

# Illegal Wildlife Trade: Half Year Report

(due 31 October)

**Project Ref No: XXIWT012**

**Project Title: Citizen-Ranger Wildlife Protection Program (CRWPP) in Kyrgyzstan**

**Country(ies): Kyrgyzstan**

**Lead Organisation: Snow Leopard Trust (SLT)**

**Collaborator(s): Snow Leopard Foundation Kyrgyzstan (SLFK); State Agency on Environmental Protection and Forestry of the Kyrgyz Republic; INTERPOL**

**Project Leader: Dr. Charudutt Mishra**

**Report date and number (eg HYR1): 30 October, 2016; HY YR2**

**Project website: [www.snowleopard.org](http://www.snowleopard.org) and <http://www.snowleopard.org/blog>**

**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).**

### **1.3 CRWPP available on SLT/Secretariat website**

We have established a CRWPP landing page on the Snow Leopard Trust website, located here:

<https://www.snowleopard.org/?s=CRWPP>

This page provides the information about how the program works and who can qualify for the rewards, and offers a download of the brochure in Kyrgyz. We are looking at ways to make the information accessible in Russian and Kyrgyz.

### **2.2 Trainings held and guidebook online**

During YR1 of IWT Challenge Fund we held a training for 23 rangers to improve wildlife law enforcement. In YR2, we sent out 'mid-year' reviews 6 months after the first training. We found only ~48% (11) of trainees were still at their job or able to respond. Overall, rangers said their work has benefited from the training and that they have been able to share information with colleagues. Five out of the 11 said they have been able to directly apply knowledge in the field; the remaining 6 said they had not been able to apply training, largely due to lack of opportunity (no poaching incidents during the intervening time period). Based on this feedback, as well as rates of attrition, we spent the first half of YR2 working with Interpol to redevelop our training approach.

In line with our schedule of activities, a second training was held between 5-9 October, 2016 at the conference hall of the Protected Area Department, Government of Kyrgyzstan. 14 people attended representing reserves, national parks, regional offices (departments) of the DFEP (Department of Forest Enterprises and Protected Areas) of the State Agency of Environment Protection and Forestry (SAEPF), and the main office of the DFEP. In YR1, training participants were rangers. This year, majority of YR2 training participants were senior members with head and vice head positions within their departments and extensive experience in nature protection; only a few rangers representing protected areas attended. The training was purposefully tweaked towards building the skills of trainees as trainers. A specific concern identified last year was the need for more information on the legal rights of field rangers. To address this concern, this year we devoted half a day's session towards local laws and provisions in Kyrgyzstan. The entire program was overseen and delivered by a specialized trainer from Interpol and the session on local laws and legal provisions followed a group discussion led by a senior official from the Protected Area Department.

### **2.3 Training feedback collected**

The trainees and their expectations were evaluated daily and towards the end of the training. From our perspective and from feedback during the training, we feel we met expectations. The trainees were much more confident this time around and received the training well with the specific intentions of delivering it to rangers at a later point in time. One observation is that, due to their positions, majority of participants were more familiar with laws and enforcement issues than previous trainees, and there was some dissatisfaction that the section on 'rights of rangers' did not provide enough information—it could have

been more robust. INTERPOL clearly specified the need to make the overall program more intensive and less extensive in the next round of follow up trainings.

Since the training recently ended, we are still in the process of translating participant feedback forms and then will analyse results. We will include summary of feedback forms in our next reporting.

### **3.2 Cases reviewed by CRWPP committee**

As reported in YR1, the general guidelines and protocols have already been agreed via an MoU shared with the State Department, a partner on this project. This year, the committee will have new members nominated from the government. Snow Leopard Foundation in Kyrgyzstan is working to meet some of these new people before calling a meeting of the committee. Once the committee is formed, they will request cases for review. Since the award ceremony will not be held until March 2016, they have time to develop the committee and will focus on this more during the second half of YR2.

### **3.3. Award Ceremony Held**

Scheduled to be held in March 2016.

### **EXTRA Results:**

#### Interpol NEST

In YR1, we held a 2-day technical Regional Illegal Wildlife Trade Workshop, from September 17-18, 2015, directly preceding the CRWPP ranger training. The workshop was organized in collaboration with Interpol, UNDP, Snow Leopard Trust, Snow Leopard Foundation in Kyrgyzstan, and the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP) Secretariat to develop a strategy for combating illegal wildlife trade in Central Asia. Results were summarized in our report last Oct 2015. This year, we are in discussion with Interpol to hold a NEST (National Environmental Security Taskforce) workshop. This is tentatively planned for November 2016.

#### Trap Cameras to Catch Poachers

In YR1, we purchased remote-sensor trap cameras to test whether they could be useful for photographing poachers. In October 2016, SLFK set up 4 cameras in strategic locations in the Sarychat-Ertash Nature Reserve (3 without the help of rangers and 1 with help of rangers). SLFK will soon distribute more sets to more PAs. The cameras will stay in the field through hunting season, which lasts until late February/early March.

## **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.**

As noted, there has been high rate of ranger attrition. SLFK feels this is largely due to issues beyond our control at the moment, including consistently poor wages. Interpol has been intricately involved in working through these issues, and has since suggested revisions based on successful training programs they have established in other countries. As part of these plans, we changed this year's training approach: originally we intended to bring back YR1 rangers as well as new rangers to continue building a 'corps' of wildlife crime specialists for each PA; instead, in YR2 we focused on high-level officials with ability to manage and train multiple rangers. Our aim now is institutionalizing the training and building a module where we will follow up with rangers through more regular engagement throughout the year. Interpol is suggesting bi-monthly interactions with YR2 participants to ensure continued knowledge levels and growth (possibly via internet meetings). We are currently working to finalize a training 'action plan' with Interpol.

A second challenge has been collecting baselines for number of cases filed, which is essential for measuring the impact of this project. We originally hoped we could obtain these through the Department of Statistics, which was newly formed last year. We have tried and realized this will not be possible due to the fact that the department is so new, and there is a lack of mandate for the department to collect data regularly. Our 'Plan B' is to 'go to the source'—i.e. we want to try to gather this information directly from the PAs on an individual basis. Since this will be time intensive, we aim to have a dedicated person whose primary responsibility is to travel to the PAs, collect information on hunting and poaching from the recent time period, and create/manage a simple database. Once we have established links with the PA staff through the trainers and trainees, this information flow is expected to become smoother.

To accommodate these challenges, we will extend our timetable to accommodate training across more months, and to include more time for baseline data collection. A timeline change has been submitted in complement to this midterm report. Once we finalize a training action plan with Interpol and cost out

implementation, and once we project costs for data collection from the PAs, we will know better how these changes might affect the budget. We appreciate the opportunity to broach these issues now and we will submit a budget change request shortly.

**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

In our YR1 final report (section 12) we discussed the difficulties in targeting the trainings. In YR1 final report (section 3.2, Output 2, Indicator 5) we mentioned our intent to work with the newly created statistics department in Kyrgyzstan to determine baselines for number of cases filed. We continue to learn and adapt as necessary to solve these issues, and to keep IWT informed of our adjustments along the way.

Formal change request submitted: Yes

A timeline change request is submitted with this report – in a separate email. A budget change request will be submitted as soon as possible.

Received confirmation of change acceptance 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?**

We are grateful for the support. This project truly would not have been pursued or possible without the support of IWT Challenge Fund. Thank you.

**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**