

## Illegal Wildlife Trade: Half Year Report

(due 31<sup>st</sup> October 2015)

<b>Project Ref No</b>	IWT-03
<b>Project Title</b>	Breaking the chain: combating the illegal trade in Ploughshare tortoises
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Madagascar; Indonesia, Malaysia
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	Madagascar National Parks, TRAFFIC International, Alliance Voahary Gasy, Madagasikara Voakajy, Turtle Conservancy, UK Border Force, Wildlife Conservation Society, Government of Madagascar.
<b>Project Leader</b>	Andrew Terry
<b>Report date and number (eg HYR1)</b>	2015/6 HYR2
<b>Project website</b>	Durrell.org/ploughshare

**1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).**

### **Output 0: General Project Management Activities**

Partners meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> July in Antananarivo, to use the opportunity of the presence of Andrew Terry from Jersey, Eric Goode of Turtle Conservancy, and Owen Griffiths of La Vanille – Mauritius. Mr Griffiths had been invited to the meeting because he had just received an agreement from the Malagasy government to breed confiscated ploughshares and therefore the project team is discussing collaboration options with him. The meeting was also the opportunity for the partners to talk about the results of the first year of the project. The appreciation and the recommendations of the British government were presented afterward as well as the activities planned for the second year of the project.

### **Output 1: Coverage and efficiency of community-park ranger patrols in the BBNP is improved through implementation and uptake of SMART system**

The community and park ranger patrols continued during the last six months. There were 1,218 patrols involving 32 people within the 5 core zones of Baly Bay National Park (BBNP). Two SMART reports have been produced from recent community patrol reports and Madagascar National Parks patrol reports done for their old monitoring system MIST. MIST is the system used before the implementation of SMART. From a comparison of the two systems, we can see that MIST reports only showed the length and duration of the patrols and not the various incidents and/or evidences found or encountered during them. Both pieces of information are needed for monitoring effectiveness in patrol effort. The patrols have marked several signs of people walking through restricted parts of the national park and also camps being made.

Poaching remains a real problem. In July an image was sent to us from colleagues in TRAFFIC SE Asia (within this project) of five adult ploughshare tortoises being offered for sale. These animals were still in Madagascar and at least one of them was an animal that until June was being tracked in the wild. This prompted the management team, together with community leaders, to review the composition of the community patrol programmes. This was carried out in September and the outcome was that two community rangers have been replaced for not being able to fulfil the job and for being the subject of strong poaching rumours.

Durrell is investing further into the coordination and management of the patrols. We recently recruited a new patrol coordinator who is focussing on this issue. We are also trialling the development of an incentive scheme based on quarterly assessment of performance to improve performance.

The next ploughshare tortoise population survey will be conducted in November. Initial results from the last population count that was conducted at the end of 2014 and into 2015 indicates that in average there are 0.03 ploughshares per hectare – highlighting their extremely low density. Things have got so bad that animals may no longer be physically finding each to reproduce. These results have been taken to the National Tortoise Committee to see what urgent measures must be taken and will be submitted for publication in a peer reviewed journal.

**Output 2 The role of local community members in poaching and the incentives and barriers to poaching are identified and understood for at least 6 of the communities most closely identified with the problem**

In July and August 2015, project partner Madagasikara Voakajy (MaVoa) completed eight focus group meetings with communities, interviewed 25 key informants and visited 854 households. At the same time, they collected and replaced the eight logbooks from the first year of the project. The logbook analysis asked community members to log any activities involving the harvest of natural resources from the wild, including the ploughshares. During the recording period, there were in total 427 observations logged, including two cases of ploughshares being taken – both in the wet season.

Initial results of the interviews and focus group discussions show that the ploughshare tortoise is an extremely sensitive species – people recognise that any discussion of the species is to be avoided and many people did not want to take part in the interviews, even though special techniques were used to anonymise responses. Those that did respond identified more opportunities for poaching than barriers. Typical opportunities cited were an increase in the price of animals; increasing unemployment, dissatisfaction with the focus on the animals and not people's wellbeing, a lack of proper integration with the National Park. The main barrier identified was the fear of prosecution if caught. This report will be further developed and the results will be an important contribution to the development of the next strategy for the ploughshare tortoise.

**Output 3 The trade chain of illegal activity for ploughshare tortoises from Madagascar to Southeast Asia is understood and documented leading to greater national and international cooperation to tackle key individuals and areas within the smuggling process**

Continuous communication has been maintained between TRAFFIC SE Asia and TRAFFIC Madagascar and Durrell throughout the year. From received intelligence and recent concrete cases, the tortoise smuggling goes through two routes: first, to mainland Africa (Kenya, Libya etc.), and to SE Asia (Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, China etc.). There have been two major seizures of tortoises at Ivato International Airport in the last six months, involving 1,487 radiated tortoises and eight ploughshare tortoises. In a separate incident, Durrell received a warning from TRAFFIC SE Asia. We contacted the relevant authorities which were unable to find anything. However TRAFFIC reported that the shipment arrived in Hong Kong. This raises questions concerning how it was possible for the animals to still have been smuggled.

We still face challenges working with national authorities. We are not providing formal intelligence reports to Government agencies due to difficult communications that now requires a number of sign-offs at high levels before any action is taken. Formally we are also struggling to promote that Madagascar forms an MoU with Thailand to address smuggling issues. This is a priority to address in the next period.

**Output 4 Improved enforcement of laws along the trade chain through filling key skills gaps and raising awareness of poaching issue within priority institutions and increased support of local Dina governing ploughshare poaching.**

A new president was appointed to the tribunal of Mahajanga in July. A courtesy visit was made to her by the Regional Director of the Environment Department, Madagascar National Parks Director, and Durrell. The Regional Director of the Environment Department has informed us that the new president is taking a tough stance, with the majority of people involved in cases of environmental laws infringement being taken into custody. This is quite unusual in Madagascar where prisons are so overcrowded that only major criminals are taken to prison. The new maintain a positive collaboration between us. Therefore this bodes well for future work with the judicial system in Mahajanga.

We plan to take the new president and another judge to BBNP to give them a good understanding of the tortoise problem. Suggestions on how to exchange ideas on smuggling cases have also been passed on as opposed to training which makes the tribunal people very sensitive. In the first year of the project, we conducted training with the "Officiers de Police Judiciaire" in Mahajanga. However, the deputy public prosecutor made it clear that we were not there to teach them their job. We can teach them something related to environment but never anything related to laws. This highlights the sensitivities involved in providing training, even though it is really needed.

Collaboration with AVG also enabled us to give to the new president a compilation of the main existing environmental laws. One of the main complaints of Malagasy judges is that there are so many laws issued in the domain of environment that they often do not know their existence nor their content. This compilation includes the laws that are often used or referred to, and in that way it simplifies the judges' job.

Durrell also took the new Regional Director of the Environment Department into BBNP to see the situation on the ground for herself, attend a specific risk mapping workshop and to discuss the current project addressing these problems. She felt very enthusiastic about our approach so she took the initiative to call for a meeting in May to get a pact of responsibility between all stakeholders as far as ploughshare protection is concerned. Her real aim was to stand as the authority which monitors all stakeholders' activities in Boeny region. AVG and Durrell supported the organisation of the event. Two deputy public prosecutors, the Customs, the police, the gendarmes, PAGE/GIZ (the German environmental programme in Madagascar), Komanga, representatives of the Boeny Region, and journalists attended the meeting.

Again government agency involvement was not as supportive as hoped. Government officers would not make any commitments on behalf of their departments. While this may be a requirement of their procedures, by refusing to engage with the process, they make collaboration difficult and also open the way for others who could be profiting from the situation to benefit. The regional head of the Customs was the only person who wanted to postpone the agenda because the port and airport authorities (APMF and ACM) were not present although invited.

TRAFFIC Madagascar, CITES Madagascar, AVG and Durrell jointly organized a two-day training for 15 Customs agents of one of their main offices in Antananarivo in September. The training was focused on the CITES convention and the various procedures to follow in importing and exporting CITES species. This Customs office has been chosen because a few people who work legally with the Environment Department complained that the agents did not know anything at all about those procedures. TRAFFIC Madagascar funded the training whereas CITES Madagascar, AVG and Durrell contributed in delivering what the trainees needed to know. The objectives of the convention were then explained to them and why it is important for Madagascar to adhere to it. They were also shown copies of the specific forms that must be used with all the important details in them. Examples of smuggled Malagasy species such as rosewood and tortoises were given to them with the known smuggling methods. In the end, the trainees went away with copies of CITES and non-CITES import and export forms, copies of accepted invoices, of the national law translating the convention, and of the lists of Malagasy and non-Malagasy species enlisted in CITES.

Durrell participated in different meetings held to improve the regional Dina which is supposed to rule all over Baly Bay and beyond. Although the Dina has not been endorsed by the tribunal yet, a major part of it which deals with security and cattle theft is already applied and has got the tacit agreement of the tribunal. The part covering public hygiene and ploughshare poaching remains unapplied for the time being so MNP and Durrell talked to the Chef de District of

Soalala to involve them in the process and to ask them to persuade the leaders of the Dina to hold another meeting soon to set up committees which will monitor the application of all parts of the Dina. The recent elections in end of July prevented us to go further on this matter. Nevertheless, now it is planned that the ploughshare festival will take place in early December in Soalala. The Dina meeting should occur at the same time and we shall try to invite the President of the tribunal to come to Soalala then because she is the one who will decide to endorse the Dina or not. Once the Dina is endorsed, it will be officially recognized by all law enforcement authorities so local communities can act as mentioned in the Dina to stop, arrest or sanction poachers caught red-handed.

In July, Durrell visited Asity, a national NGO which manages the new protected area of Mahavavy - Kinkony located in the contiguous district of Mitsinjo, in order to see what kind of collaboration can be achieved in monitoring the smuggled tortoises passing through Mitsinjo. Asity proposed to involve the local official group of Officiers de Police Judiciaire but that can only be achieved with the agreement of the Chefs de District of Mitsinjo and Soalala, plus the Coordinator officer of the Gendarme in the area. Again, the recent elections in end of July prevented us to go further on this matter.

Any social marketing activity has not been realised yet although the results of MaVoa research require this kind of solution.

**2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

The political situation of the country still hangs as a potential threat to the project. Most members of the government were replaced in April but no obvious changes have occurred since. Only people with strong personality and integrity take initiatives in governmental offices; fortunately, they tend to grow slowly in number as time passes by. As far as the project is concerned, interactions with government agencies have been delayed by the political situation in the country – for example the meeting involving the two Chefs de District and the Coordinator officer of the Gendarmerie. But our concern is that there is a lack of decision-making authority that will be available to decisions needed when poachers have been identified or arrested.

The project team is trying to secure a meeting with the Minister of Environment to discuss the smuggling issue. Unfortunately, although the Minister has tried to re-engage CITES and global processes, especially in relation to the rosewood smuggling situation – little action has been seen. But Durrell keeps on pushing the national Tortoise committee to raise the voice until everybody can hear.

We have to inform the project donors of the management situation facing one of the project partners, AVG. Following a financial audit, cases of fraud were discovered and several members of staff fired. While no IWT funds were involved, activities are being affected while the organisation revises its management and plans with its donors. The project team ground is monitoring the situation closely and is in regular contact with the senior staff at AVG. For the moment AVG can only bring in limited expertise. The planned activities to raise local people's awareness on the importance of natural resources (and including ploughshare smuggling issues) scheduled with regional journalists and media is delayed. AVG still considers the work with Durrell a priority, and the collaboration is still intact but their ability to partner on the ground is limited until their new funding is clarified

The Chinese mining company which wanted to set up a big port in Baly Bay has temporarily drawn back probably because the prices of raw materials have fallen down and apparently they are now looking for partners to share the risks in their mining project. But to local authorities, they said that they were leaving because the environment people prevented them from doing their job right and bringing development to the area in rejecting the port proposal in Baly Bay. Reversing this situation, which also involves what MaVoa has found would require an important social marketing campaign.

**2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?**

Discussed with LTS: Yes/No

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

**3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?**

Yes  No  Estimated underspend: £

**3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully as it is unlikely that any requests to carry forward funds will be approved this year.** Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project and

would like to talk to someone about the options available this year, please indicate below when you think you might be in a position to do this and what the reasons might be:

**4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to IWT challenge Fund management, monitoring, or financial procedures?**

**Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also** be raised with LTS International through a Change Request.**

Please send your **completed report by email** to Joanne Gordon at [IWT-Fund@ltsi.co.uk](mailto:IWT-Fund@ltsi.co.uk). The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 001 IWT Half Year Report**