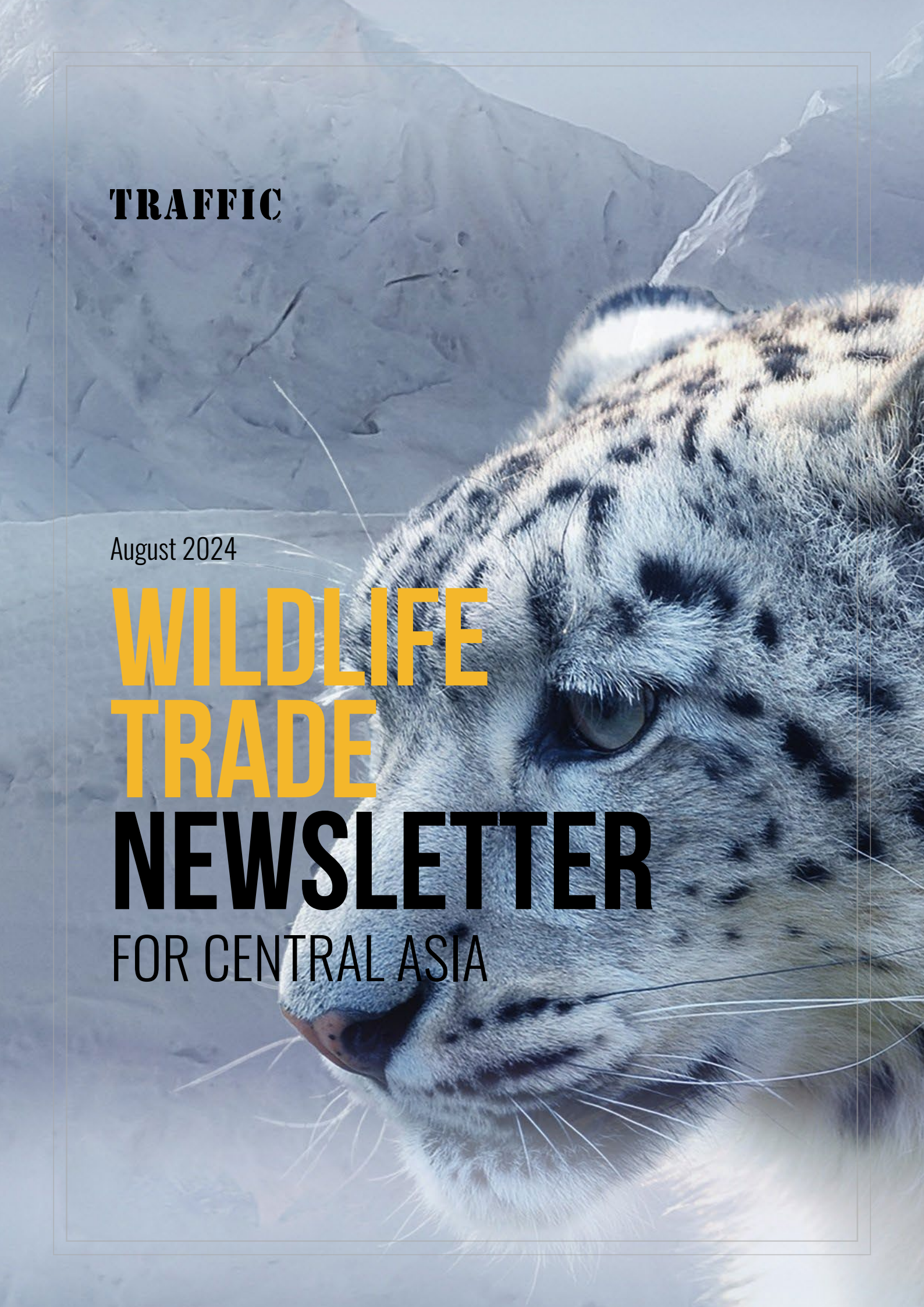


TRAFFIC

August 2024

**WILDLIFE
TRADE
NEWSLETTER**
FOR CENTRAL ASIA



TRAFFIC REPORT

ABOUT US

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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Snow leopard © pixabay



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INTRODUCTION

**THIS INAUGURAL NEWSLETTER
COVERS THE PERIOD FROM JANUARY
2023 TO APRIL 2024**

This newsletter is produced within the framework of a project funded by the United States Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. The two-year project is entitled "Strengthening Capacity & Fostering the Will to Combat Wildlife Crime in Central Asia" and is led by Fauna & Flora, in collaboration with TRAFFIC, the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK), the Institute of Zoology Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ecological Resource Centre "Ekomaktab".

The aim of the project is to build law enforcement capacity to help combat wildlife trafficking (CWT) across major hotspots and trade routes throughout Central Asia, including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.

The aim of this newsletter is to inform relevant governmental authorities as well as other interested organisations and stakeholders in the Central Asian region about issues related to the illegal hunting/offtake and trade in wild animals and plants in Central Asia, including news articles, selected information on recent developments related to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), interesting tools or upcoming events. It will be published in English and Russian and made available electronically only. It will be published twice a year. This inaugural newsletter covers the period from January 2023 to April 2024. The news was collected from open-source media and were adapted / translated into English language.

TRAFFIC would like to thank its project partners for their assistance and support in developing this newsletter. Notably, TRAFFIC thanks Fauna & Flora, the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity in Kazakhstan (ACBK), the Institute of Zoology of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ecological Resource Centre "Ekomaktab", the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision of Kyrgyz Republic, the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan.

If you would like to receive the newsletter or would like to contribute to the next issue, please contact Sanjar Kurmanov – Project Support Officer via phone: +996 554 555550 or mail: sanjar.kurmanov@traffic.org.



1. SELECTED NEWS ARTICLES

COVERING THE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 2023 TO APRIL 2024.



Photo: Arnebia plant | Ori Fragman-Sapir © www.flora.org.il



PARROTS FROM KYRGYZSTAN WERE BROUGHT TO RUSSIA LEGALLY

ON 1 FEBRUARY 2024, 520 PARROTS WERE IMPORTED TO THE KRASNOYARSK REGION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION FROM OSH CITY, KYRGYZSTAN.

Source: <https://www.krsk.kp.ru/online/news/5654122/>

Veterinary checks of 520 parrots from Kyrgyzstan were delivered to the Krasnoyarsk Airport Experts counted five species of parrots: Budgerigar *Melopsittacus undulatus*, Cockatiel *Nymphicus hollandicus*, Eastern Rosella *Platycercus eximius* (CITES Appendix II), Lovebirds *Agapornis* and Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula kramera*.

According to the Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance of the Russian Federation the birds were transported in compliance with the veterinary and sanitary requirements of the Russian Federation and the Customs Union.

The birds were brought to the regional capital for an individual entrepreneur who is engaged in breeding and keeping birds. The parrots have now been quarantined and will be monitored by specialists.



The birds were brought for an individual entrepreneur who is engaged in breeding and keeping birds



Photo source: The Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance Administration for the Krasnoyarsk Territory.



SAUDI FALCON CLUB RELEASED SAKER FALCONS

Falco cherrug (CITES Appendix II) IN KYRGYZSTAN.

Source: <https://24.kg/english/279516>

At least 14 falcons were released in Kolotu gorge, Internatcional village, Issyk-Ata district of Kyrgyzstan, as part of the Hadad project, which is dedicated to returning rare birds to nature.

The event was held on 13 November, 2023 and organised by World Nomad Union company and Tilad Environmental Consultancy Co Ltd organisation from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The release process was carefully prepared

and carried out in accordance with protocols developed by project specialists. Employees of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology, and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic and the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic are monitoring the adaptation process.

In total, under the management of the Falcon Club of Saudi Arabia, more than 90 rare falcons have already been delivered to Kyrgyzstan. More information about the Hadad project can be found here: <https://hadad.edu.kg/>



Photo source: 24.kg news agency, by Maria Orlova



Photo source: Freepik



THE SNOW LEOPARD HAS BECOME A NATIONAL SYMBOL OF KYRGYZSTAN

PRESIDENT OF KYRGYZSTAN SADYR ZHAPAROV SIGNED A DECREE “ON RECOGNIZING THE SNOW LEOPARD AS A NATIONAL SYMBOL OF KYRGYZSTAN” ON 30 DECEMBER 2023

Source: https://kaktus.media/doc/493316_snejnyy_bars_stal_nacionalnym_simvolom_kyrgyzstana.html

This was reported by the presidential administration.

The Snow Leopard (CITES Appendix I) is included in the Red List of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and has the rare of endangered status in 12 countries around the world. The Snow Leopard represents not just the richness of nature and cultural value, but also shows how healthy and stable the mountain ecosystem is. The mountain ecosystem covers a third of the world’s land area. The recognition of the Snow

Leopard as the national symbol of Kyrgyzstan will facilitate the implementation of measures aimed at: ensuring the protection of the Snow Leopard’s population and its habitat within the country.

Promoting awareness of the Snow Leopard and developing a logo and application options to determine how the Snow Leopard can be used at both the national and international levels.



ATTEMPTED ILLEGAL EXPORT OF ARNEBIA PLANT INTERCEPTED IN KYRGYZSTAN

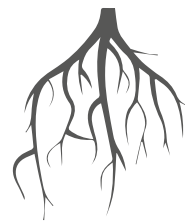
Source: https://kaktus.media/doc/491310_iz_kyrgyzstana_pytalys_vyvezti_825

Unidentified persons attempted to illegally export 825 kilograms of the roots of the Arnebia (Arnebia Forssk) plant, which is listed as an endangered plant in Kyrgyzstan and whose trade is prohibited. According to reports from the press service of the State Tax Service

of the Kyrgyz Republic, employees of the State Security and Border Guard Services of the National Security Committee stopped a car at the “Ak-Zhol-Avtodorozhny” checkpoint to Kazakhstan for inspection on 27 November 2023.



Photo source: Press office of the State Tax Service of the Kyrgyz Republic



**825kg
worth of
plants roots**
found contained
in 55 boxes

They found 55 boxes containing a total of 825 kg worth of plant roots, similar to those of the endangered Arnebia species listed in the Red Book. Authorities discovered that the driver did not have shipping documents for the goods.

The driver was detained until the authorities could clarify the situation and the items were transferred to competent authorities to take legal action.



Photo source: Press office of the State Tax Service of the Kyrgyz Republic



Photo source: File photo showing the skulls of two Marco Polo sheep in the Wakhan Corridor of northeastern Afghanistan. Photo: Scott Wallace (Getty Images).



MONTANA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO CREATING MASSIVE FRANKEN-SHEEP WITH CLONED ANIMAL PARTS.

THE PLAN WAS TO LET PEOPLE HUNT THE LARGEST SHEEP IN THE WORLD ON PRIVATE RANCHES IN THE UNITED STATES

Source: <https://gizmodo.com/franken-sheep-marco-polo-cloned-schubarth-hybrid-animal-1851330381>

An 80-year-old man in Montana pleaded guilty to two wildlife crime felonies involving his plan to let paying customers hunt sheep on private ranches.

He was found guilty of bringing the animal parts of endangered and protected sheep from Kyrgyzstan to the US, which is recognized by international and US law. Also, Montana State also forbids the import of these foreign sheep or their parts in an effort to protect local American sheep from disease. But these weren't just any old sheep. They were "massive hybrid sheep" created by illegally importing animal parts from Central Asia, cloning the sheep, and then breeding an enormous hybrid species - reports Matt Novak in his article published on March 12, 2024.

Arthur "Jack" Schubarth, owns and operates the 87-hectare "alternative livestock" ranch in Vaughn, Montana where he started the operation in 2013, according to a press release from the U.S. Department of Justice. "Alternative livestock" includes hybrids of mountain sheep, mountain goats, and other large mammals which are often used for trophy hunting by wealthy people.

An unnamed accomplice of Schubarth kicked off the decade-long scheme by illegally bringing biological tissue from a Marco Polo *Ovis polii* (CITES Appendix II) sheep, the largest sheep in the world, from Kyrgyzstan into the U.S. in 2013, according to prosecutors.



Photo: A herd of saigas gallops at a watering place © Oskanov | freepik.com



SAIGA SHOOTING SUSPENDED IN KAZAKHSTAN

Source: <https://orda.kz/otstrel-sajgakov-priostanovili-v-kazahstane-382509/>

On 12 February 2024, the suspension in the culling of Saiga Antelopes *Saiga tatarica* (CITES Appendix II) was announced by the Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan - Yerlan Nysanbayev on the sidelines of the Majilis, reports Orda.kz. Previously, it had been published that the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Kazakhstan would allow amateur hunting for Saiga and planned to hunt more than 200,000

Saiga in the winter period of 2023-2024.

"Discussions were held with local scientists and international experts. And plus, in winter there were difficulties in moving in the Steppe. Therefore, since February 10, we have stopped the process of regulating the number of saiga," Nysanbayev said.



Photo courtesy by the Irgiz-Turgay state nature reserve (Courtesy Image)

According to his forecast, the Saiga population in Kazakhstan will soon reach 2.5-2.8 million. So, due to the sharp increase in the Ural

population, Saiga shooting will resume in the future.



Photo: Press service of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan



A LARGE BATCH OF SAIGA HORNS WAS SEIZED BY POLICE IN ZHETYSU, KAZAKHSTAN

Source: <https://baimedia.kz/ru/krupnyu-partiyu-rogov-sajgi-policzejskie-v-zhetisu/>

Employees of the Department for Combating Organized Crime together with employees of the Department of the Border service of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the Zhetysu region stopped a car in Zharkent city on 11 March 2024, in which there were three men.

Authorities discovered boxes and bags with Saiga antlers in the cabin and trunk of the car. Their total number was 1382 antlers. A criminal case has been opened based on the illegal handling of derivatives of rare animals, noted Eldar Abdikenov, Deputy head of the Zhetysu Regional Police Department. Saiga Antelopes *Saiga tatarica* is listed in CITES Appendix II and Kazakhstan Red Book with status Endangered.



Photo: Picture from an open source



SAIGA HORNS WORTH 2 BILLION TENGE WERE SEIZED

FROM A FOREIGNER IN THE KOSTANAY REGION

Source: <https://kaztag.info/en/news/saiga-horns-worth-t2-billion-seized-from-foreigner-in-kostanay-region>

This was reported by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

According to Serik Baygonov, the head of the Organized Crime Control Department of the Kostanay Region, in December 2023, a traffic stop on the Ekaterinburg-Almaty Republican Highway at the exit from Kostanay Revealed three travel bags belonging to a 29-year-old passenger, a citizen of a neighboring country, found in the luggage compartment.

The bags contained 916 Saiga horns and about 7.5 million Kazakh Tenge (USD 16 990). The offender was found to have caused damage to the state of approximately 2 billion Kazakh Tenge (USD 4 530 920).

A pre-trial investigation has been launched under Part 3 of Art. 339 of the Criminal Code of Kazakhstan (illegal handling of rare and endangered, as well as prohibited species of plants or animals, their parts or derivatives).



916 Saiga horns

and about USD 16990 were found in the bags



Photo: Picture from newscentralasia

**ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS &
AQUARIUMS**

CITES



TURKMENISTAN TO JOIN CITES

AND THE EURO-ASIAN REGIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS

Source: <https://www.newscentralasia.net/2024/04/15/turkmenistan-will-join-a-biodiversity-protection-convention-and-an-associat>

Deputy prime minister and foreign minister of Turkmenistan – Rashid Meredov reported during a cabinet meeting on 12 April 2024 that Turkmenistan was preparing to join the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Accession to the Convention will create opportunities for more effective protection of the rare and endangered species of flora and fauna in Turkmenistan.

Rashid Meredov also proposed that Turkmenistan should join the Euro-Asian Regional Association of Zoos and Aquariums

(EARAZA). This will allow Turkmenistan to establish mutually beneficial cooperation with zoological parks of the EARAZA member countries, facilitate the exchange of experience and improve the skills of specialists.

Moreover, the foreign minister noted that in order to preserve biodiversity in our country and in adjacent territories, in particular, the protection of migratory species of wild animals, and strengthening the international legal framework, it is proposed to sign a Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of protection of the wildlife of the Ustyurt Plateau between the relevant ministries of Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.



A BRIEF GUIDE TO OBJECTS OF EXPORT/IMPORT OF FAUNA AND FLORA HAS BEEN PUBLISHED

BY THE INSTITUTE OF ZOOLOGY OF THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

Source: <https://izooology.uz/ru/2023/10/25/>

In 2023 the Institute of Zoology of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan published guidance on objects of export/import of Fauna and Flora for law enforcement agencies.

The short guide is a practical guide for identifying the most popular species and subspecies of plants and animals that are the subject of import-export-re-export and fall under CITES and the legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The identifier includes the necessary information to determine the species of CITES samples, as well as for the most frequently imported and exported species that are not included in the CITES appendices, including an image of the species/

subspecies, its derivatives and body parts, the name in Russian, English, the scientific name, the list of countries of residence and countries of import-export and re-export, methods of transportation, and the subject of trade (live, specimens, derivatives).

The short guide also contains a list of documents required for inspection at border checkpoints and customs posts of the Republic, including the inspection scheme and information on the commodity nomenclature of foreign economic activity (HS code). The guide is intended for use by employees of environmental agencies, customs, and border services of the Republic of Uzbekistan.



Photo: Institute of Zoology of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan.



THE SKIN OF A RED-LISTED BEAR WAS CONFISCATED FROM POACHERS IN THE TASHKENT REGION, UZBEKISTAN.

Source: Alexander Esipov, Institute of Zoology of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

On 8 January 2024, in the village of Kumushkan, Parkent district, Tashkent region of Uzbekistan, employees of the district inspectorate of the Ministry of Ecology of the Republic of Uzbekistan confiscated the skin of the Tien Shan (white-clawed) Brown Bear *Ursus arctos isabellinus*.

This subspecies is listed in the Red Book of the Republic of Uzbekistan with the status

of 2(VU:R) vulnerable, but it is mosaically widespread. The Tien Shan Brown Bear is also included in Appendix I of CITES.

The skin was confiscated and transferred to the scientific collection of the Institute of Zoology of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan. A case of illegal extraction and storage of the skin of a threatened subspecies is being considered.



Photo: Obtained from Alexander Esipov, Institute of Zoology of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan.



UZBEK CUSTOMS OFFICERS STOPPED THE ILLEGAL IMPORT OF A BATCH OF DEER ANTLERS AND ELEPHANT TUSK.

Source: Alexander Esipov, Institute of Zoology of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

On 23 March 2023, at the Gishtkuprik checkpoint on the border between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, Uzbek customs officers stopped an attempt to import a batch of fragments of horns of wild animals without any accompanying documents.

In total, 180 fragments of antlers of the Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*, and one fragment of the antler of the Elk *Alces alces* were identified.

The fragments were intended for the manufacture of handles of national knives,

popular both among the residents of Uzbekistan and among numerous tourists. A 93.5 cm long fragment of elephant *Elephantidae spp.* was also found in the consignment. All elephant species are listed on the IUCN Red List with categories from Endangered to Critically Endangered, and CITES Appendices I and II, that is, they are subject to the most stringent restrictions. The horns and tusk were confiscated. The case is under investigation.



Photo: Obtained from Alexander Esipov, Institute of Zoology of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan.



Photo: Obtained from WWF website



TAJIKISTAN HAS INTRODUCED A STATE PROGRAMME TO PROTECT THE SNOW LEOPARD

WHICH IS LISTED IN THE RED BOOK OF TAJIKISTAN.

Source: <https://avesta.tj/2024/02/23/v-tadzhikistane-prinyali-gosprogrammu-po-ohrane-krasnoknizhnogo-snezhnogo-barsa/>

On 23 February 2024, the Government of Tajikistan approved a state programme (2024-2028) for the protection of the Snow Leopard. This was reported by National Information Agency of Tajikistan Khovar. “The government decree adopted the state programme for the protection of the Snow Leopard in the Republic of Tajikistan (2024-2028). The programme will be implemented in three stages – from 2024 to 2026, 2027, and 2028. The programme includes scientific research, monitoring of the animal population, the development of measures to improve the food supply, as well as the development of solutions to reduce the risk of leopard attacks on domestic animals. In addition, it is aimed at preventing illegal hunting of the leopard and protecting its habitat, including the creation of protected natural areas.

According to the Red Book of Tajikistan, the Snow Leopard is endangered – in 2017, the number of these animals in the Republic was estimated at 250 individuals. The main threats to leopards indicated in the Book were poachers, reduction of the food supply and degradation of natural habitats. As Abdusattor Saidov, Vice-president of the National Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan, Doctor of Biological Sciences, told Khovar news agency, according to the results of a study with camera traps, it can be assumed that the population has grown and there are now about 500 individuals in the Republic. However, it is difficult to study the habitats in detail, since the Snow Leopard lives in mountains with steep slopes at an altitude of 3-4 thousand meters above sea level. In the 1960s, there were an estimated one thousand animals in Tajikistan.



THE REVISED RED BOOK OF TAJIKISTAN WILL INCLUDE 304 SPECIES OF PLANTS AND 253 SPECIES OF RARE ANIMALS

Source: <https://avesta.tj/2023/10/10/v-obnovlennuyu-krasnuyu-knigu-tadzhikistana-vojdut-304-vida-rastenij-i->

A round table on the issue of the revised edition of the Red Book of Tajikistan was held in Dushanbe on 10 October 2023 by the initiative of the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, the press service of the Committee for Environmental Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan reports.

The round table was attended by 40 scientists, specialists, and experts from the National Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan, the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, relevant ministries and departments, and scientists from the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan. The round table was opened with a welcoming speech by Vice-President of the National Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan Abdusattor Saidov, who spoke about the Red Book and its role for the protection and conservation of rare species of flora and fauna

and natural resources of the country. The Red Book of Tajikistan summarizes all available information on the status, distribution, condition of the group, changes in the number of rare animals and plants, defines further research and the main ways of their protection and reproduction.

During the round table, the working groups presented reports and information on scientific research and expeditionary work carried out in various regions of Tajikistan in order to study and determine the current state of rare species of flora and fauna. It was noted that the new edition of the Red Book of the Republic of Tajikistan will include 304 species of plants and 253 species of rare, endangered animals. Some species of plants and animals from the earlier edition will be excluded from the current Red Book of Tajikistan due to their current status.



Photo: <https://khovar.tj/rus/2024/02/1064-ekzemplyara-krasnoj-knigi-tadzhikistana-vrucheny-uchrezhdeniyam-obshhego-srednego-obrazovaniya-respubliki/>

ENVIRONMENTALISTS TOGETHER WITH THE STATE SECURITY AGENCY OFFICERS DETAINED POACHERS WITH A LARGE BATCH OF FISH.

Source: <https://avesta.tj/2023/10/03/ekologi-sogda-zaderzhali-brakonerov-s-krupnoj-partiej-ryby/>

According to the SugdNEWS reports, on 3 October 2023 in Sogda, poachers were detained for catching more than one thousand pieces of fish without the necessary permits using a fishing net. According to the source, during an operational raid on the Tajik Sea reservoir at the Jahonzeb site of the Lohuti rural jamoat of Kanibadam, inspectors of the Department of State Control over the Use and Protection of Flora, Fauna and Fish Resources of the Main Department for Environmental Protection of the Sughd region, together with employees of the GKNB (State Security Agency) Department in the region, detained residents of Kanibadam who were engaged in illegal fishing.

The actions are in violation of article 44 of the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On the Environment" and on the basis of the Code of Administrative Offences of Tajikistan, two protocols have been drawn up against poachers. "The total cost of damage to the environment is more than 100,000 somoni. In order to take the necessary measures, cases of administrative offenses were sent to the Department of Environmental Protection of the city of Kanibadam, and material was sent to the prosecutor's office of the Sughd region," the source concludes.



Photo: <https://dzen.ru/a/YCztoxa5iHjhxInC>



Photo: Tien Shan (white-clawed) brown bear © valeria_aksakova in freepik

A young gazelle with light brown fur and dark eyes stands in a field of tall, green grass. The gazelle is looking directly at the camera. The background is a dense thicket of grass, slightly out of focus.

2. RECENT TRAINING AND EVENTS



Photo: Saiga antelope © dasha-urvachova | Unsplash

REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR CENTRAL ASIA ON COMBATING ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

Source: <https://www.traffic.org/news/kyrgyz-republic-workshop-2023/>

TRAFFIC, in collaboration with Fauna & Flora and the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology, and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic organised a regional workshop on Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade on 4–6 July 2023 in Bishkek, the Kyrgyz Republic.

Over the three days, in addition to presenting current information and discussing challenges in combating illegal wildlife trade, technical knowledge and practical tools were provided to enable the participants to effectively combat illegal trade. Participants of the workshop found very useful practical knowledge and skills of experts from the key speakers, including UK Border Services, China Customs Services, CITES Secretariat, Border Management Programme in Central Asia (BOMCA), and Ibirs Foundation. The representative from CITES Secretariat met with the representatives of the Ministries of Natural Resources from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and was able to clarify any

questions on submission of annual legal and illegal wildlife trade reports.

The workshop was funded by the UK's Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund and the United States Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. The workshop aimed to review project results, raise awareness of the importance of combating wildlife trafficking in the region, and support such efforts through technical training and practical tools. Participants included key governmental organisations from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, as well as China, the United Kingdom, the United States, the European Union, CITES, and NGOs working in the field of Central Asian biodiversity conservation.

More information about the workshop can be found at TRAFFIC's web page: <https://www.traffic.org/news/kyrgyz-republic-workshop-2023/>



Photo: Obtained from the website of Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan



Photo: Participants posing for a photo. Obtained from the website of Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan

ROUND TABLE ON WILDLIFE CRIMES HELD IN KAZAKHSTAN

Source: <https://www.acbk.kz/article/default/view?id=634>

A round table dedicated to the topic of countering illegal trade in wild animals and plants in Central Asia was held in Astana on 19-20 September 2023. Illegal trade in wild animals and plants and measures to counter such crimes were discussed by representatives of different law enforcement and environmental agencies of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The participants of the round table exchanged their experiences with the implementation and enforcement of the provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in Central Asia and discussed gaps in national legislation.

TRAFFIC presented the findings of a recently conducted study of the current state of wildlife trade in Central Asia (see below). The report received a positive response from the participants, who appreciated the importance of conducting such assessments and discussed the report's findings.

A new "CITES course" developed by the Academy of Law Enforcement Agencies at the Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Kazakhstan together with the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan was presented to the audience and successfully tested.

CITES AND SPECIES ID TRAINING

FOR CUSTOMS AND BORDER SERVICES

Fauna & Flora Kyrgyzstan's team conducted a training session which took place on 24-25 October 2023, aimed at enhancing the knowledge of representatives from customs and border posts of the State Customs Service and State Border Service of the Kyrgyz Republic about the CITES convention and the identification of the most popular species and subspecies of animals involved in legal and illegal export/import.

The training covered topics such as contraband of CITES-listed items, CITES permits, identification, and gaps in legislation implementation—additionally, discussions centered on safety measures when handling CITES-listed items and storing confiscated objects.

Four presentations were delivered identifying native and exotic species of invertebrates, reptiles, birds, and mammals. Each presentation demonstrated the key distinguishing features and identification traits of species/subspecies most frequently transported across borders, including the status of these species according to IUCN and CITES listings.

This training allowed participants to gain deeper insights into the workings and objectives of CITES and improve their skills in identifying animal species. This will enhance the effectiveness of combating illegal wildlife trade at customs and border posts.

CRIME PREVENTION WORKSHOP

FOR ECO-POLICE AND RANGERS

On 8-9 February 2024, a training workshop on “preventing and prosecuting wildlife crime” was conducted in Karakol city. The event was organized by Fauna & Flora Kyrgyzstan in collaboration with the Ilbirs Foundation and the General Prosecutor's Office of the Kyrgyz Republic. This collaborative effort underscores the commitment of the involved entities to strengthen legal and operational frameworks, ultimately contributing to the preservation and protection of wildlife. The comprehensive programme covered topics such as legal frameworks, practical application of laws, existing challenges, potential solutions, and crime prevention strategies and tools. It aimed

at establishing effective communication channels, identifying, and addressing shortcomings, and fostering collaboration among the participating organizations.

The training saw the participation of various entities, including the General Prosecutor's Office of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Prosecutor's Offices of Issyk-Kul and Naryn regions, internal affairs agencies, the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision, and the state inspectors of the “Naryn”, “Sarychat-Eertash” and “Khan-Tengri” state reserves, as well as local government bodies.

UPDATE FROM THE 14TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS

Source: <https://enb.iisd.org/conference-parties-convention-migratory-species-wild-animals-cms-cop14-summary>

The 14th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP14) was convened in the ancient Silk Road city of Samarkand, Uzbekistan from 11-17 February 2024.

The meeting was the first CMS CoP since the COVID-19 pandemic, and the first to be hosted in Central Asia. Over 2,000 people attended, including 432 delegates representing 111 Parties; 38 delegates from 11 non-Party countries; 50 representatives from United Nations agencies; 80 representatives of intergovernmental organizations; 203 representatives of international non-governmental organizations; 115 representatives of national non-governmental organizations; and 123 members of both national and international media.

Fourteen new species, subspecies, and populations were added to the CMS Appendices. Of these, ten were added to Appendix I, which comprises migratory

species in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of their range. Eleven species were added to Appendix II, which covers migratory species that have an unfavorable conservation status and require international cooperation for their conservation and management.

Three Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremonies took place during the High-level Segment on Sunday, 11 February: Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan signed the MoU on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia; Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan signed the Memorandum for Cooperation on Conservation of Wildlife on the Ustyurt Plateau; and Uzbekistan, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) signed the agreement for the Food System, Land Use, and Restoration Impact Program under the Global Environment Facility (GEF).



Photo: CMS High-level Segment Family Photo by IISD/ENB | Anvar Zokirov

A large brown eagle is perched on a grassy hill. The eagle's feathers are a rich, dark brown, and its wings are spread slightly. The background is a clear, light blue sky. The overall scene is captured in a warm, golden light, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The eagle is the central focus of the image, and its presence is emphasized by the text overlay.

3. SELECTED CITES NEWS

OF RELEVANCE FOR THE CENTRAL ASIAN REGION



Photo: A golden eagle ready to fly © Freepik

FRAUDULENT EXPORT PERMITS AND RE-EXPORT CERTIFICATES FOR SAMPLES

INCLUDED IN APPENDICES I AND II FROM THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The notification is published at the request of the Russian Federation. The Russian Federation draws the attention of Parties to the existence of fraudulent Russian export permits and re-export certificates issued in relation to trade in tropical butterflies (*Papilionidae spp.*), as well as trophies of Grey Sea Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), Great Grey Owl (*Strix nebulosa*), Leopard (*Panthera pardus*), Steppe Eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*), Snow Leopard (*Panthera uncia*), Bearded Vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*), Eurasian Griffon (*Gyps fulvus*), and Snowy Owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*).

The Management Authority of the Russian Federation requests that all such permits and certificates be considered invalid unless confirmed otherwise by that Authority. Parties may submit such or similar Russian export permits and re-export certificates to the Management Authority of the Russian Federation (cites@rpn.gov.ru) for its consideration and advice. More information can be found here: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/notifications/E-Notif-2024-052.pdf>

LANGUAGE STRATEGY FOR THE CONVENTION

On the 19th meeting (CoP19; Panama City, 2022), the Conference of the Parties adopted [Decisions 19.38 and 19.39](#) on the Language strategy for the Convention.

The Decision 19.38 was directed to the Secretariat and states to provide for the translation of all valid Resolutions and Decisions into the three additional languages (Arabic, Chinese and Russian) drawing on available informal and official translations; and arrange for the translation of the CITES website

into these additional languages.

The Decision 19.39 was directed to the Standing Committee, and stated the Standing Committee shall, at its 77th meeting, consider the future approach to the language strategy of the Convention in order to provide interpretation in all six languages at the meetings of the Conference of the Parties, with emphasis on the interpretation at the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, subject to extrabudgetary contributions.

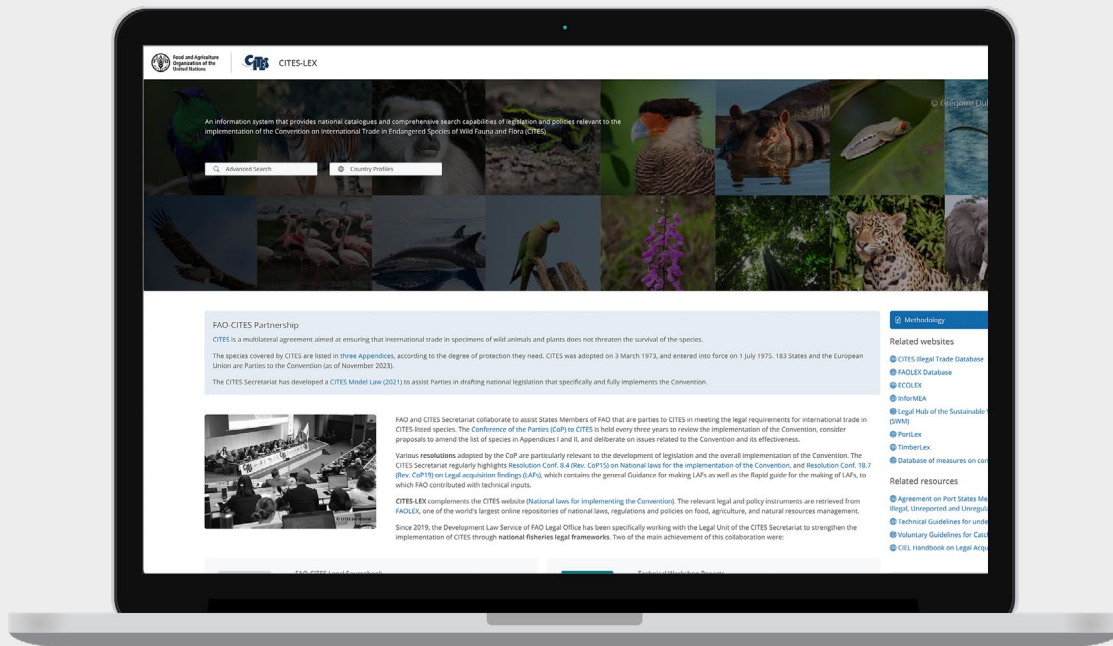


Photo: A mockup of CITES-LEX website

THE LAUNCH OF CITES-LEX

A DIGITAL MILESTONE IN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

On World Wildlife Day, 3rd March 2024, the wildlife conservation community witnessed a significant leap forward with the launch of CITES-LEX. This innovative platform, a collaboration between FAO and the CITES Secretariat, represents a major advancement in the digitalization of wildlife conservation efforts.

CITES-LEX is designed to assist Parties CITES to navigate the complexities of international trade in species listed in the CITES Appendices by providing comprehensive access to national catalogues and legislative policies. This multilateral agreement, with 183 States and

the European Union as Parties, aims to ensure that international trade does not threaten the survival of these species.

CITES-LEX integrates legal and policy instruments from [FAOLEX](#), one of the largest online repositories for laws and regulations on food, agriculture, and natural resource management. This integration not only ensures the availability of high-quality and reliable information but also enhances the platform's utility in strengthening the legal foundations for wildlife trade and conservation. [Visit the CITES-LEX webpage](#)

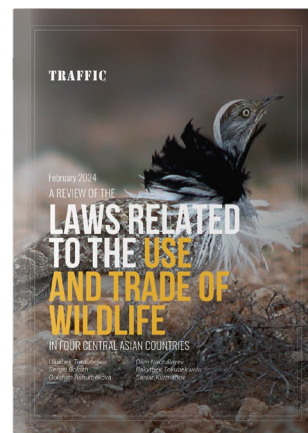
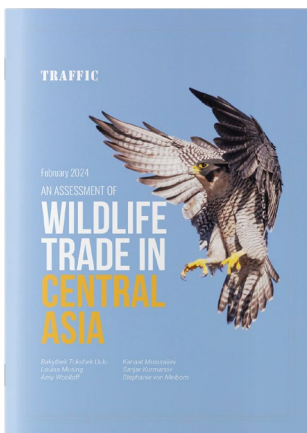


Photo: Falcon © Freepik

4. NEW PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

TRAFFIC, Fauna & Flora, the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK), the Institute of Zoology for the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Ecological Resource Centre “Ekomaktab” present a trio of reports with the first-of-its-kind comprehensive analysis

of wildlife trade in Central Asia. Data from a wide range of sources was compiled to shed light on the levels and dynamics of wildlife trade—both legal and illegal in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.



REPORT: AN ASSESSMENT OF WILDLIFE TRADE IN CENTRAL ASIA

This report sets out to establish a benchmark assessment of the levels and dynamics of wildlife trade—both legal and illegal—within the four Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

This will enable future studies to assess the changes in wildlife trade dynamics over time: which species are being traded in increasing or declining quantities and for what purposes. The study also aims to identify the common challenges and what solutions are available to assist national agencies within each of the study countries to manage and regulate the dynamics of the legal wildlife trade and support them to combat illegal trade within the region in a coordinated manner.

The study includes an analysis of the wildlife trade data currently available for these four

countries. Much of these data are derived from the information gathered from national government agencies within the region carrying out their international obligations as a Party to CITES.

This assessment focuses on animal and plant species listed in the CITES Appendices but also includes information on non-CITES listed species that are protected at the national level. It is hoped that this report will enable future studies to assess the changes in wildlife trade dynamics over time. To do this, CITES trade data for each of the four study countries were obtained from the CITES Trade database for 2012-2021.

REPORT: GUIDANCE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES ON ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE: DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND SHARING IN CENTRAL ASIA.

Law enforcement agencies in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan can greatly benefit from systematically collecting, analysing, and sharing data with neighbouring countries on illegal wild species traders, networks, and trade routes. By doing so, these agencies can effectively bring these criminals to justice.

The report comprises four main parts: “Guidance on Illegal Wild species Trade Data Collection; Guidance on Illegal Wild species Trade Data Analysis; Guidance on Illegal Wild species Trade Data Sharing; and Training and Capacity Building Resources to Support Law Enforcement Agencies Tackling the Illegal Wild species Trade”.

The guidance also includes examples of best practices from other countries, including

European Union Member States. Additionally, the report references existing resources such as the International Consortium on Combatting Wildlife Crime (ICWC) Wild Species and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit and consolidates various tools and resources from initiatives like CITES, the World Customs Organisation (WCO), and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) websites.

The report acts as a guidance tool, urging law enforcement agencies to adopt best practices in combating illegal wild species trade. By understanding the intricacies of this criminal activity and leveraging data-driven approaches, agencies can significantly enhance their effectiveness in tackling this global issue.

REPORT: LAWS RELATED TO USE AND TRADE OF WILDLIFE

Source: <https://www.traffic.org/news/spotlighting-wild-species-trade-in-central-asia/>

This study examined the issue by employing a multi-pronged approach, including a detailed analysis and evaluation of the existing legal frameworks. The primary objective was to identify gaps in current laws and formulate recommendations for addressing these shortcomings. The study then delved into the legal frameworks of the Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) to determine their effectiveness in combating illegal wildlife trade. The research began with a thorough analysis of social media platforms, where illegal wildlife trade activities

often occur. The analysis revealed a concerning trend of online platforms facilitating the sale and exchange of endangered species and their products. While these nations had made efforts to align their legal systems with international conventions and treaties, there were noticeable gaps and weaknesses in the enforcement of these laws. These gaps included ambiguous definitions, inadequate penalties, and shortcomings in the regulation of online trade. Through a meticulous analysis, the research pinpointed several key gaps in the legal frameworks across Central Asia.

LAUNCH OF THE WORLD WILDLIFE CRIME REPORT 2024:

NEW DATA, TRENDS, THREATS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO COMBAT ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

More information: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/wildlife.html>

The World Wildlife Crime Report 2024 was launched in May 2024 by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Vienna, Austria. This is the third report in a series following the [2020](#) and [2016](#) publications. The report provides an updated focus on trends in the illegal trade in wildlife species listed in CITES. It presents a systematic

analysis of wildlife crime harms and impacts, probes the factors driving wildlife trafficking trends, and takes stock of current knowledge about the effectiveness of the different types of interventions being pursued to resolve wildlife crime.



ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE TRAINING MODULES

Fauna & Flora, with support from the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, has developed four training modules to support law enforcement agencies tackling illegal wildlife trade in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In addition, subsidiary modules were created for Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to address specific needs. The four modules take a crime prevention approach to wildlife trafficking, highlighting existing global resources and tools available to law enforcement in Central Asia. It is hoped that these courses will build the institutional

capacity and knowledge in the four countries in an effective and sustainable way. They are designed as train the trainers courses which will help to mitigate the impact of the high turnover of staff who receive one-off trainings. The modules are available in Russian, Kyrgyz and Tajik language and they consist of 1. Wildlife Crime: An Overview; 2. Wildlife Crime Prevention: Foundations; 3. Wildlife Crime Prevention: Application and Practical Tools for Law Enforcement; 4. Assessment of Wildlife Crime Prevention Strategies.

The modules can be obtained upon request from Fauna & Flora, contact: Zhainagul.Bekenova@fauna-flora.org or Akylai.Kabaeva@fauna-flora.org

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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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