

## Illegal Wildlife Trade: Half Year Report

(due 31October)

<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>	2016/7 HYR3
<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**

- A project partners meeting took place on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2016 to look back at what has been done since the beginning of the project and what still needs to be achieved, especially with the current most alarming situation for the tortoises. MaVoa gave an update of the results they were able to get lately in July. In total, the logbooks showed that in 22 months, 21 ploughshares had been recorded and the records were made especially in February, May and October. During this meeting, AVG and Durrell could show the encouraging results of their collaboration through the AVG project called ALARM (<http://www.eagle-enforcement.org/madagascar/>). The decision to work together again to secure the international airport of Ivato in the capital was also taken by the Environment and Forests ministry representative, AVG and Durrell at the meeting. Ideas of a new project to follow the current one were gathered as well during the meeting. These include MaVoa fine-tuning their special methodology to get delicate information on a larger scale and readily exploitable to stop the poaching.

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

- We responded to the challenges with the management and use of community patrol data, identified in the 2015/6 annual report by focussing a role, a Data Manager, as well significant support from Durrell's global conservation science team, on the collection, management of community data and its integration into the SMART database.
- The Malagasy government would like SMART to be used all around the country.
- A full SMART report was produced from the patrol data of Beaboaly. Beaboaly is the most important site in Baly Bay now because MNP and Durrell have started to move tortoises in the wild to this site for security reason since end of last year.
- To ensure the safety of the tortoises in Baly Bay and upon the continuous lobbying by MNP and Durrell, the Préfet de Région agreed to send 12 elements of the OMC to the zone. The stakeholders convene to add more objectives to the safety mission (cf.

Minutes of related meeting) and the Préfet himself went to Baly Bay with the heads of the Army, the Gendarmerie and the Police from Mahajanga to assess the implementation of the mission.

**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**

- MaVoa collected the logbooks in July. In total, the logbooks showed that in 22 months, 21 ploughshares had been recorded and the records were made especially in February, May and October. MaVoa will produce their final report before December as they will be asked to present the definitive results of their study to regional authorities in Mahajanga in early December.

**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**

- In South-East Asia, 12 intelligence reports were generated for radiated tortoises, with three seizures during this period. New Intelligence and information on key traders of Ploughshare Tortoises in Indonesia, Thailand and Madagascar (both in physical markets and online) is being compiled and cross-checked. TRAFFIC's new Senior Wildlife Crime Data Analyst will analyse the information and provide links between these traders and produce a map of international trade routes.
- In terms of monitoring the online trade TRAFFIC tracked 20 social media and Facebook groups. Two different adverts for ploughshare tortoises were recorded during this period, with a total of six animals being offered for sale. Two new adverts were also found on Instagram
- Monthly surveys of freshwater turtles and tortoises were carried out in key markets and pet shops in Jakarta, Indonesia from May to August 2016. Ploughshare Tortoises were encountered on two occasions (comprising 2 different individual animals) at one retail outlet. Prices for the Ploughshare Tortoise were IDR 450 000 and 350 000 (USD 34 000 and 26 000). Thirty-two Radiated Tortoises were counted during the surveys and were present at six different retail outlets.
- A paper focussing on loopholes in Indonesian laws pertaining to illegal trade in freshwater turtles and tortoises has been completed and shortly be submitted to the Journal of Indonesian Natural History. An article for the TRAFFIC Online Newsletter 'Wildlife Connections' highlighting this issue will appear in the next issue
- A report containing findings from the recent market surveys in Jakarta for tortoises and freshwater turtles has been finished and is now in the internal review stage. It will feature in a peer-reviewed TRAFFIC Report that will highlight the open trade in Ploughshare Tortoises and other non-native CITES listed species. One of our major objectives here is to emphasise the need for legal reform in Indonesia, as current legislation does not adequately cover species not native to Indonesia.
- The findings from the online survey of Ploughshare Tortoise trade has been completed. The paper has been submitted to Oryx and is currently under review. The project enabled Durrell to have an active presence at the CITES COP17. Project partners WCS, Durrell, TRAFFIC and collaborating organisations Global Wildlife Conservation and Turtle Survival Alliance put together a statement for COP on the state of poaching. This was submitted to the national delegations for the UK and Germany (through the Embassies in Madagascar) and the EU and US delegations (via WCS). The US delegation submitted the statement as a formal document to the COP meaning that it was included in the formal documents of the conference.
- Project coordinator, Hasina, participated in the COP as part of the Malagasy delegation and spoke on behalf of his country, "Madagascar highlighted its efforts to counter tortoise smuggling, reporting the recent arrest of six poachers. It called upon all Parties to share information on smuggling cases and collaborate in general with its efforts to halt the illegal trade."

- Articles were also submitted to the EU Parliament magazine and the IWT Challenge fund Newsletter.
- As a result of these interventions, the following Decision was adopted by the COP: "The Secretariat shall engage the government of Madagascar and other relevant stakeholders to provide urgent assistance to combat illegal collection and trade in the Ploughshare tortoise (*Astrochelys yniphora*) or Angonoka."

**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.**

- It is possible to see a potentially positive change in the behaviour of the tribunals. For example in February 2016 a smuggler was released with no sentence and a Ar15,000 fine. But in October, two smugglers were sentenced to two years in prison with a Ar21m fine! The virtuous circle of magistrates mentioned in the annual report has much to do with this. Durrell is now trying to organize a workshop with the magistrates of Mahajanga through the Ministry of Justice by the end of the year to get things moving forward there.
- There has been notable success in the fight against smugglers within Madagascar. Six Malagasy smugglers selling tortoises on the Internet arrested in Antananarivo in August. Through this project Durrell have been working in close collaboration with the public prosecutor of Antananarivo, the Analamanga (Antananarivo) regional department of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, and AVG since January 2016 to register a complaint against the leader of the smugglers and to track him down. This leader operating under the name of XXXX had been very active in selling Malagasy endemic tortoises to people in Southeast Asia for at least 6 months before he got arrested. Earlier in the year, he was selling eight ploughshare tortoises poached from the released population via Facebook. At that time, despite efforts to engage the dealer it was not possible to find where the tortoises were being held or enable an arrest. However, the current arrest was made possible thanks to the cooperation with a new project of AVG, ALARM, and the Gendarmerie. All 6 people will be kept in prison until the trial which will be on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016.
- Three other Malagasy people were arrested trying to sell tortoises in Antananarivo still in August and one of the dealers will also stay in prison until her trial towards the end of October 2016. This last case was revealed during the investigation of the former case by ALARM.
- The Dina officially known as Dinan'i Boeny Miray Dia has been validated by the tribunal of Mahajanga and an official delegation composed of the Chef de Région, the Préfet de Région, the heads of the Army, the Gendarmerie and the Police from Mahajanga, and a chef de service from the regional department of the Environment and Forests went to Baly Bay to announce this to the local population. Each article of the Dina was then read and explained as well as the sanctions that are all included in it.
- Around 150 Customs agents from Antananarivo and 13 from Morondava, Taolagnaro and Toliara (southern part of the country) had been trained on CITES principles and procedures from April until October 2016. There are two sites left to do the training (the biggest town in the north of the country – Antsiranana – and the biggest port of the Island – Toamasina). A final report will be produced when all the training is done.
- During the project design, we under-estimated the cost of developing a social marketing campaign. While it is much needed, a significant investment is required. This is currently being sought through another project. However within this project, we have aimed to identify particular behaviours that may influence people's pride in the ploughshare tortoise. Therefore with local elders and local authorities, the team visited four villages, Marotia, Tanambao V, Jejema and Ankihy, to discuss with village members how useful the ploughshare can be for people and how important it is for the local culture. Equally the team discussed the penalties associated with being caught poaching tortoises.

**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 current national political situation has not improved at all. The government is trying to convince the populace to wait until general elections in 2018 rather than to push for a presidential election now. The government is extremely unpopular at the present moment.

There are concerns about safety in the country and one of the towns where our pochard breeding project is based has been attacked by bandits five times in the last month. Crime is becoming increasingly common.

In September our ploughshare tortoise facility in Ampijoroa Forest Station was attacked by poachers. A group of people cut power to the National Park headquarters and our breeding centre (circumventing the alarms) and tried to cut through the fence. They were spotted by our staff and one of them was arrested. The case is now at the tribunal. Thankfully none of the tortoises were stolen.

Within the project, we have addressed a number of concerns from Output 1 around the capacity to record, manage and use all the data generated by the community patrols. However the capacity of community guards remains a challenge. In Output 2, we have generated good evidence from the logbooks concerning perceptions at the village level, however we are yet to use the evidence effectively and communities remain distant from the National Park. A priority for us among our development projects is now to find ways for these people to benefit directly from the park and the protection of the tortoises. In Output 3, we are made good progress with an extremely strong engagement by all partners at the CITES COP 17. Output 4 and the engagement of the legal processes in Madagascar remains the most challenging aspect of the project. We have not been able to deliver on objectives around social marketing because we underestimated the challenges involved. We believe it is the important response, but the costs and challenges involved outweigh the resources available. We are addressing this problem at the moment through other support.

The delivery of this project co-incided with a massive increase in pressure on the animal. However the project has enabled us to mount a strong response which saw actions with not only conservation partners and government partners, but also the Embassies of the UK and Germany (directly intervening incountry) and the US government.

Working on the development of emergency funding the tortoise, the project partners have generated a fund of \$ that is focussed on securing a second breeding facility, protecting the wild site, and securing an international population.

**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**