Fund, WWF, IUCN, People's Postcode Lottery, the US Agency for International Development, US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative, among others.

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