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The *TRAFFIC Bulletin* publishes information and original papers on the subject of trade in wild animals and plants, and strives to be a source of accurate and objective information.

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Temminck's Ground Pangolin *Smutsia temminckii*
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Bêche-de-mer on sale in seafood market, Hong Kong
(© Fion Cheung);
Galapagos Land Iguana *Conolophus subcristatus*
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Green-winged Saltator *Saltator similis*
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TRAFFIC

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Nigeria's biggest city, Lagos, is believed to be offering for sale the largest number and heaviest total weight of new ivory objects of any African city where surveys have been undertaken to date, according to a study carried out in September 2012. Some 14 349 ivory items were recorded on open display in 36 retail outlets during the course of an investigation by the authors, supported by The Aspinall Foundation.

Nearly all these shops specialize in ivory. The Lekki market, famous for its souvenirs, offered for sale 99% of the ivory items seen. The previous ivory survey in Lagos, undertaken by TRAFFIC in 2002, recorded some 5155 ivory objects in 31 outlets, which included shops based within the international airport and near several luxury hotels.

Almost all ivory in Nigeria has been imported (and is exported) in contravention of CITES regulations, and most ivory items for retail sale are being offered for sale illegally, without the necessary permits from the Nigerian Government.



LUCY VIGNE

IVORY BUST ON SALE IN LAGOS, NIGERIA.

LAGOS: AFRICA'S BIGGEST DOMESTIC IVORY MARKET?

In this most recent survey, nearly all the ivory items for sale in Lagos were recently made. Some had been carved in Lagos. Five ivory workshops were found on Lagos Island, the largest of which had eight craftsmen from Benin and three Nigerians. Although some vendors said that Lagos craftsmen still produced ivory items, the authors only saw them working on cow bone, producing mostly beads.

The most common ivory items for sale were jewellery, followed by human figurines and chopsticks. Many more items are now produced to meet increased Chinese demand compared with ten years earlier. During the authors' four visits to Lekki market, the majority of foreigners looking at souvenirs were Chinese; it was apparent that they were largely only interested in the outlets selling ivory and were the only ivory buyers seen by the authors. They were observed negotiating to buy in bulk bangles, necklaces, signature stamps, chopsticks and combs.

Ivory items on sale are much cheaper in Lagos than in China. In Lagos, a pair of chopsticks costs USD63 before bargaining, but in southern China the average price is USD455. A signature stamp for personal use costs USD108 in Lagos (again, before bargaining), and USD214 in Guangzhou. The greatest price difference is for beaded necklaces: USD57 in Lekki market compared with USD586 in a Guangzhou shop. Added to this, the Chinese population in Nigeria has increased from about 2000 Chinese residents in 2001 to 100 000 by 2007.

It is imperative that the Nigerian Government enforces its laws on the ivory trade, not only by targeting the shops selling ivory, and their customers, but also by intercepting illegal ivory being imported and exported from the country. The Chinese Embassy in Nigeria could assist greatly in stopping these sales by taking more robust measures to ensure its citizens are aware of the illegal nature of the trade.

The next issue of the *TRAFFIC Bulletin* will include a more detailed report on Lagos's ivory trade.

Esmond Martin and Lucy Vigne are independent consultants studying the international trade in endangered species, and in particular the trade in ivory and rhinoceros horn.