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SAWEN UPDATES

MoU BETWEEN SAWEN AND NTNC TO STRENGTHEN WILDLIFE CRIME CONTROL EFFORTS

08 November 2024

South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) for five years. Recognizing the long standing support from NTNC since the formal launching of SAWEN, this alliance will enhance institutional collaboration and strengthen enforcement efforts in combating illegal wildlife trade across the South Asian region.



TRAINING ON WILDLIFE CRIME INVESTIGATION TO PROSECUTION

16 December 2024

A training program on 'Wildlife Crime Investigation to Prosecution' took place from 08 to 14 December 2024 at Sauraha, Nepal. The event was organized by SAWEN in cooperation with the Government of Nepal and in collaboration with Zoological Society of London (ZSL) Nepal and Himalayan Nature (HN). The training was financially supported by the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund. It brought together 24 officials from Protected Areas and Division Forest Offices across Nepal. The training aimed to equip law enforcement personnel with the necessary knowledge and skills covering different aspects of wildlife crime investigation to prosecution. Participants received hands-on training on crime scene investigation and identifications of wildlife parts and products. It also fostered collaboration among various stakeholders to create a more unified approach to combat illegal wildlife trade.



AGREEMENTS BETWEEN HN, SAWEN AND ZSL

25 October 2024



SAWEN entered into a grant agreement with ZSL and HN on 08 October 2024. This partnership aims to capacitate law enforcement agencies of Nepal to combat illegal wildlife trade. Another agreement with ZSL and HN was signed on 22 October 2024 with the objective of carrying out research activities on illegal wildlife trade and networks across south Asian nations. The joint efforts will focus on building a robust network to address wildlife trafficking through improved national and transnational coordination.

Editorial Note: This bulletin contains wildlife crime related news compiled from various online sources. The news contents are not verified by SAWEN Secretariat and hence the Secretariat is not responsible for any inaccuracies. Please contribute to the bulletin by sharing wildlife crime news or any other reports pertaining to wildlife crime from your country.

TRANS-NATIONAL WILDLIFE CRIME

LIVE TURTLES SEIZED AT TRICHY AIRPORT

TAMIL NADU-INDIA, 30 December 2024: The Air Intelligence Unit (AIU) officials seized 2,447 live turtles from passenger's checked-in luggage at the Trichy Airport, Tamil Nadu. The turtles were brought by a passenger arriving from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Both the passenger and the receiver were arrested under the Customs Act, 1962.

CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT BUSTED SMUGGLING RACKET, SEIZED TIGER SKIN IN NAGAON

ASSAM-INDIA, 10 December 2024: The Customs officials seized a tiger skin and arrested two smugglers in the Nilbagan area of Nagaon district. According to officials, the tiger was killed over a year ago and the smugglers were attempting to sell its skin on the black market of Myanmar.

MIZORAM FOREST DEPARTMENT RESCUED EXOTIC DE BRAZZA'S MONKEYS FROM WILDLIFE TRAFFICKER

CHAMPHAI-INDIA, 08 December 2024: In a joint operation, the officials of Assam Rifles and Mizoram Forest Department rescued four exotic De Brazza's monkeys and arrested a Myanmar national in Champhai. The monkeys were from Zokhawthar in east Mizoram's Champhai district near the Indo-Myanmar border.

INDIAN CITIZEN DETAINED AT DHAKA AIRPORT FOR SMUGGLING BIRD CLAWS

DHAKA-BANGLADESH, 07 December 2024: In a joint operation, the officials of Customs and Wildlife Crime Control Unit (WCCU) arrested an Indian national attempting to smuggle four kilograms of bird claws into Bangladesh at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. During interrogation, the accused confessed to smuggling bird claws into Bangladesh, intending to re-export them to China for the production of various ornaments.

TURTLES SEIZED AT DHAKA AIRPORT

DHAKA-BANGLADESH, 03 December 2024: In a joint operation, the officials of Customs and WCCU seized a total of 305 turtles and arrested an accused at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. The accused was Bangladeshi national who arrived from China with 285 Red-eared slider turtles and 20 Snapping turtles. He is also identified as a member of international wildlife smugglers.

EXOTIC ANIMALS RESCUED IN SEPARATE CASES AT HYDERABAD AIRPORT



HYDERABAD-INDIA, 29 November 2024: The Customs officials intercepted two separate wildlife smuggling attempts uncovering a huge number of exotic animals illegally brought in from Bangkok at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, India. On 24 November, the officials seized 41 live exotic animals concealed in plastic containers from two passengers. The seized species included Asian Forest tortoises, Cuvier's Dwarf caimans, Rattlesnakes, Eastern Coral snakes, Ball pythons, and Shingleback skinks. Similarly, on 14 November a passenger arriving at the Airport from Bangkok was arrested with two Spotted cuscus and one Eastern cuscus.

TWO HELD AT HYDERABAD AIRPORT IN WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING CASE

TELANGANA-INDIA, 25 November 2024: Acting on suspicion, the Customs officials arrested two women passengers arriving from Bangkok with exotic snakes at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Hyderabad. The suspects had concealed the snakes in a basket.



RARE ANIMALS RESCUED AT KIA

BENGALURU-INDIA, 14 November 2024: The Customs officials rescued 40 rare and endangered animals and arrested two passengers, at the Kempegowda International Airport. The duo, arriving from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia had concealed the animals in trolley bags. One bag contained 24 animals, including Aldabra giant tortoises, Red-footed tortoises, Beaded lizards, Shingleback skinks, juvenile Rhinoceros iguanas, and an Albino bat. The second bag held 16 animals, including Lutino iguana, Agile gibbon, baby American alligators and baby Leopard tortoises.

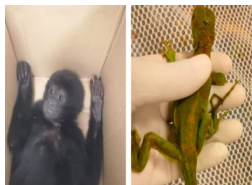
CUSTOMS OFFICIALS FOIL ATTEMPT TO SMUGGLE 12 EXOTIC TURTLES, TWO HELD

MUMBAI-INDIA, 06 November 2024: The Customs officials recovered 12 exotic turtles from two passengers arriving from Bangkok at the Mumbai International Airport. The turtles were hidden inside rectangular plastic boxes, which were concealed between the food packets kept inside the trolley bags carried by the passengers. The turtles were eight of Japanese Pond turtles and four of Scorpion Mud turtles.



FOUR HORNBILL BIRDS FOUND HIDDEN IN LUGGAGE RESCUED AT MUMBAI AIRPORT

MUMBAI-INDIA, 22 October 2024: The AIU officials rescued four endangered hornbill birds at the Mumbai airport from two passengers arriving from Thailand. The accused tried to smuggle the avian species into the country by hiding them in a plastic container kept inside a bag that was full of chocolates.



CHENNAI CUSTOMS SEIZED FOUR SIAMANG GIBBONS, 52 GREEN IGUANAS FROM MALAYSIAN PASSENGER AT AIRPORT

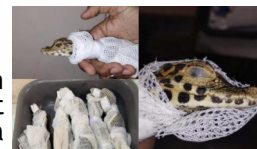
CHENNAI-INDIA, 16 October 2024: The Chennai Customs officials seized four Siamang Gibbon monkeys and 52 green iguanas from a Malaysian passenger who landed at Chennai Airport from Kuala Lumpur. The officials also apprehended a person who was waiting to receive the smuggled exotic wildlife species.

CUSTOMS SEIZED AROUND 5,000 RED-EARED SLIDER TURTLES AT CHENNAI AIRPORT

CHENNAI-INDIA, 01 October 2024: The Customs officials seized around 5,000 Red-eared slider turtles at the Chennai airport smuggled from Malaysia by two smugglers. Among them, 12 were found dead and 19 belonged to the Albino category. On further investigation, it was revealed that the duo arrived in India without any documentation from Malaysia.

FIVE BABY CROCODILES SEIZED AT AIRPORT

MUMBAI-INDIA, 28 September 2024: The Mumbai Customs arrested two passengers arriving from Bangkok, Thailand for allegedly attempting to smuggle five juveniles of Caiman crocodiles at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport. The baby crocodiles were hidden inside a box in the trolley bags.



SMUGGLER WITH 195 STAR TORTOISES ARRESTED ALONG INDO-BANGLADESH BORDER

KOLKATA-INDIA, 03 September 2024: The Border Security Force (BSF) arrested a smuggler and recovered 195 Indian star tortoises from his possession along the Indo-Bangladesh Border (IBB) in West Bengal's North 24-Parganas district. While two of the smugglers managed to escape, the third was caught along with the sacks. The tortoises were found in the sacks which were being trafficked to Bangladesh. The accused confessed that he had been involved in multiple smuggling activities along the border to make a living.

NATIONAL NEWS



BANGLADESH

HUGE AMOUNT OF TURTLES SEIZED FROM CHANDPUR DISTRICT

DHAKA, 30 December 2024: The WCCU officials seized three species of Mud turtles (approximately total weight 280 kg) from Doabhanga and Tamta areas of Chandpur district. The turtles included 170 kg of Sundhi turtles, 100 kg of Kari kite, and 10 kg of yellow turtle.

TURTLES SEIZED IN CHANDPUR

DHAKA, 10 December 2024: The WCCU officials seized 800kg of turtles in an overnight operation in Chandpur. The seized turtles included 500kg of Sundhi tortoises, 280kg of Kari Kaita turtles, and 20kg of Yellow tortoises. It was revealed that smugglers had been disguising the illegal turtle trade as eel, also known as 'Kuchia' business.

BIRD HUNTER ARRESTED WITH SEVERAL WILD PARROT ON THE ROOFTOP OF HOUSE

DHAKA, 25 November 2024: The WCCU officials seized several wild parrots and hunting materials including hunter birds from the rooftop of four-storey house in Zahurul Haque City. The noted hunter has been hunting wild birds with the help of a variety of traps by attracting birds on the roof of his four-story house.

MORE THAN HALF A HUNDRED WILD BIRDS SEIZED IN TONGI BAZAR

DHAKA, 17 November 2024: The WCCU officials seized various species of birds during a raid conducted in Tongi Bazar. The officials seized 12 Red-breasted parakeet, 34 Alexandrine parakeet, 52 Bank Myna, 20 Spotted dove and 15 Indian silverbill.

ENDANGERED CAPPED LANGUR RESCUED FROM MIRPUR

DHAKA, 25 October 2024: The WCCU officials rescued four endangered Capped Langurs from Dhaka's Mirpur area. The animals were transported to Chuadanga in a car, reportedly intended for smuggling to India. The officials also arrested the wildlife smuggler during the raid who is a repeated offender with multiple wildlife trafficking cases.



FIVE HELD FOR TRADING WILDLIFE PARTS, INCLUDING ONE FROM UP

RAIPUR, 30 December 2024: The Chhattisgarh Forest officials seized elephant tusks; skins of leopards and bears along with other wildlife remains in the Balrampur Forest Division. The officials apprehended five suspects, three from the Wadrafnagar Forest Range, one from Balrampur, and one from Govardhanpur whilst attempting to traffic elephant tusks. Two elephant tusks, three mobile phones, and a scooter used in the illegal activity were confiscated from them. Similarly, in a separate operation, officials arrested two suspects, one from Babhni District Sonbhadra, Uttar Pradesh, and another from Purandih, Ramanujanj, for attempting to smuggle two leopard skins and one bear skin. The officials also seized two mobile phones, one motorcycle, and one scooter used in the crime.

FARMHOUSE CARETAKERS ARRESTED FOR KILLING SAMBAR IN SISWAN

MOHALI, 29 December 2024: The officials of Forest and Wildlife Department apprehended three poachers from Siswan jungle area and seized 2.5 kg of Sambar meat and four lower limbs. The trio were working as caretakers of the farmhouse in Siswan. They were caught red-handed while cooking Sambar meat in a vessel and preserving four lower limbs in a polythene bag. The accused admitted that they killed a Sambar ensnared in the barbed wire of a farmhouse for its meat.

MAN HELD WITH GANESHA IDOL MADE OF IVORY

KRISHNAGIRI, 25 December 2024: Acting on a tip-off, the Forest officials arrested an individual possessing a Ganesha idol made of ivory and seized the idol from him.



BEAKS OF ORIENTAL PIED HORNBILL SEIZED IN RANGAPARA, ONE ARRESTED

ASSAM, 22 December 2024: Acting on a tip-off, the officials of Railway Protection Force (RPF) arrested an individual after being found in possession of four beaks of Oriental Pied hornbill, locally known as 'Dhanesh' at Rangapara railway station. The officials are probing the incident to uncover potential links to a larger wildlife trafficking network.

MAN HELD WITH LEOPARD SKIN IN BOUDH

BERHAMPUR, 14 December 2024: The Special Task Force (STF) officials arrested a suspected wildlife criminal for illegal possession of a leopard skin at Meheruni in Boudh. The officials seized a medium-sized leopard hide from the accused.



POACHER HELD FOR KILLING MIGRATORY BIRDS NEAR CHILIKA LAKE

ODISHA, 08 December 2024: The Odisha Forest officials arrested an individual for killing migratory birds near Chilika Lake. Carcasses of Northern pintail and White-breasted water hen were seized from the possession of the accused person. The officials also seized one handmade spear and 15 pieces of stigmas of lily flower ingested with poison from him.

ONE DETAINED WITH 1.3KG RHINO HORN IN LAKHIMPUR

DIBRUGARH, 05 December 2024: The Police arrested a man with a rhinoceros horn weighing 1.3 kg from Dholpur area of Lakhimpur district. The accused revealed that he was approached by three unknown individuals with the horn, offering to provide hefty commission after finding a potential buyer.



THREE HELD FOR KILLING LEOPARD AT RAIMONA PARK

GUWAHATI, 22 November 2024: The Forest officials arrested three individuals for allegedly hunting and cooking a mature female leopard within park boundaries of Raimona National Park. The officials recovered approximately 5.15 kg of dried leopard meat, various body parts, and a leopard skin weighing roughly 3 kg along with three snares. The accused revealed that the leopard was poisoned with a prey for its meat.

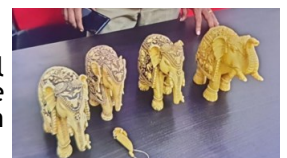


THREE ARRESTED WITH LEOPARD HIDE

BARIPADA, 19 November 2024: The Forest officials caught three persons including a poacher red-handed while they were trying to sell leopard hide at Balikhoni village under Bangiriposi range. The officials seized the leopard hide from the accused. Another person involved in this case managed to escape from the spot.

IVORY ARTEFACTS SEIZED, 12 ARRESTED

CHENNAI, 15 November 2024: The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau's intelligence team of Tamil Nadu seized five ivory artefacts and arrested 12 people in this connection in Villupuram. The gang was planning to sell ivory artefacts to prospective clients at a guesthouse in Villupuram town. The team also seized a car, two motorcycles and a moped from them.



HYDERABAD DRI OFFICERS RESCUED PANGOLIN, ARREST FOUR ANIMAL SMUGGLERS

HYDERABAD, 13 November 2024: The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) officials rescued a live pangolin and detained four wildlife traffickers from Kadiri, Andhra Pradesh. Based on intelligence reports about a trafficking group seeking buyers for a live pangolin, the DRI officials acted as a dummy customers with the smugglers and arrested them red-handed.

ONE DETAINED WITH ELEPHANT TUSKS IN KEONJHAR

KEONJHAR, 12 November 2024: The Forest officials from Anandpur wildlife division detained one and recovered two elephant tusks, weighing approximately 975 grams.

WILDLIFE SMUGGLER HELD WITH DEER MUSK & HOOVES IN DEHRADUN

DEHRADUN, 07 November 2024: The STF officials arrested a wildlife smuggler from Vikasnagar area and seized 25.62 grams of deer musk and two hooves measuring 22 cm and 18 cm, respectively.

ELEPHANT HAIR CONFISCATED FROM JEWELRY SHOP

PUNE, 05 November 2024: The wildlife officials of Pune confiscated four pieces of elephant hair from a jewelry shop which was being sold illegally in Sadashiv Peth. The shop had advertised sale of elephant hair rings, bracelets and other jewelry, saying these would help the love life of its owners. The shop owner claimed that the hair used was shipped from Indonesia and South Africa.

RED SANDERS LOGS SEIZED, FOUR HELD

TIRUPATI, 27 Oct 2024: The officials of Red Sanders Anti-Smuggling Task Force (RSASTF) seized 26 red sanders logs and arrested four smugglers in Sanipaya forest area of Annamayya district. The officials found some persons moving suspiciously in Bolluvandlapalli area and on investigating them, they recovered the red sanders log. Some of them managed to escape but four smugglers got apprehended.

UTTARKASHI MAN NABBED WITH TWO LEOPARD HIDES

DEHRADUN, 09 October 2024: The STF officials arrested an individual for illegal possession of two leopard skins in Uttarkashi district. The leopard hides, measuring about 6ft. and 8 ft. in length were seized from his possession.

FOUR ARRESTED WHILE ATTEMPTING TO SELL SAND BOA

MUMBAI, 08 October 2024: Based on tip-off, the Police officials arrested four individuals for attempting to sell sand boa in Mumbai, a rare snake species known as 'Mandul'. The officials discovered the live sand boa measuring 55 inches in length and weighed approximately 4.8 kg inside one of the three bags in the trunk. The accused confessed that they intended to sell the snake for traditional medicine and black magic.

TWO HELD AT PRAYAGRAJ RAILWAY STATION FOR SMUGGLING TURTLES

NEW DELHI, 27 September 2024: The Police arrested two people for allegedly smuggling 10 turtles at Prayagraj junction railway station. The accused revealed that they were given the turtles by an individual in Sultanpur with instructions to deliver them to Bhagalpur in Bihar and in return they were promised certain money.

VANDALUR IVORY THEFT: ONE HELD, MAIN SUSPECT STILL AT LARGE

CHENNAI, 26 September 2024: The Forest officials arrested an individual in connection with the recent ivory theft at Arignar Anna Zoological Park. On 08 September, two pieces of ivory were missing from the Arignar Anna Zoological Park, Vandalur. The arrested individual was identified as an accomplice of the main suspect who was a temporary worker in the zoo and had gone missing since the theft.

TWO TRUCKERS JAILED FOR SMUGGLING VULNERABLE FLAPSHELL TURTLE

GUWAHATI, 25 September 2024: The Police arrested two truck drivers in Chhattisgarh for their alleged involvement in smuggling an Indian flapshell turtle. The accused allegedly smuggled the turtle from an area near the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve while travelling from Upper Assam to the Export Promotion and Industrial Park for loading goods.

THREE ARRESTED FROM UP WITH ELEPHANT TUSKS

RUDRAPUR, 19 September 2024: In a joint operation by the Uttarakhand STF, Uttar Pradesh STF, and WCCB Delhi, three men were arrested for their alleged involvement in wildlife parts trafficking. The officials seized two elephant tusks about 3.2 feet long from them. The accused claimed that the ivory was passed down from his maternal grandfather. However, investigators suspect the elephants may have been killed recently.

FIVE POACHERS HELD; TIGER TEETH SEIZED

BARIPADA, 12 September 2024: The Forest officials arrested five people and confiscated four tiger teeth during a raid in Manikpur village. The officials recovered the tiger teeth, three guns, a partially constructed wooden gun butt, explosive materials, approximately 80 arrows, and a bundle of snares from them. The STF officials had seized the tiger hide earlier and two of these accused had been on the run.

MAN ARRESTED FOR BEATING PYTHON TO DEATH

RAIPUR, 09 September 2024: The Forest officials arrested a man for beating a python to death on the Mainpur-Deobhog National Highway in the Gariaband district. Initially, the accused claimed that he and his two friends had caught the python alive and released it into a dam. However, when confronted with the viral video showing him beating the python, he confessed to the crime. He had beaten the python to death and buried it under the sand.

LIVE PANGOLIN RESCUED IN NABARANGPUR, ONE ARRESTED

NABARANGAPUR, 03 September 2024: The Forest officials rescued live pangolin weighing around 8.970 kg and arrested one individual in connection with this case. The accused was nabbed through a trap set by the Forest officials team following intelligence report that the accused was trying to smuggle the live pangolin out of Odisha.

LEOPARD HIDE SEIZED IN PHULBANI, THREE HELD

PHULBANI, 03 September 2024: The Forest personnel seized a leopard hide in Phulbani and arrested three persons in this connection. The officials seized leopard hide along with two bikes and three mobile phones from the accused.

**NEPAL****ONE ARRESTED WITH TIGER HIDE**

KATHMANDU, 25 December 2024: The Nepal Police arrested one individual with tiger skin from Kapilvastu district. The tiger skin of 6 ft. length, four teeth and nails were seized from the accused. The officials also found three gun shoot hole in the seized skin.

**POACHER KILLED BY TIGER**

CHITWAN, 22 December 2024: A poacher was killed by a tiger while attempting to trap the animal in the buffer zone of Chitwan National Park. The tiger managed to escape the trap and killed the main poacher, who was a repeated offender in poaching activities. Another individual involved in the incident, who managed to escape from the tiger's attack, was arrested by park officials.

ONE HELD WITH RED PANDA SKIN

KATHMANDU, 30 October 2024: The Nepal Police apprehended an individual at Swoyambhu, Kathmandu and seized two Red panda skins from his possession.

**PAKISTAN****SNOW LEOPARD CUB SOLD IN BLACK MARKET RECOVERED**

GILGIT, 25 September 2024: The officials of Gilgit-Baltistan Parks and Wildlife Department recovered a snow leopard cub sold in the black market. The cub was estimated to be two and a half months old and it was caught from its habitat in Nazabar Nullah in Yassen valley of Ghizer district a month ago. Three people have been arrested and investigation is underway to detain more individuals involved.

**SRI LANKA****LEOPARD KILLED AND HEAD TAKEN AWAY**

HATTON, 18 December 2024: A carcass of well grown leopard of around ten years old was discovered without its head and limbs, by wildlife officials. The leopard was killed by a wire trap.

FOREIGN YOUTUBER INVESTIGATED FOR VIOLATING SL WILDLIFE LAWS

COLOMBO, 25 October 2024: The Department of Wildlife Conservation has commenced a probe into a video shared on YouTube of a foreign national and four Indigenous people hunting, slaughtering and eating a peacock at the Maduru Oya National Park. The group is accused of trespassing into the Maduru Oya National Park, setting a fire, hunting and killing the protected bird, and sharing it on social media.