Daggers Cut Down Rhinos

MID DLE EAST

A Wife investigation in Yemen reveals an unexpected surge in rhino horn imports



equipped: Yemeni men in Sanaa with some rhino hom-handled jambiyyahs.

ast April, WWF sent Esmond Bradley Martin, now UNEP's Ispecial envoy for rhino conservation, and his associate Lucy Vigne to the Aremen, to investigate the rhino narade. They were shocked to learn thino horn imports had apparently and the about 500 kilos. Stall after I offered jambiyyahs – traditional agers—with rhino horn handles.

The reason for the rise? Yemen's floation has increased the counts largely unpatrolled borders, openathe country up to smugglers en the from eastern Africa and perps Zimbabwe, where poachers are ting hardest.

Yemen's renewed rhino horn use partially responsible for the conting drastic decline of Africa's wild inos. Sanaa's biggest rhino horn aler told a WWF informer that he reliased more than 750 kilos of horn on August 1990 to March 1992 – Uivalent to about 260 dead rhinos.

Martin and Vigne discussed tactories to reduce the rhino horn trade the Foreign Minister Abdul Karim I-Iryani. The result: in May 1992



One of many dagger stalls in Sanaa's souk.

the Grand Mufti, Yemen's religious leader, issued a decree against killing rhinos for their horns and urged their protection.

Then in December, the government banned domestic trade in raw rhino horn – an important step if enforced. A short film in Arabic on the rhino's plight will be broadcast in Yemen. Martin and Vigne had suggested these measures in 1990, but the unification of North and South Yemen and the Gulf war put the rhino horn issue on hold.

Reported by Lucy Vigne, who has worked with Esmond Buildey Martin on WWF-supported wildlife trade projects since 1985

Jørgen Thomsen, Director of TRAFFIC International, started his working life with the Danish Ministry for the Environment. The ornithologist then moved to the United States, to work first with WWF and then with TRAFFIC USA, before taking on his current position. And what is TRAFFIC? Sarah Russell auizzed Thomsen in the office on the outskirts of Cambridge, where he and his team coordinate the activities of the TRAFFIC network.

Trade



Jørgen Thomsen with an eminently marketable hyacinth macaw.



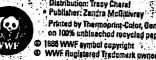
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Cover: Because of intensive trade, all Paphiopedilum orchids, or lady's slippers, are listed on Appendix I of CITES. Photographer Gorald Cubitt found this P. spicerianum growing in Sikkim, India. See page 3 for more on the plant trade.

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The Wildlife Trade: Looking Back to Move Ahead

Presumably people do not want the planet to lose u 50 species every day. Nevertheless, it is we who are re for this sad statistic. After habitat loss, the main cau high extinction rate is overexploitation of wildlife.

To curb the potentially destructive effect of the in tional wildlife trade, and to provide a solid basis for regulation that could benefit both nature conservation people, the Convention of International Trade in En Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was signed 20 years ago.

CITES entered into force in 1975. TRAFFIC Records Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Con was founded almost immediately afterwards i became an essential source of information on wildlife trade. TRAFFIC's studies help make s convention's control measures are followed ar the possible threat to species concerned.

Needless to say, CITES and TRAFFIC have very closely ever since. Successes include bringing cr and vicuña back from the brink of extinction by help replace poaching with sustainable trades in skins and The TRAFFIC Network - which extends from Monte Taipei - has been a great support to CITES. TRAFFIC governmental structure allows it to penetrate illegal n whether of the 27,000 tiny orchid species that are list CITES appendices, or the rhino horn trade.

Unfortunately, even with TRAFFIC and CITES sup. the rhino still needs help. I myself feel no species des more attention than another. But you do not kill a sy If the rhinos go, what happens to cacti, songbirds, sn That is why we can only hope that all states - Parties non-Parties to CITES - will do everything in their po save the rhinos.

The last 20 years have seen many developments th affect the work of CITES and TRAFFIC, such as new a breeding techniques, artificial plant propagation, new consumer patterns. Remembering lessons of the past, organizations are preparing for the challenge of a chaworld. This is all in the hope of helping to stop, over 20 years, the steep decline of that divine wealth – the biological diversity.

Izgrev Topkov Secretary General, CITES

WWF--World Wide Fund For Nature is the world's largest private international conservat organization with 28 Affiliate and Associate National Organizations around the world and over 5.2 million regular supportors. WWF aims to conserve nature and ecological processes by proserving genetic, specie s, and ecosyste diversity, unsuring that the use of renowable natural resources is sustainable both dow and in the langer turm; and prome uling actions to reduce pollution and the wasteful consumption of res va os World Wildlife fand o Casada and the United States of America.

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