Good News for CITES Enforcement in Central Africa

The Africa Regional Bureau of the Species Survival Network (SSN) is pleased to send you our best wishes for the New Year. May 2011 bring you great success in your efforts to conserve wildlife, and great happiness as well.

This issue of CITES Afrique celebrates the success of simultaneous sting operations conducted by Cameroon, Congo, Gabon and Central African Republic in December 2010, that led to the dismantlement of a prominent illegal trade network and to the seizure of various CITES-protected wildlife products. It also contains information about the thriving illegal lion trade in Central Africa and its consequences for the species. In closing, we provide information on the creation of partnerships between Ghana, Congo, Cameroon and the European Union (EU) to fight illegal timber trade, and the encouraging results of a centralized system to prevent illegal trade in finished products.

Latest CITES Postings and Notifications

♦ The Secretariat encouraged Parties to report findings and observations on the outcomes of the International Expert Workshop on Non-Detriment Findings in preparation for the 19th meeting of the Plants and Animals Committees (CITES Notifications 2011/004)

♦ The Secretariat distributed a questionnaire to CITES Management and Scientific Authorities asking them to provide information on international trade in finished products of Orchidaceae in preparation for the 19th meeting of the Plants Committee. Responses to the questionnaire are to be sent to the interim Vice-Chair of the Plants Committee at: deal@conabio.gob.mx by 21 January 2011 (CITES Notification 2011/003)

♦ The Secretariat informed Parties that the 25th meeting of the Animals Committee will be held in Geneva (Switzerland) from 18 to 22 July 2011. Participants must register by 18 June 2011 by filling in the Registration form online (http://www.cites.org/eng/co_m/AC/index.shtml) or by returning the registration form to the Secretariat. (CITES Notification 2011/002)

♦ The Secretariat provided guidance to Parties on its interpretation of how international trade should be regulated when either a whole species or a national population of a species is included in Appendix III (CITES Notification No. 2011/042)

♦ The Secretariat distributed information about the submission of reports on all seizures of ivory and other elephant products to the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) and circulated an electronic version of the ETIS Data collection form and Explanatory Notes. The Secretariat reminded Parties that the absence of ivory or other elephant product seizures within the course of a year should also be reported. (CITES Notification No. 2011/041)

♦ The Secretariat informed Parties that it has established an email alert service on its website and included in its alert mailing list all CITES Authorities that have not already subscribed (CITES Notification 2010/040)

♦ The Secretariat informed the Parties about the Bonn and Gaborone Amendments to the Convention, and reported on progress towards ratification of the Gaborone Amendment which is not yet in force. The Secretariat urged Parties that have not done so to accept these amendments (CITES Notification 2010/039)

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Important CITES Dates

♦ 31 January 2011: Deadline set in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP14) for Parties that hold a stock of raw ivory within their territory to inform the Secretariat of the level of that stock, indicating the source of the ivory

♦ 17 February 2011: Deadline for submission of information about non-detriment findings for consideration by the Plants Committee and for the submission of documents for consideration at the 19th meeting of the CITES Plants Committee (CITES Notifications 2010/033 and 2011/003)
Unprecedented CITES Regional Enforcement Success in Central Africa

Sting operations conducted simultaneously in Cameroon, Gabon, the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Republic of Congo in early December 2010 dismantled highly organized wildlife trafficking rings. The operations resulted in the arrests of numerous smugglers and the seizure of elephant ivory, turtle shells, African grey parrots, and leopard and lion skins.

These enforcement activities were made possible through cooperative projects between local wildlife conservation organizations and national wildlife authorities. In the Central African Republic, the clampdown was the result of the WWF Renforcement de l’Application de la Loi Faunique (RALF) project, which aims to increase wildlife law enforcement activities and judicial follow-up on wildlife crimes in the country. The WWF RALF project works closely with the CAR Ministry of Forests and Wildlife, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Interior. In the Republic of Congo, the raid was led by the Projet d’Appui à l’Application de la Loi sur la Faune Sauvage (PALF), a project uniting the local non-governmental organization Conservation Initiative Justice and the Congolese Ministry of Forestry, Hunting and Fishery. In Gabon, the operation was led by the Appui à l’Application de la Loi sur la Faune (AALF) project which coordinates representatives of the Ministry of Water And Forests with members of two non-governmental organizations that defend the environment and wildlife. These projects are modelled after collaborative work between the Cameroonian Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife and SSN member the Last Great Ape Organization (LAGA), which has successfully been fighting wildlife crime in Cameroon for the last seven years.

This unprecedented wildlife law enforcement success, and these coordinated arrests, send a clear warning to smuggling networks that they can no longer exploit a lack of cooperation among neighboring countries to ease their smuggling activities. SSN warmly congratulates the authorities from Gabon, Cameroon, Central African Republic and the Republic of Congo, and the organizations with whom they have collaborated, for this unprecedented regional enforcement success. SSN encourages CITES Parties in the region to continue intensifying and diversifying their collaboration for enforcement and urges CITES stakeholders to support financially the creation of similar projects in the African region.

Lions on the Brink of Extinction in Central Africa?

An unprecedented wildlife law enforcement operation undertaken in early December 2010 in the Central African Republic led to the confiscation of two lion skins. The skins were discovered carefully hidden, along with seven leopard skins and two ivory tusks, under cow hides in a truck headed from Bangui in the Central African Republic to Nigeria. The seizure of the lion skins came just days after the Large Carnivore Initiative reported that two lion cubs from Waza National Park, Cameroon, had been captured alive and sold to a newly-opened zoo in Nigeria for USD 8,685.00 (1.3 million Nigerian Naira) in violation of Cameroonian law and CITES. These two events confirm the existence of a flourishing illegal trade in lions in Central Africa, and have raised concerns within the international community over the plight of lions in the region.

One hundred years ago, lions occupied all suitable habitat in Africa south of the Sahara. Today, lions are becoming increasingly rare, particularly in West and Central Africa where all populations are small, isolated and decreasing. Southern Chad and northern Central African Republic are the only two regions left in West and Central Africa where lions can still be seen in non-protected areas.

The emergence of an illegal trade in lion parts is of great concern to conservationists, given the threats lions already face from disease, habitat loss and persecution by farmers whose livestock have been killed. Lion parts are also in demand for traditional medicine practices in West and Central Africa. This demand targets lion fat (for back and joint pain), skin and lungs (for whooping cough), veins (for erectile dysfunction), noses (for stomach problems) and livers (for headaches) and seems to be a significant incentive for the illegal lion trade.

Confirmation of a flourishing illegal trade in lions shortly followed soon after the creation of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime uniting CITES, Interpol, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Bank and the World Customs Organization. It illustrates the difficult challenge ahead for law enforcement and for the conservation of vulnerable lion populations. SSN warmly congratulates the authorities of Central African Republic for the seizure of the lion skins, and encourages them to impose severe sanctions on the smugglers. SSN also encourages the authorities of Cameroon and Nigeria to cooperate to ensure that the two lion cubs sold illegally are seized, and that necessary prosecutions are initiated.
New Year wishes for 2011

The greeting card and the calendar are available for download on the SSN website - please contact us if you wish to receive paper copies!
New Year Wishes for 2011

Working within CITES to facilitate the participation of African countries

www.ssn.org

Photo by Bourama Niagaye, DNEF-Mali

Best wishes for 2011
From the Species Survival Network’s Africa Regional Bureau

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Partnership Between Ghana, Congo, Cameroon and the EU Against Illegal Timber Trade

Illegal logging and the related trade in illegally produced timber products, are a growing concern for CITES Parties worldwide. They have been internationally recognized as one of the most damaging threats to world forests. The extent of illegal logging is difficult to evaluate but experts estimate that 20-40% of global wood production comes from illegally logged tropical forests (Institute for Environmental Security, 2008).

The European Union, one of the largest consumers of timber products in the world, plays an instrumental role in the fight against illegal logging. It has started working with timber-producing developing countries to ensure that they have the capacity to detect and deal with illegal logging. The EU adopted The Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan in 2005. This action plan is a voluntary scheme to ensure that only legally harvested timber is imported into the EU from participating countries that have signed a bilateral FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPA) with the EU. To date, three African countries (Ghana, Republic of Congo and Cameroon) have signed VPAs. Four others (Central African Republic, Liberia, Gabon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo) have started negotiations on VPAs. These agreements include provisions designed to halt trade in illegal timber, especially through licensing schemes that will verify the legality of timber exported to the EU, and through provisions for better enforcement of forest law. The EU and its Member States support the implementation of VPAs through bilateral aid channels and bilateral development assistance to help countries establish capacity for better forest governance.

SSN warmly congratulates the governments of Ghana, Congo and Cameroon for this unprecedented commitment to eliminating exports of illegally harvested timber. SSN is strongly supportive of capacity-building initiatives such as the FLEGT Action Plan. SSN encourages the Central African Republic, Liberia, Gabon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to continue their negotiations with the EU towards establishing VPAs in order to strengthen their efforts against the illegal timber trade.

Critically Endangered Mountain Gorilla Population on the Rise

The analysis of the results of a census conducted in March and April 2010 in the Virunga Volcanoes Region was released in December 2010, and showed a 26.3 percent increase in the population of Critically Endangered mountain gorillas (Gorilla beringei beringei) in this area over the last seven years. The Virunga Volcanoes Region covers territory included in National Parks in Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo and represents one of the richest biological areas of the world. This brings the number of mountain gorillas in the region to 480, an increase of 100 individuals since 2003. The census results were released shortly after two mountain gorillas orphaned by poachers in DRC’s Virunga National Park in 2004 and 2007 were relocated to the Senkwekwe Center gorilla sanctuary at Rumanagabo in Virunga National Park after several years spent in Rwanda, the country where they were confiscated. In DRC, the gorillas will live inside a lush, enclosed forest area where they will be semi-free ranging in order to learn the skills they will need to survive in the forest and to possibly one day be reintroduced into the wild.

SSN warmly congratulates the Governments of Rwanda, Uganda and DRC for their collaboration for the protection of mountain gorillas. SSN also applauds Rwanda and DRC for the successful relocation of the confiscated gorillas.

Please don’t hesitate to contact SSN if you have any questions.

Capacity-building corner

Useful publications:
♦ Henshell and al., Lion Status Updates from Five Range Countries in West and Central Africa, CATnews 52 Spring 2010 (copy available upon request).

Useful websites:

Please contact the SSN Africa Regional Bureau if you need help with translation.
SSN member of the month: Defenders of Wildlife

**Organization Profile:**
- **President:** Rodger Schlickeisen
- **Date of creation:** 1947
- **Mission Statement:** Dedicated to the protection of all native animals and plants in their natural communities.
- **Offices located in:** Mexico and United States
- **Projects in Africa located in:** Kenya
- **Website:** http://www.defenders.org/

**Local Project:** Living with Lions Program

African lions are in serious decline due to habitat loss, trophy hunting, poisoning, illegal trade, and retaliatory killing due to predation on livestock. But in Kenya, an innovative project is helping to keep at least one of these factors in check. Through the Living with Lions program, Maasai warriors are trained to track lion movements and prevent attacks on livestock, putting them at the front lines of protecting the lion’s future. These so-called “lion guardians” also help find missing livestock, reinforce fences, and work with local communities to develop alternatives to killing lions in retaliation. Last year, Defenders of Wildlife contributed funding to help the lion guardians project expand farther onto ranchlands just outside Amboseli National Park in southwestern Kenya.

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**CITES protected species of the month**

- **Name:** Orchid; orchidée (no common name) (*Polystachya fusiformis*)
- **CITES listing:** Appendix II
- **CITES export quotas:** No export quotas reported for 2010 (See: http://www.cites.org/common/quotas/2010/ExportQuotas2010.pdf)
- **CITES Trade levels (WCMC trade database 2010):** Between 2000 and 2009, 14 live plants and 2 dried plants were traded. The two importers were the United States and France. The two exporters were South Africa and Madagascar.
- **IUCN category:** Not yet assessed
- **Threats:** Habitat loss/degradation; collection of live plants and seeds
- **Range States:** Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Réunion, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia
- **Useful resources:** Orchid Specialist Group <http://www.orchidconservation.org/osg/>

- **Name:** Preuss’s monkey; cercopithèque de Preuss (*Cercopithecus preussi*)
- **CITES listing:** Appendix II
- **CITES export quotas:** No export quotas reported for 2010 (See: http://www.cites.org/common/quotas/2010/ExportQuotas2010.pdf)
- **CITES Trade levels (WCMC trade database 2010):** Between 2000 and 2010, exports of *Cercopithecus* spp. amounted to
  - 234 trophies and exports of *Cercopithecus preussi* amounted to
  - 33 specimens, 7 unspecified. The main importers were the United States and Canada; the main exporters were Gabon, South Africa, Equatorial Guinea and Cameroon.
- **IUCN category:** Endangered (IUCN 2008)
- **Threats:** Habitat loss (urbanization, cultivation, fire); bushmeat trade; hunting
- **Range States:** Cameroon, Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea