



# WCCB Newsletter

Quarter: Oct – Dec, 2022

Issue: 08

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## From Additional Director's Desk

**New Delhi:** At the outset, I wish all a very happy New Year 2023 and hope this new year brings lots of success and prosperity to the humankind.



Despite several challenges posed by wildlife smugglers the preceding year, India's forest/wildlife personnel achieved phenomenal success in curbing the illegal wildlife trade. It is with the relentless support of our forest and other law enforcement personnel that WCCB was able to bust several illegal wildlife trade networks across the county. I would, like to thank all the officials of law enforcement agencies across India for their dedication to the cause of wildlife conservation and appreciate their continued support to us in our fight against wildlife crime and disrupting the illegal wildlife trade syndicates.

In 2023, we have new challenges in the field of wildlife crime as well as new opportunities to counter the menace of illegal wildlife trade. I assure full support and cooperation of WCCB to all the stakeholders in curbing the illegal wildlife trade. I also call upon all stakeholders and wildlife lovers to put their contribution towards saving India's wildlife heritage.

As we release 08th edition of our quarterly e-newsletter, we look forward to the valuable suggestions to help improve it further. Jai Hind!

— *H.V Girisha, IFS, Additional Director, WCCB*

“Wild animals are less wild and more human than many humans of this world”

— *Munia Khan*

## Picture in Focus



*45 villagers living in and around the Sultanpur National Park, Haryana, were sensitized about illegal Wildlife Trade activities by WCCB team, on 22-11-2022.*

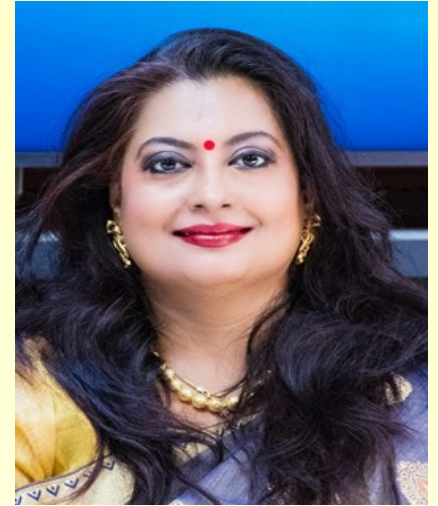
# Role of Zoological Survey of India in supporting law enforcement and combating illegal wildlife trade

Zoological Survey of India is the apex and leading organization on faunal inventorization and animal taxonomy under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Govt. of India. ZSI was established in 1916 with the objectives of exploration, survey, inventorization and monitoring of faunal diversity in various States, Ecosystems and Protected areas of India. At present, ZSI has 16 regional centres across the country working towards the advancement in knowledge of faunal diversity and taxonomy. ZSI is known for its specimen repository and has been declared as the designated Repository for the National Zoological Collection as per Section 39 of the National biodiversity Act, 2002. Beside that ZSI also deals with the environmental impact studies, training, capacity building and human resource development. One of the important services rendered by ZSI is to provide advisory and support to the various law enforcement agencies in dealing wildlife offences. As per the Gazette notification of Government of India (July, 2017), ZSI is one of the authorized institutions to deal and respond to the wildlife crime cases and issue advisory/species identification reports, which are admissible in honorable court of law for legal prosecution of the cases. Since, illegal wildlife trade is a global, lucrative, transnational organized crime with high demand driving high prices, imparting about \$53 billion/year in international grey market. The illegal wildlife trade is estimated to be the fourth largest illicit trade globally after weapons, drugs and human trafficking. And it is growing – according to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), illegal profits from environment crime are expected to increase at 5–7 percent each year as criminal groups expand the scope and scale of their activities.

India has only 2.4 per cent of the world's land area, but it has about 8.1 per cent of the world's species diversity, making it one of the world's 12 mega diversity countries supporting a great species diversity and endemism for both plants and animals. It has also been of the major hub for the illegal wildlife trade including different taxa from insect to mammals. As per TRAFFIC report more than 70000 wild animals including body parts or derivatives were seized just from airports during 2011-2020. Different mammalian species such as pangolin, rhino, elephant and tigers are prime

targets for their products. Millions of aquatic fishes for aquarium trade or fin and seahorses used in Chinese traditional medicine are caught annually from India. Similarly, averages of 7000000 birds are trapped annually in India. ZSI receives a large volume of such seized animal samples for the identification from enforcement agencies across the country. ZSI identifies the different taxa and species based on the basis of morphological characters if specimens/samples are intact with recognizable identifying characteristics such cases include whole body, flat skin, canines, hair, claws, antlers, horn or ivory. In cases where the seized materials have lost the morphological such as cooked meat, carved horns or ivory, skin part, scales, meat samples, scales etc. to conceal the original identity and materials such as snake venom, blood, ambergris etc. are processed for analytical examination or DNA analysis. A tiny piece or part of the sample is used for DNA examination, where the mitochondrial genes such as., Cytochrome b, 12S rRNA, 16SrRNA etc. are sequenced to generate species level identity. ZSI provides forensic examination report in the most appropriate way following the integrated approach. ZSI always prioritise the law enforcement agencies and provide end to end support, which also include training of the front-line staff, capacity building at various level, and support/ expert opinion in the court as and when the experts receive summons. During 1988-2021, ZSI has responded to 653 wildlife crime cases related to mammals alone received from various law enforcement agencies across the country. Some of the frequently seized species were leopard, tiger, rhino, deer, green sea turtle, pangolin and goral. In last few years, ZSI has made concentrated efforts in strengthening the wildlife forensic capabilities in India, and raised a dedicated facility "Centre for Forensic Sciences" in 2018 and published *Standard Operating Procedures* (SoPs) to deal wildlife crime cases. From the recognized centre, ZSI has already submitted over 200 case reports based on wildlife DNA forensics. Of the total cases received during 2017-2021, 67 % of cases were of *Schedule I* species of listed under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 which provides absolute protection, and offences under these are given highest penalties. Unlike other contemporary institutions, ZSI provides free advisory to the law enforcement agencies (absolutely no charges apply to the wildlife crime

cases) and ZSI's scientists also maintain digital sequence information (DSI) of all cases. More than 5000 DNA sequences are submitted and maintained by ZSI on global database of BOLD (Barcode of Life Database) and NCBI/GenBank database.



**Dr. Dhriti Banerjee,**  
**Director**  
*Zoological Survey of India (ZSI),*  
*Kolkata*

ZSI has also established and published books/manuals which can be used as reference or guide by supervising authority, investigating officers and all relevant practitioners. Manual for Wildlife forensics, Manual for identification of hairs of mammals through tricho-taxonomy and field guide for collection of biological samples for forensic purpose were published by ZSI for dealing and providing reference against Wildlife Crime. ZSI also regularly conducts conference, workshops and Karyashalas for different stakeholders such as for the officials of State Forest department, police, WCCB, military, paramilitary, lawyers and working professionals. These high-end workshops help in identifying gap areas, and building network for sharing intelligence, skills and overall upliftment of the wildlife forensic capabilities in India.

We in ZSI, believe "Illegal wildlife trade is an organized transnational crime driven by corruption and also linked to money laundering. It can easily damage economic development of any country and everyone has to do their part to stop this, before it is too late. Government institutions like us, have bigger responsibilities, and therefore need bigger and wider shoulders".

# Enforcement Operations



**Uttar Pradesh:** On inputs of WCCB, UP Forest Department seized 70 Indian Rollers, 58 Rose ring Parakeets, 10 Plum-headed Parakeets, and 8 White-breasted Kingfishers and arrested 4 persons from Bird Market at Kanpur, on 05-10-2022.

**Tamil Nadu:** Joint team of WCCB & Tamil Nadu Police Dept. seized 1106 Kg of Sea Cucumbers (687 kg raw, 399 Kg, semi processed, and 20 Kg processed) at Mandapam area of Ramnad (T.N), on 06-10-2022.



**Nagaland:** Joint team of WCCB and Nagaland Forest Department seized 05 pieces of Elephant ivory weighing 19 kg and arrested 03 persons from Dimapur, Nagaland, on 07-10-2022.

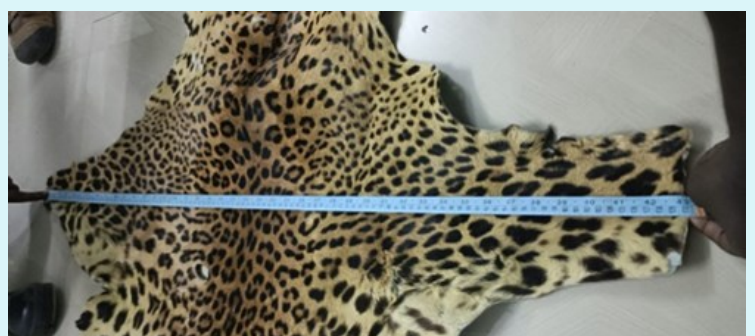
**Madhya Pradesh:** Joint team of WCCB, and M.P and Chhattisgarh Forest Dept. seized 01 Tiger skin and arrested 3 persons from Singrauli - Surajpur Border area of M.P., on 15-10-2022.



**Chhattisgarh:** Joint team of WCCB and M.P and Chhattisgarh Forest Dept. seized 01 Leopard skin and arrested 3 persons from Surajpur area of Chhattisgarh, on 16-10-2022.

**West Bengal:** Joint team of WCCB and West Bengal Forest Dept. seized 01 Snake Venom jar (weighing 2.517 kg.) and arrested 01 person at Phasidewa, Darjeeling (W.B.), on 16-10-2022.

**Tamil Nadu:** Joint team of WCCB & Tamil Nadu Forest Dept. seized one Leopard Skin and arrested one person from Alageshapuram area of Thoothukudi (T.N.), on 18-10-2022.



# Enforcement Operations



**Madhya Pradesh:** Joint team of WCCB and M.P Police seized 01 Leopard Skin, 04 Wild Pig tusks & few Leopard whiskers and arrested 04 persons at Baichiya area of Mandla (M.P), on 22-10-2022.



**Gujarat:** Joint team WCCB and Gujarat Forest Dept. seized 68 pieces of framed Black Corals, 02 live Indian Softshell turtles, 15 pieces of Hathha Jodi, and some protected Sea Shells and arrested 04 persons from Damoh, Vadodara, on 03-11-2022.

**Jharkhand:** Joint team of WCCB and Jharkhand Forest and Police Department teams seized 08 pcs. of elephant ivory and arrested 05 persons at Chaibasa, Jharkhand, on 16-11-2022.

**Tamil Nadu:** Joint team of WCCB & Tamil Nadu Forest Dept. seized a Tiger Skin and arrested four persons at Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu, on 21-11-2022.



**Uttar Pradesh:** Joint team of WCCB, STF, U.P Police & U.P Forest Dept. seized 1.2 Kg of Pangolin Scales & 04 Wild Boar teeth and arrested 2 persons at Sukrit Bazar, Robertsganj (U.P), on 24-11-2022.

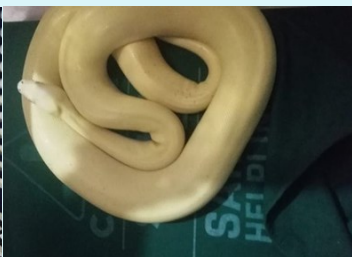
**Karnataka:** Joint team of WCCB and Karnataka Forest Dept. seized around 1.5 kg. of Pangolin scale and arrested two persons, on 26-11-2022.



**Karnataka:** Joint team of WCCB and Karnataka Police Dept. seized 04 Leopard paws with nails intact & arrested 05 persons at Hassan, Karnataka, on 29-11-2022.



# Enforcement Operations



**Karnataka:** Joint team of WCCB and Karnataka Forest Department seized 02 pieces of elephant ivories (weighing 10.950 Kg) & arrested 03 persons at Gundalupeta area of Chamrajnagar, Karnataka, on 09-12-2022.

**West Bengal:** Joint team of WCCB and West Bengal Forest Dept. seized 13 live Star Tortoises and arrested one person at Bagan area of Howrah (W.B.), on 12-12-2022.

**Tamil Nadu:** A two-day long joint operation conducted by WCCB, T.N State Police & Forest Dept. teams, led to seizure of 01 elephant Ivory (approx. 21 Kg) and arrest of 02 persons from Adukkamparai area of Vellore (Tamil Nadu), on 12 & 13 Dec, 2022.

**Assam:** Joint team of WCCB and Assam Forest Department seized 03 Elephant ivory pieces (weighing 08 kg approx.) & 02 Tiger Canines and arrested 04 persons from Guwahati, on 16-12-2022.

**Maharashtra:** Joint team of WCCB and Maharashtra Forest Dept. seized 9 Spotted Black Terrapin, 7 Star Tortoise & 5 Alexandrine Parakeets and arrested 2 persons at Mumbai, on 20-12-2022.

**Maharashtra:** Joint team of WCCB and Maharashtra Forest Dept. seized exotic animals viz. Iguanas, Corn Snake, Bearded Drogon, Kenyan Sand Boa, Tarantula, Scorpions, Albino Python, and live Tortoise and arrested one person from Nalasopara area of Mumbai, on 21-12-2022.

**Gujarat:** Joint team of WCCB and Gujarat Forest Department seized one Barn Owl and arrested two persons at Valsad area of Gujarat, on 22-12-2022.



# Sensitization/Training Programmes

Dy. Director, WCCB, Sh. A.K Chaurasia delivered a lecture on “Role of WCCB in Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade & Interface between Customs & WCCB” to 73<sup>rd</sup> Batch of IRS Probationers, at WII, Dehradun, on 03-10-2022.



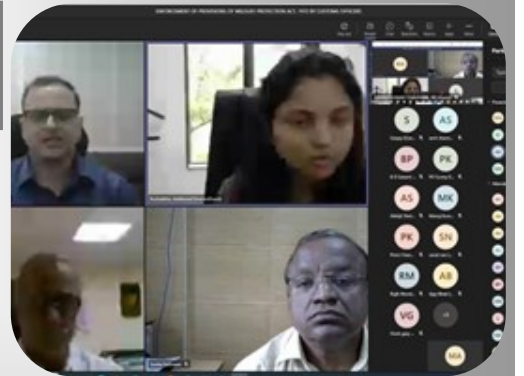
WCCB official delivered lecture on illegal wildlife trade related issues for newly promoted Dy. SPs of Haryana Police, during a Re-Orientation Programme organized by Haryana Police Academy, at Karnal, Haryana, on 11-10-2022.

WCCB, Uttarakhand Forest Department and ITBP (NF), jointly conducted a sensitization program on wildlife crime issues attended by 140 officials of ITBP, Indian Army, State Police, and National Park, at Uttarkashi, on 12-10-2022.



WCCB conducted a Capacity Building Training Program on wildlife crime related issues for CISF personnel, at CISF unit ASG Bagdogra Airport, on 12-10-2022, attended by 55 CISF officials.

Dy. Director, WCCB, Mr. Arvind Kumar Chaurasia, gave lectures to Customs Officers on “Role of Indian Customs in Combating Wildlife Crimes” during a virtual program organized by NACIN, Mumbai, on 13-10-2022.



WCCB conducted a hands-on Training Program on Identification of wildlife articles for SSB officials, at ITS, SSB, Kolkata, on 13-10-2022, attended by 62 SSB personnel.

70 SSB officials attended a Capacity Building Training Program organized by WCCB, at SSB, Ranidanga, on 13-10-2022.



WCCB conducted a Capacity Building Training Program, at SSB Camp, in Falakata on 13-10-2022, attended by 54 SSB Officials.

## Sensitization/Training Programmes



Dy. Director, WCCB, Sh. A. K Chaurasia spoke on “Organized Environmental Crimes & Effective Policy Measures In Indian Subcontinent” during a Round Table Discussion conducted by Jindal Global University, Haryana, on 14-10-22

WCCB, Gangotri National Park, Uttarakhand Forest, & ITBP (NFR), jointly conducted sensitization programs for ITBP officials posted at Border Posts of Nelong and PDA in Uttarakhand, on 13-10-22



WCCB conducted a 2-day Capacity Building Training Program for Forest and Police official on wildlife crime related issues, at Chikballapur, Karnataka on 13 & 14 Oct, 2022, attended by 50 officials.



90 SSB officials attended a lecture given by WCCB officials on species in illegal trade, at SSB Training Centre, Gorakhpur, on 17-10-2022.



WCCB officials delivered lectures on wildlife crime related issues, in a program organized by Nat'l Forensic Sci. University, Delhi on 18-10-22, attended by Judges/Magistrates, Police officials, ACFs & officials of CFSL/FSLs.



WCCB official sensitized RPF personnel on wildlife crime related issues, during a Training Course organized by Railway Protection Force, at RPF Training Centre, Trichy (T.N), attended by 80 RPF officials, on 20-10-2022.



40 CISF personnel posted at Trichy International Airport, participated in a Sensitization Programme on prevention of wildlife smuggling organized by WCCB, on 20-10-2022.



WCCB conducted a 2-day Capacity Building Program on wildlife crime related issues for Andhra Pradesh Forest Dept. officials, at Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh, on 20 & 21 Oct, 2022, attended by 40 officials.



# Sensitization/Training Programmes

WCCB and Lakshya NGO jointly organized a sensitization program on "Citizens Role to Combat Wildlife Crime" with special focus on birds, for the officials & staff of Lucknow Airport, virtually, on 12-11-2022.



44 Officer Trainees of CASFoS Coimbatore attended a 2-day Capacity Building Program on wildlife crime related issues organized by WCCB, on 16 & 17 Nov, 2022.

WCCB organized a Training Course on identification of wildlife articles for SSB officials at ITS, SSB, Kolkata, on 18-11-2022, attended by 29 SSB officials.



WCCB officials gave lectures to Police and Forest officials on "Investigation of wildlife crime cases" in a 5-day Capacity Building Training Program organized by CDTI, Jaipur from 28 Nov to 02 Dec, 2022, attended by 25 officials.

Judges of various Courts across Delhi participated in a Sensitization Workshop on wildlife crime issues organized by WCCB, at Delhi Judicial Academy, on 02-12-2022.



RDD/ER, WCCB delivered lecture on wildlife crime case handling, during a week-long workshop on 'Legal issues in Forestry' organized by CASFoS, Burnihaat, on 13-12-2022, attended by 20 Forest Officers.

29 RFOs of Tamil Nadu Forest Dept. attended a session on identification of wildlife articles conducted by WCCB official at Advanced Institute of Wildlife Conservation, Vandalur (T.N.), on 08-12-2022.



65 Officers of Karnataka Police attended a wildlife crime sensitization program jointly organized by WCCB and Human International Society at Dharwad, Karnataka, on 12-12-2022.



## Sensitization/Training Programmes

43 officials of Madhya Pradesh Forest & Police Departments attended a two-day Capacity Building Training Programme jointly organized by WCCB and M.P State Police Academy, at MPPA, Bhopal, on 13 & 14 Dec, 2022.



Forest Flying Squad Officials of Bhopal attended a sensitization program on 'Prevention of wildlife crime' jointly organized by WCCB, M.P Forest Dept., and Bhopal Birds NGO, at Forest, Bhopal, on 12-12-2022.



43 officials of Madhya Pradesh Forest & Police Departments attended a two-day Capacity Building Training Programme jointly organized by WCCB and M.P State Police Academy, at MPPA, Bhopal, on 13 & 14 Dec, 2022.



WCCB official gave lecture on identification of wildlife articles, during a 2-day Workshop on 'Commonly traded wildlife article identification & cyber wildlife crime' organized by WTI & Valmiki Tiger Reserve, Bihar, on 15/16-12-2022.



16 IFS officers attended a session on 'Seizure & arrest procedure' taken by WCCB official, during a one-week compulsory course for IFS officers organized at Assam Veterinary College Guwahati, on 21-12-2022.



WCCB organized Sensitization-cum-Awareness Programs for the Fishermen Community located at Lotus Jetty, Worli, Mumbai and briefed them about do's and don'ts of marine species trade, on 28-12-2022, attended by 120 Fishermen.



Sr. officials of Enforcement Agencies attended an Inter-Agency Coordination Meet on "Trafficking of Exotic Pets & Measures for Prevention" organized by WCCB, at Chennai International Airport, on 23-12-2022.

## Institutional Programmes

# WCCB celebrates Vigilance Awareness Week

**Nov, 2022:** WCCB observed the Vigilance Awareness Week from Oct 31 to Nov 6, 2022 across all its offices around the country. Marking the week, officials and staff members of WCCB took the 'Integrity Pledge', in the ceremonies held at its headquarter and regional offices.

Vigilance Awareness Week, observed every year during the last week of October, is taken up to encourage all stakeholders to collectively participate in the prevention of, and the fight against corruption and to raise public awareness regarding the existence, causes and gravity of and the threat posed by corruption.



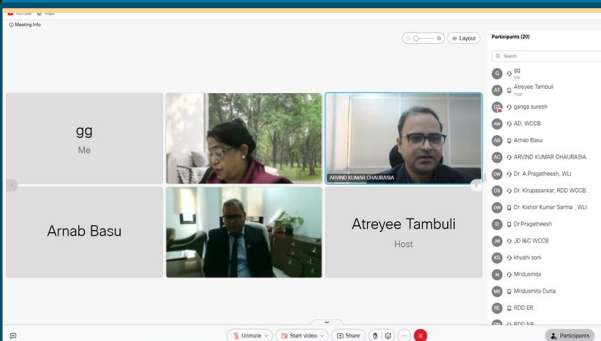
## WCCB Conducts Quarterly RDD Meet

**Dec, 2022:** Wildlife Crime Control Bureau organized the Quarterly Regional Deputy Directors (RDD) Meet at its Bureau Headquarter in New Delhi, on 21 December, 2022. The meet was attended by Regional Deputy Directors of all the five Regional Offices of WCCB situated in various locations across the country.

The meet was held to review the work done by regional offices and discuss action plan for the coming quarter. The meet was chaired by the Additional Director, Mr. H.V Girisha and attended by all Senior official of the Bureau.



## WCCB organizes Winter Internship Programme



WCCB organized its annual 'Winter Internship Programme 2022-23' from 01 to 30 December, 2022. The program was inaugurated by Additional Director, WCCB, Sh. H.V Girisha, in a virtual ceremony held on 01-12-2022. All senior officers of WCCB and Interns from across the country participated in the programme. Senior officials of WCCB also interacted with the participants and apprised them of wildlife crime related issues.

The month long WCCB Internship Programme intends to inculcate knowledge and motivate Students and Researchers in the field of Wildlife Crime and Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT). Interns having had deep insight in the field of wildlife crime and IWT are expected to be eyes and ears of WCCB. During the program, they are made aware of the national and international scenario in wildlife crime and IWT. Each intern is assigned a specific topic to study, to prepare a report and give a power point presentation, under the supervision of senior officials of WCCB.

Under the guidance and supervision of Sh. H.V Girisha, the program has further evolved and streamlined to benefit both the organization as well as the interns. The Bureau officials are consistently endeavoring to improve the structure and design of internship program to make it more beneficial to the interns, WCCB, and to the cause of wildlife conservation at large.

## Exit-Point Detections



WCCB team examined an import cargo and detected several wild species viz. 162 Ball Python, 53 Corn Snake, 205 Centrohelys Sulcata Tortoise, 198 Albino Red-eared Slider Turtle, 3 Milk Snake, and 7 Monitor Lizard, concealed under layer of live aquarium fishes in a consignment seized by DRI at Chennai Airport, on 06-10-22 midnight.



WCCB team examined a consignment of live fish detained by DRI and found various species of exotic animals viz. 251 Yellow Pond Turtle (36 Dead), 37 Alligator Snapping Turtle, 08 Common Snapping Turtle, 259 Iguana (74 dead), 1 Black and White Tegu, 10 Spiny Tailed Lizard (1 dead), 9 Pan Cake Tortoise, 2 Salamander, 23 Vietnamese Black Breasted-leaf turtle (05 dead), 27 Red Eared Slider Albino Turtle, 2 Rainbow Boa, 1 Monitor Lizard, 3 Burmese Albino Python, 4 Albino Ball python (1 dead), 11 Ball Python, 2 Burmese Python, & 15 Leopard Tortoise, at Air Cargo Complex, Mumbai, on 06-10-2022.



WCCB team examined a passenger baggage referred by AIU, Chennai and detected illegal transportation of exotic species viz. 2 Common Cuscus, 2 Dwarf Cuscus, and 1 Spotted Cuscus concealed in 4 netted pet bags, at Chennai International Airport, on 23-08-2022.

## Exit-Point Detections



WCCB team inspected the check-in-luggage of a passenger arriving from Bangkok, intercepted by Chennai Air Customs, and detected 2 Pygmy Marmoset, and 2 Dusky Leaf Monkey (both dead) on 27-11-2022.



WCCB examined a Customs referred consignment at IGI Courier Terminal, Delhi and found 6 kg of Bird feather bowtie (Peafowl tail feather and other bird's feather) arriving from Shanghai, on 14-12-2022.



WCCB examined three Customs export consignments at Foreign Post Office (FPO), Delhi and found 03 kg of Peafowl tail feathers destined to USA, on 15-12-2022.



WCCB examined Customs import consignment at Foreign Post Office (FPO), Delhi and found 1 pcs of Chital Skin, arrived from Texas, USA, on 15-12-2022.

# Poachers shift target to giant hippos' teeth in place of ivory

Dec, 2022: Deepening restrictions on ivory trafficking have led to an increase of the trade in hippopotamus teeth, wildlife campaigners are warning, with potentially serious effects for a species already listed as “vulnerable to extinction.”

When the UK last June announced a near-total ban on the trade in elephant ivory, an animal welfare charity studied what happened in three widely used online marketplaces.

“We found the increase in hippo ivory trade in the UK within a month after the near total-ban of elephant ivory was introduced,” says Frankie Osuch, lead author of a report released by Born Free in September.

This was “deeply concerning evidence of increased demand for ivory from

hippos, whose numbers in the wild are under threat” the report said.

Researchers say this pattern was clear as far back as 1989, when a worldwide ban on trade in ivory was first agreed, and has only intensified as governments have brought in new measures to tighten the ban.

Like ivory, hippo teeth and tusks are often used for decorative carvings, but they are cheaper and easier to obtain.

Hippo body parts can still be traded under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), though all international sales require an export permit.

It has been calculated that between 1975, when CITES records began, and 2017, 770,000kg of hippo teeth were

legally traded. But there is also an illegal trade.

In 2020 hippo teeth were among the mammal body parts most often seized in the EU, according to a European Commission report.

“There are increasing cases of sniffer dogs detecting hippo teeth at different airports in Africa these days, and the detection does not mean all of them are caught, perhaps only half of them are,” says Philip Muruthy, vice-president of the Africa Wildlife Foundation.

A study by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in 2016 estimated that the worldwide population of the common hippo was between 115,000 and 130,000 — a drop of 30....

*News Source: [theeasaffrican](http://theeasaffrican.com)*

## Tanzanians nabbed with elephant tusks worth 500,000 in Kisumu

Dec, 2022: Three suspects, among them two Tanzanians, were arrested by police in Kisumu after they were found in possession of elephant tusks valued at over 500,000.

Police said 52-year-old Wilson Korio was arrested together with Tanzanians Jakaya Mchubo Paswa (42), and Lemintiye Mbukoti (27), after they were found with eight pieces of elephant tusks weighing 16 kilograms.

The arrest came after detectives in Kisumu received a tip-off from an informant, and then liaised with Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) personnel to make the bust.

They headed to Mamboleo where the arrest of the three was effected.

A fourth suspect who is said to have attempted to rescue his accomplices was shot in the arms in the process before he sped off on a motorbike.

Meanwhile, the three will remain in custody pending arraignment on Wednesday, December 28, 2022.

*News Source: [the-star](http://the-star.com)*

## Rhinoceros horns worth S\$1.2 million seized at Changi Airport, largest such haul in Singapore

Oct, 2022: The National Parks Board (NParks) on Tuesday (Oct 4) seized 20 pieces of rhinoceros horns that were being smuggled through Singapore Changi Airport.

Airport security and NParks' K9 Unit detected and inspected two bags and found 34kg of rhinoceros horns,

estimated to be worth around S\$1.2 million, NParks said in a media release on Wednesday.

This is Singapore's largest seizure of rhinoceros horns to date, it added.

"The owner of the bags, who was travelling from South Africa to the Lao People's Democratic Republic through Singapore, was immediately arrested and the rhinoceros horns were seized by NParks."

Rhinoceros are protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild

Fauna and Flora (CITES), to which Singapore is a signatory.

Under CITES, international trade in rhinoceros horns is prohibited.

Singapore is committed to international efforts to curb illegal wildlife trade to ensure the long-term survival of these animals, said NParks.

"Genetic testing is being carried out at NParks' Centre for Wildlife Forensics to identify the rhinoceros species," it added.

"The horns will subsequently be destroyed to prevent them from re-entering the market, disrupting the global supply chain of illegally traded rhinoceros horns."

Under Singapore's Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act, those who are found in possession of CITES-scheduled species in tran....

*News Source: [channelnewsasia](http://channelnewsasia.com)*

## CITES COP19 urges parties to remove references to pangolins from 'official pharmacopoeia'

Nov, 2022: The 19th Conference of Parties (COP19) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) urged countries November 22, 2022, to remove references to parts and derivatives of pangolins "from the official pharmacopoeia" to help save the species.

COP19 suggested countries to replace these references with acceptable substitute products that do not threaten the existence of another wild species, according to a document released by the CITES Secretariat. COP19 is being held in Panama City from November 14-25.

The pangolin is 'the most trafficked animal in the world'. Pangolins are listed in Appendix I of CITES in accordance with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's Red List.

This means that the species is threatened with extinction. There are eight species of pangolins in the world of which the Indian Pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*) and the Chinese Pangolin (*Manis pentadactyla*) are found in India.

At least 23.5 tonnes of pangolins and their specimens were trafficked in 2021 alone, according to TRAFFIC, a global non-profit working on trade in wild animals and plants and their conservation.

COP19 also urged parties and non-parties alike to adopt and implement comprehensive national legislation and review existing ones that will serve deterrent penalties targeting illegal trade in specimens of native and non-native pangolin species.

It suggested applying anti-money laundering measures, forensic analytical

techniques, working with online platforms transportation companies, intelligence-led enforcement and creating robust systems in border regions to bring about effective regional enforcement.

The working parties came together to mutually agree on implementing methods and techniques to detect and identify illegally traded pangolins and their parts from alleged captive breeding operations.

It also agreed to work on best practice tools for safely handling, caring and rehabilitating pangolins in case of confiscation of live specimens, eventually to be released in the wild.

COP19 also urged parties on whose territories the parts and specimens of pangolins exist to take stringent steps....

*News Source: [downtoearth](#)*

### Rhino poacher sentenced to 34 years in jail

Nov, 2022: A man has been sentenced to 34 years in prison for rhino poaching by a court in Mpumalanga. This comes against the backdrop of another court in the area sentencing a man to 17 years for rhino poaching. The Skukuza Regional Court sentenced Siphon Titus Khosa on Friday to 34 years in jail.

The SAPS provincial commissioner in Mpumalanga, Lieutenant General Semakaleng Daphney Manamela said the sentence stems from two poaching incidents which took place in 2016.

Kruger National Park section rangers had reportedly seen two poachers enter the park on September 27, 2016 through the Stolznek area. Additional field rangers were immediately called in and a search commenced. The two helicopters which were dispatched to assist with the search, played a vital role in enabling the team to spot the....

*News Source: [iol](#)*

### India garners international support to save two endangered freshwater turtles

Dec, 2022: India has scored a notable success in mobilising international support for the conservation of two of its endangered freshwater turtles, but there is a huge ground work ahead to translate the policy into action and save these valuable members of the ecosystem from vanishing.

At a recently-concluded 19th meeting of the conference of the parties (CoP19) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) at Panama City, India's proposal to regulate trade in Leith's softshell turtle (*Nilssonina leithi*) by shifting its listing to the highest category – threatened with extinction and necessitating regulation of trade – was accepted.

CITES is the global treaty that regulates international trade in nearly 40,000 species of wild plants and animals,

including timber and marine species which are included in its three appendices. The first appendix deals with species that are threatened with extinction, and trade is only permitted in exceptional circumstances, for example, for scientific research. The second appendix includes species that are not necessarily threatened with extinction, but whose trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilisation detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild; while the third appendix has species that are protected by national legislation in at least one country which has asked the CITES countries for assistance in controlling the trade.

At the Panama meeting, India suggested transferring Leith's softshell turtle (*Nilssonina leithi*) from Appendix II to Appendix I, which was agreed upon. The country's proposal for induction....

*News Source: [mongabay](#)*

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## Visits/Representations

### Addl. Director participated in COP19 Meet in Panama, shared WCCB's Experiences of disrupting Tiger poaching



Additional Director, WCCB, Mr. H.V. Girisha spoke about India's initiatives to counter illegal wildlife trade linked to internet, in the CITES CoP19 Side-Event on "Creating a coordinated approach to combat wildlife crime linked to the internet", in Panama, on 22-11-2022. He also shared 'WCCB's experiences of disrupting Tiger poaching in India', in a side-event organized during the meet in Panama, on 24-11-2022.

### Addl. Director represents India at the SAWEN Meet



Additional Director, WCCB, Mr. H V. Girisha represented India at the General Meeting of South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN), organized from 02 to 03 Nov, 2022, at Male in Maldives.

### WCCB officials represented India at the UNODC WIRE Meet



Joint Director, WCCB, Dr. Manoj Kumar and Deputy Director, WCCB, Mr. Arvind Kumar Chaurasia represented India at the Wildlife Inter-Regional Enforcement (WIRE), organized by UNODC from 30 Nov to 02 Dec, 2022, at Bangkok in Thailand.

## Awards/Visit

### Ex-Addl. Director Ms. Tilotama Varma awarded UNODC/UNEP 2022 'Asia Environment Enforcement Award'



Ex Addl. Director, WCCB, Ms. Tilotama Varma has been awarded UNODC/UNEP 2022 'Asia Environmental Enforcement Award', received by Joint Director, WCCB, Dr. Manoj Kumar on her behalf in Bangkok.

### Ex-Addl. Director Ms. Tilotama Varma awarded Clark R. Bavin Wildlife Law Enforcement Awards 2022



Ex. Additional Director, WCCB, Ms. Tilotama Varma has been awarded the prestigious Clark R. Bavin Wildlife Law Enforcement Awards 2022 for excellent leadership to WCCB in enforcing national & international wildlife and CITES laws. The award was received on her behalf by Dr. S.P Yadav, ADG (Forests) during the CITES CoP19 Meeting at Panama.

### Enforcement on inward smuggling of exotic species through Myanmar - Mizoram Border.



Dr. Manoj Kumar, JD (IC), Sh. Agni Mitra, RDD(ER) and Sh. Arvind Kumar Chaurasia, DD (Customs), WCCB visited Mizoram from 07 Nov to 10 Nov 2022 to intensify enforcement against inward smuggling of exotic species through Myanmar - Mizoram Border.

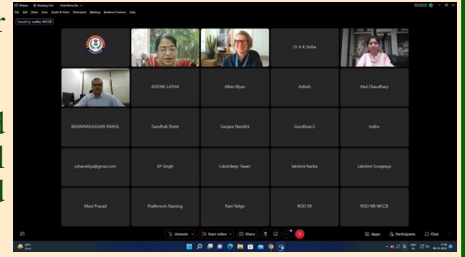


# World Wildlife Week 2022 Celebrations

Annual “Wildlife Week” celebration was observed by WCCB from 02nd Oct to 08th Oct, 2022. Several online and field level programmes viz. lectures, training sessions, sensitization programmes, awareness programmes, quiz contests and painting, drawing & essay competitions for school students, were organized by all regional offices of WCCB during the period. People from all walks of life participated in the week long celebrations. A glimpse below:

Celebrating the Wildlife Week 2022, WCCB Headquarter organized a Webinar on “Role of Forensics in Curbing Wildlife Crime”, on 06-10-2022.

Several eminent persons from the field of Criminology, Forensic Studies and Wildlife Forensics presented their views on emerging trends on global illegal wildlife crime and role of forensics in curbing the menace, which was attended by 60 persons including forensic Science students across the country.



**Northern Region:** Marking the celebrations of Wildlife Week, WCCB Northern Region Office and Customs Department, jointly organized a session on "Prevention of Wildlife Trafficking–Role of Indian Customs" at ICD Tughlakabad, Delhi,

45 persons including School Students and Customs Officials participated in the program.

**Eastern Region:** Marking the event, WCCB Eastern Region Office and Manipur Forest Dept. organized a lecture on wildlife crime related issues at Loktak Lake, Manipur, on 05-10-2022, attended by 50 persons including Forest and Police officials, NGO Members and Students. The office also organized a lecture on "Importance of Wildlife" at Keibul Lamjao National Park, Manipur, on 07-10-2022, which was attended by 25 persons including Park Officials, NGO Members & Wildlife Research Fellows. Later in the week, RDD (ER) gave a lecture on "Wildlife Conservation in India: Recent Trends" during a program organized by West Bengal Zoo Authority marking the event, on 07-10-2022, attended by 50 persons.



**Western Region:** WCCB Western Region Office and Goa Forest Dept, jointly celebrated Wildlife Week and organized a Sensitization Program for Students and faculties of Dr. Dada Vaidya College of Education, Ponda, Goa, on 03-10-2022. 100 persons participated in the program. While, on 04-10-2022, both the organizations came together and organized a another Sensitization program for Public Prosecutors, Customs, Police and Forest officials, at Van Bhavan, Goa.

**Southern Region:** Celebrating the Week, WCCB Southern Region Office & Ethiraj College for Women, Chennai, jointly organized a lecture on wildlife conservation and illegal wildlife trade related issues, on 07-10-2022. Around 200 persons including Faculties and Students of the College participated in the program. The office also conducted an awareness program for the officials of Sathiyamangalam Tiger Reserve, Tamil Nadu, on 06 & 07 Oct, 2022, which was attended by 80 officials including Range Officers and Anti-Poaching Watchers of the Reserve.



**Central Region:** Central Region Office of WCCB organized an awareness programme for community member and conducted several activities viz. Quiz Contests, Drawing Competitions and Wildlife Sensitization Sessions for the community members including Students, Villagers and PRI Members, living around the Panna Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh, on 08-10-2022.

The program was attended by 80 persons.

## PRI/Awareness Programmes



**WCCB & NGO Aaranyak jointly organized a PRI Sensitization Programme on wildlife crime related issues at Haflong area of Dima-Hasao District, Assam, on 10-10-2022, attended by 28 persons including NGO Members, Village Pradhans & Forest officials.**



**A PRI Sensitization Programme on wildlife crime related issues was conducted by WCCB and NGO Aaranyak, jointly, at Longnit, Karbi Anglong, Assam, on 11-10-2022, attended by 65 people including Local NGO Members, Village Pradhans, and Forest Officials.**



**Around 100 people including Students and PRI and EDC Members participated in a Wildlife Sensitization program organised by WCCB at Mandla district of Madhya Pradesh, on 10-10-2022.**



**40 Members of Baiga Tribal Community of Mandla District in Madhya Pradesh, participated in a PRI Sensitization Programme organised by WCCB at Forest Eco Camp, Mandla (M.P), on 11-10-2022.**



**WCCB and NGO SPOAR jointly organized a Sensitization Program on wildlife crime related issues for PRI & NGO Members living around Buxa Tiger Reserve (W.B.), on 15-10-2022, attended by 33 persons.**

## PRI/Awareness Programmes



**85 persons including school Students, PRI Members and NGO Members were sensitized on wildlife crime related issues during a Sensitization Programme jointly organized by WCCB and NGO Aaranyak at North Missamari High School in Sonitpur, Assam, on 09-11-2022.**



**WCCB and NGO Aranyak jointly organized a PRI Sensitization Programme on wildlife crime related issues at Nunai Forest Range in Udalguri, Assam, on 10-11-2022, attended by 91 persons including Village Panchayat Members, Tea Estate Managers and NGO Members.**



**A PRI Sensitization Programmes was conducted by WCCB at Pakke Tiger Reserve, Arunachal Pradesh, in collaboration with NGO Aranyak, On 30-11-2022, attended by 47 persons.**



**Over 100 villagers participated in wildlife awareness programs organized by WCCB and Manipur Forest Department at Khawpuibung and Singngat villages in Manipur, on 05 & 06 Dec, 2022, respectively.**



**Residents of Kandli Village in Dharwad (Karnataka) were sensitized towards wildlife crime related issues during a PRI Awareness Program jointly organized by WCCB & Karnataka Forest Dept., on 13-12-2022.**

# Swachhhta Campaign 2022

Taking participation in Government of India's 'Swachhhta Campaign', WCCB conducted several activities at its offices situated across the county from 02 Oct to 31 Oct, 2022. From New Delhi to Mumbai, From Chennai to Jabalpur & Kolkata, officials and staff members of WCCB participated in the month long Swachhhta (Cleanliness) Campaign and undertook cleanliness, sanitization, and document weeding drives at its office premise.

Below is a pictorial glimpse of some of the cleanliness and sanitization drives conducted during the period:



## The Shillong Times

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### WCCB, Aaranyak hold multi-stakeholders wildlife crime workshop

By From Our Correspondent — On Nov 10, 2022



Guwahati, Nov 10: Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) in coordination with Assam Forest Department and Aaranyak today held a sensitization workshop on prevention of wildlife crime for forest personnel, Village council members, Village Defence Personnel, representatives of tea garden management in Nunai Range Office of Khalinduar Reserve Forest in Udalguri district of Assam.

Resource persons addressing the workshop sensitized the participants on the basic fact that the Indian Constitution has given responsibility to all its citizens to conserve wildlife. This responsibility of citizens of Assam and other northeastern states is quite crucial as the region sharing its boundaries with other countries.

Jawaharlal Baro, Assistant director of WCCB also spoke about different laws including Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, to combat wildlife crime. He emphasised on mass participation to combat wildlife crime.

He also spoke about different provisions in Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, to combat wildlife crime called for people's participation to control wildlife crime.

Around 100 participants representing Village Council Development Committee (VCDC) members, chairman, village head, forest staff, VDP personnel, and representatives from tea garden managements, local communities actively participated in the workshop.

Jayanta Kumar Pathak, manager of Environment Education and Capacity Building (EECB) of Aaranyak spoke about importance of conservation for well-being of natural environment and

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New Delhi, Dec 28: Random testing of rising scare of...



Home / NE News / Mizoram News / Smugglers Opting...

### Smugglers Opting Champhai Route For Exotic Animals: WCCB

Officials of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change held a coordination meeting with various stakeholders engaged in prevention of wildlife smuggling at the Office of the Divisional Forest Officer, Champhai on Wednesday.



By : Sentinel Digital Desk | 10 Nov 2022 2:38 PM



AIZAWL: In a concerning development, it has come to light that wildlife smugglers have been frequently using a route passing through Champhai District of Mizoram along the India-Myanmar border to smuggle several exotic species of animals from South East Asian countries.

This was stated by officials of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change in a meeting held in Champhai on Wednesday.



# Indian Star Tortoises

*Scientific Name: Geochelone elegans*

### Key Facts

The Indian star tortoise is a threatened tortoise species native to India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka where it inhabits dry areas and scrub forest.

They have mostly tan skin on their head, limbs, and tail but may also be marked with dark spots. Their thick legs are covered in tubercles, which are scale-like perturbances.

Indian star tortoise's limbs and head are small enough to pull inside its shell in case of predators.

They can live up to 80 years old with the right care, however, they usually live to around 50 years of age.

Their shell grows tall and is very rounded in shape which is another distinctive feature when compared to the shells of other tortoises which are often more flat.

The Indian star tortoise size varies from 7-12 inches long, with females growing to the larger end of that range and males generally staying on the smaller side.

Males also have longer and thicker tails than females and, if you look at the underside of their shell, you will notice that the male's plastron is slightly concave in shape whereas the female's is completely flat.



### Interesting Facts

Its name comes from the star-like patterns that feature on its high-domed shell. Because of these very distinctive patterns and its highly rounded shell, the Indian star tortoise is popular in the world's trade in exotic pets.

The attractive markings on its shell, aside from looking very pretty, serve to help this tortoise more easily blend in with its surroundings, by breaking up the hard edge of the shell, so when the tortoise is grazing, it is not so obvious to predators passing by.

The Indian star tortoise is diurnal and mostly active in the morning and late afternoon. They are traditionally herbivores eating leaves, berries, flowers, and fruit; however, in cases of scarce food, they can be seen eating carrion. During abnormal hot or cold stints, they will become inactive and not eat for long periods.

### Threat

A large number of specimens of this species are found in the illegal wildlife trade in India. The main threats to the Indian star tortoise is the illegal pet trade and habitat destruction.

### Conservation Status

Indian Start Tortoises are listed in Schedule IV of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.






The species is listed in Appendix I in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

It is listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.

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