

observations in sports hunting magazines, and combining these sources allowed us to retrace their itineraries.

Subsequently we found Spennemann's zoological notebook, coding breeding records of all bird species, with an entry for the Javanese lapwing for August 1931. A nest was observed at Tegalurung near the mangrove forest, possibly on the edge of the abandoned rice fields. It contained a fresh clutch of two eggs and, being one of the few nests observed of the species, his observation extends the known breeding period to include the end of the dry season. The accounts show that as of 1931 the Javanese lapwing was still regularly encountered along Java's north coast and bred locally.

With the reappraisal of the lapwing's habitat requirements, partly based on Spennemann's information, we believe that up until 80 years ago the range of the Javanese lapwing covered most of the north coast of the province of West Java, possibly extending into western Central Java. It would be well-worth searching for yet unexplored areas with suitable habitat in this extended region. One of us (SvB) surveyed the Poponcol-Tegalurung area in November 2006 and did not find any Javanese lapwings. However, the bird is expected to migrate locally and we anticipate that the best time for surveying is when the birds are on their breeding grounds, which we now know lasts from May until at least August. These are also the areas where we anticipate the birds to be most vocal, during courtship and defence of their nests, greatly increasing the chance of detection by human observers. By means of this communication we hope to raise renewed awareness for the plight of this possibly not yet extinct bird and its habitat in the Javan coastal zone, where three other endemic birds occur (Javan plover *Charadrius javanicus*, Sunda coucal *Centropus nigrorufus*, Javan white-eye *Zosterops flavus*), each waiting reappraisal of its conservation status.

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An increase in demand for ivory items in Ethiopia threatens elephants

Tusks from elephants poached in northern Kenya and Sudan are being moved into Ethiopia to be made into trinkets, and the few remaining elephants in Ethiopia are also being poached. Wholesale prices for tusks (which weigh < 5 kg) in Addis Ababa have tripled over 1999–2008 to USD 121 kg⁻¹. In January 2008 we carried out a survey for Care for the Wild International of the curio shops in Addis Ababa. We counted 2,152 ivory items for retail sale, including 706 new items

stored away, mostly in crisp paper bags. There were 1,790 items that had been crafted well after the 1990 CITES ban. While pre-1990 carved items are recognizable by their large size (such as heavy bangles, figures and carved tusks), the newer items are mass-produced trinkets. Most are thin bangles, rings, earrings, necklaces and pendants, and are identical in the various shops. As well as jewellery the most common items are chopsticks, cigarette holders and signature stamps, items all popular in China.

Turnover for new, small items is the greatest; they are easier to hide in luggage or, in the case of jewellery, to wear under one's clothes. We were advised not to put ivory items in hand luggage because they are often identifiable by x-ray. No vendor offered us a CITES document or other permit for any ivory item, telling us instead to take the items in our suitcase.

The main buyers of ivory items are foreigners. As well as tourists, there are many foreign businessmen, diplomats and conference attendees in Addis Ababa, and there are growing numbers of Chinese labourers. In 2001 there were 100 workers from China, mostly involved in road construction, and by 2006 there were c. 3,500. The Chinese are known to be the main buyers of ivory items all over Africa. While newer ivory items are out of fashion in much of the world, they are still in high demand in China. In Guangzhou the price for ivory chopsticks in 2004 was USD 139 compared with USD 16 in Addis Ababa in 2008. It is thus understandable why demand has increased and why the handful of Ethiopian craftsmen who remain working in Addis Ababa are carving items specifically for the Chinese market.

The Ethiopian government needs to crack down on the shops and confiscate the illegal ivory items offered for sale. Officials succeeded in doing this in 2005 in collaboration with TRAFFIC and the CITES Secretariat. However, to prevent another build up of ivory items for sale in Addis Ababa's curio shops a new strategy needs to be implemented. Law enforcement officers need to monitor the shops on a frequent basis so that vendors cannot display their ivory. The Chinese ambassador does ask company managers to warn their staff against buying ivory but reminders are probably warranted. Publicity, and penalties for buying ivory, must also be increased if elephant poaching for ivory is to be curbed in Ethiopia and neighbouring countries.

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Convention on Biological Diversity: 9th Conference of the Parties

The 9th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 9) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) took place over 19–30 May 2008 in Bonn, Germany. The CBD is a global treaty addressing the conservation and sustainable use of



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Cover: Polar bears have a circumpolar distribution directly tied to the declining Arctic sea ice, and comprise discrete subpopulations that, in Canada, are used to manage a sustainable harvest. Threats to the conservation of the species are not spatially uniform, however, and five Designatable Units that capture broad patterns of polar bear biodiversity could provide a framework for improved conservation. For further details see pages 504–515. (Photograph © Staffan Widstrand / naturepl.com).

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