

**Illegal trade in Long-tailed Macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*) in  
Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam  
Highlighted under the Review of Significant Trade (Resolution Conf. 12.8 (Rev. CoP13))  
Revised**

This document is submitted by the Species Survival Network Primate Working Group.

At its 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting, the Animals Committee adopted the following recommendation of its Working Group on the Review of Significant Trade of Appendix II Species with respect to trade in *Macaca fascicularis*:

**"The Working Group noted the concerns raised in relation to high levels of illegal trade in the species, particularly between Cambodia and Viet Nam, and recommends that the Animals Committee bring these concerns to the attention of the Standing Committee for further consideration."** -- AC28 Com. 8

This document provides background information on illegal trade in *M. fascicularis* among Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam in order to assist the Standing Committee in taking action to address the concerns raised by the Working Group and endorsed by the Animals Committee.

SSN also is concerned that Cambodia has been removed from the Review although the information used to justify its removal, received after the Animals Committee had recommended its retention, is of questionable value.

## **BACKGROUND**

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*Macaca fascicularis* was included in the Review of Significant Trade at the 25th meeting of the CITES Animals Committee (AC25) in 2011; AC27 agreed to maintain Cambodia (Possible Concern), Lao PDR (Urgent Concern) and Viet Nam (Possible Concern) in the Review. The current status and distribution of *M. fascicularis* in these countries remains unknown. *M. fascicularis* is the most heavily-traded species of live mammal listed on the CITES Appendices; between 2006 and 2013, 203,624 live specimens were reported to have been exported from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam (Annex 1). A large majority of *M. fascicularis* were traded under source codes C and F; Lao PDR has exported wild-sourced specimens and specimens claimed to be ranched.

## **ACTION AGREED AT AC28**

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At its 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting, the CITES Animals Committee:

- Received responses from Cambodia and Viet Nam (no response was received from Lao PDR);
- Recommended removing Viet Nam from the Review, based on its report that it does not remove specimens from the wild;
- Recommended retaining Cambodia in the Review, with additional information requested on population size and status and information on its capture ban; and
- Noted concerns raised in relation to high levels of illegal trade in the species (see above).

Note that Lao PDR was not included in the concluding remarks of AC28 because, as a result of Lao PDR's lack of response, trade from this country (including illegal trade) was not discussed at the meeting.

## **ACTION TAKEN BETWEEN AC28 AND SC66**

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SC66 Doc. 31.1 reports that Cambodia, in response to information on population size, status and information on its capture ban, responded to the Secretariat in November 2015 stating that, according to a 2009 study, the number of *M. fascicularis* in the wild in Cambodia is an estimated 3,000,000 individuals. Cambodia also reported that its ban on capture of wild specimens is expected to remain in place until at least 2018. In response, the Secretariat in consultation with the Chair of the Standing Committee, determined that Cambodia had implemented the recommendations of the Animals Committee.

## ACTION TO BE TAKEN AT SC66

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As the evidence reported here strongly suggests that illegal trade in *M. fascicularis* is widespread among the three countries under review, and that (particularly in Viet Nam) animals exported as captive-bred may in fact be wild-caught specimens originating in Cambodia and Lao PDR, actions under the Review of Significant Trade alone are likely to be insufficient to deal with the problem. This will be especially true if Viet Nam is removed from the Review.

SSN therefore urges the Standing Committee take broad action to address trade in *M. fascicularis* in all three states, including the issues of illegal trade and potential misuse of source codes. In particular, SSN urges the Standing Committee to:

- Implement a suspension of trade in *M. fascicularis* from Lao PDR for its lack of response to the recommendations of AC27;
- Identify specific actions to be taken by the Secretariat with respect to illegal trade in *M. fascicularis* involving all three range states, including Viet Nam, in accordance with par. (I) of Res. Conf. 12.8 (Rev CoP 13) (“Problems identified in the course of the review that are not related to the implementation of Article IV, paragraph 2 (a), 3 or 6 (a), shall be addressed by the Secretariat in accordance with other provisions of the Convention and relevant Resolutions”). SSN recommends that the Standing Committee direct the Secretariat to do the following:
  - Arrange for independent on-site inspections of alleged breeding facilities; request records indicating that founder stock was legally acquired and that captive breeding is in fact taking place; issue trade suspensions against both Viet Nam and Cambodia if no suitable responses are received;
  - Recommend independent, reliable population surveys in Cambodia and Lao PDR, in order that the impacts of legal and illegal trade on wild populations can be determined. The surveys should be completed within a pre-determined time frame and trade suspensions should be pursued if there is failure to comply within this period;
  - Seek further confirmation that wild populations in Viet Nam are not being exploited for international trade, including capture for supply to breeding farms in that country (see information below indicating that illegal trapping is still going on in Viet Nam).

SSN also urges the Standing Committee to restore *M. fascicularis* to the Review of Significant Trade for Cambodia as a matter of urgency. The methodology used in the 2009 survey relied upon by Cambodia, in its November 2015 submission, to justify a population estimate of three million individuals has not been provided, though it seems to be based on the assumption (provided without supporting data) that the species occupies 100,000 km<sup>2</sup> of range at a standard density of 30 animals/km<sup>2</sup>. This population estimate is contradicted by the results of numerous surveys between 2006 and 2011 that suggest *M. fascicularis* is in fact not common in Cambodia and that ‘Cambodia[n] populations are disappearing.’<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup> In the Seima Protected Forest, an area of almost 3,000 km<sup>2</sup>, a wildlife monitoring report by the Wildlife Conservation Society<sup>5</sup> found that populations had declined by 82.8% between 2010 and 2013, and appeared to be on the brink of local extirpation. Without details allowing comparison between the 2009 survey and these conflicting studies, the November 2015 submission should not have been regarded as sufficient to justify Cambodia’s removal from the review.

## ILLEGAL TRADE CONCERNS

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A brief summary of illegal and unsustainable trade concerns include the following:

- During visits to select breeding centers in **Lao PDR** in 2005 and 2007-2008 no *M. fascicularis* infants were found on the farms, suggesting that captive breeding was not taking place.<sup>6</sup>

- From 2006-2008, **Lao PDR** exported more than 17,000 *M. fascicularis* as source code 'R'; source code 'R' as defined in Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15) is not appropriate for primates because primate juveniles do not have "a very low probability of surviving to adulthood".
- Regarding **Cambodia**, a 2007 report stated that current levels of trapping for international trade would pose a significant threat to wild populations of *M. fascicularis* in that country, and that the impact of intense collection of *M. fascicularis* in Cambodia was not yet known but may be "dramatic".<sup>7</sup>
- According to a 2008 study by the Wildlife Conservation Society, regulation and monitoring of **Viet Nam's** wildlife farms is poor and enforcement is weak.<sup>8</sup>
- Studies published in 2008 and 2010 reported that wild-caught *M. fascicularis* were illegally exported from **Cambodia** to **Lao PDR**<sup>9,10</sup>, from where they were illegally exported to **Viet Nam** for use in breeding farms.<sup>14</sup>
- Regarding **Lao PDR**, in 2010 UNEP-WCMC produced a Review of Significant Trade for the CITES Secretariat that estimated the country-wide *M. fascicularis* population at 3,000-5,000 individuals, with a decreasing trend;<sup>12</sup> exports of wild-caught animals in one year alone (2004) may have comprised more than half the country's total wild population at that time.
- Quantities of *M. fascicularis* exported from **Lao PDR** were considered in a 2010 study to "far exceed" the capacity of the national population and the expected output from breeding facilities.<sup>9</sup>
- One of the breeding facilities in **Lao PDR** - Xaysavang Trading Export Import Company Limited—is linked to the Xaysavang syndicate and notorious Laotian wildlife trafficker Vixay Keosavang.
- In 2014, TRAFFIC reported that "the composition of wildlife seizures implicating **Lao PDR** in 2014 highlights that the country is a major conduit for the trafficking of high value, and highly threatened wildlife."<sup>11</sup>
- According to a 2015 article in the New York Times, In **Viet Nam**, much of the wildlife intercepted from illegal traders is reportedly sold by officials back into the black market.<sup>12</sup>
- Evidence gathered in 2015 points to the continued existence of a widespread illegal cross-border trade in wild *M. fascicularis* captured in **Cambodia** and transported to **Viet Nam**.<sup>13</sup>
- In **Viet Nam**, a manager at one facility, Thanh Cong in Lang Son Province, admitted to, in the past, taking wild-caught *M. fascicularis* who had been confiscated by the police from illegal dealers. These wild-caught monkeys were then used for breeding.<sup>13</sup>
- There are concerns regarding the legitimacy of **Lao PDR's** production facilities for other species. Efforts to confirm the legitimacy of python breeding facilities there in 2012 and 2013 were not successful.<sup>14</sup> In addition, from 2008-2013, **Viet Nam** re-exported over 330,000 ranched and captive-bred fresh-water turtles sourced from **Lao PDR**; most of the initial imports were not recorded.<sup>15</sup> **Lao PDR's** ability to produce this number of specimens is questionable.

## COUNTRY PROFILES

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### Cambodia

Regular exports of large numbers of *M. fascicularis* from Cambodia began in 2004. The source codes used for these exports indicate that captive-bred (source 'C') exports began in 2004 (1,590 specimens). *M. fascicularis* are reproductively active from around four years of age. In order for a captive-bred animal to have been available in 2004 for export at the age of two (the typical age a *M. fascicularis* is exported for research purposes), the breeding facilities would need to have been established in 2002 at the latest. According to the Cambodia CITES MA statement, however, no farms in Cambodia were established prior to 2003.

In 2012, field investigations found that *M. fascicularis* trapped without permits in Kampong and Siem Reap Provinces were transferred to breeding farms. To avoid detection by the authorities, the animals were reportedly brought into the farms during the night, hidden under packs of ice in vehicles which had been adapted to hold cages.<sup>16</sup>

In 2015, a security worker at one farm in Pursat Province reported that the farm was buying illegally-caught *M.*

*fascicularis* and paying the Forestry Department for the relevant authorization papers.<sup>13</sup> He also claimed that the trapping of wild *M. fascicularis* continued around the Tonle Sap area.<sup>13</sup>

Illegal international trade also continues to be a concern. Evidence gathered in 2015<sup>13</sup> indicates that wild *M. fascicularis* from Cambodia are bought for around US\$75 by dealers in Viet Nam and sold for around US\$100. For an extra fee, documents can be obtained from a farm in Viet Nam that would (falsely) identify the *M. fascicularis* as having been captive-bred there. One dealer had around twenty *M. fascicularis* in cages on his premises that he claimed he had obtained recently from Cambodia. Another dealer claimed that buyers from Viet Nam were due to arrive in a village in Pursat Province, Cambodia, to buy between 20 and 30 wild-caught *M. fascicularis*. Dealers provided advice on how *M. fascicularis* could be smuggled across the border from Cambodia; some even claimed that they had good relationships with rangers and border officials to facilitate this illegal trade<sup>13</sup>. One dealer in Tây Ninh Province, Viet Nam, stated that it is easier to get *M. fascicularis* into Viet Nam from Cambodia than it is to smuggle cigarettes.<sup>13</sup> Another dealer in Viet Nam offered to arrange for *M. fascicularis* from Cambodia to be available with relevant documentation from a farm in Tây Ninh Province and commented, “Why breed monkeys when you can get them from Cambodia.”<sup>13</sup>

Cambodia is a global center of illegal wildlife trade, servicing as a transit point of illegal animal products, particularly ivory between Viet Nam and China<sup>17</sup>. Other commonly smuggled animals including bears, big cats, pythons, pangolins and turtles.<sup>18</sup> Most animals are destined for Viet Nam and China to supply consumer and traditional medicinal demands.

### **Lao People’s Democratic Republic**

A 2010 study<sup>9</sup> reported that *M. fascicularis* breeding facilities in Lao PDR may temporarily hold wild-caught animals for re-export to Viet Nam and/or China. During visits conducted to wildlife breeders in Bolikhamxay and Champasak provinces in 2005 and between 2007 and 2008, no infants were found on the farms, suggesting that captive breeding was not taking place. Due to the small populations of *M. fascicularis* in Lao PDR, the origin of the wild-caught specimens was thought to be Thailand and/or Cambodia.

Recorded exports do not match the reproductive capabilities of breeding farms. In order for a captive-bred two-year old animal to be available for export in 2006 (as recorded by Lao PDR) the breeding facilities should have been established around 2004. Yet, the earliest farm in Lao PDR was the Xaysavang Trading Company, established in 2005. Vientiane Xinling received its first primates in 2005 and Binh Long was completed in late 2010 / early 2011.<sup>6, 19</sup>

The Xaysavang syndicate was involved in laundering thousands of illegally traded *M. fascicularis* from Cambodia into Viet Nam through Lao PDR with falsified permits,<sup>19</sup> and is implicated in poaching and international trafficking of tigers, rhino horn, ivory, endangered turtles and pangolins.<sup>21</sup> The United States government has offered a reward of up to \$1 million for information leading to the dismantling of the Xaysavang Network.<sup>22</sup>

“Lao PDR is clearly being exploited by organized crime groups for its strategic location and its lack of capacity to enforce national laws and CITES effectively.”<sup>11</sup> At least nine high-value international wildlife seizures were made in 2014 for which Lao PDR was implicated as the source, transit or destination country. Lao PDR itself reported no major wildlife seizures during the year. In 2014, TRAFFIC identified Lao PDR as a major source of illegal wildlife products including illegal trade involving rhino horn, elephant, tiger parts, pangolins and turtles to supply international demand.<sup>11, 23, 24</sup>

### **Viet Nam**

In 2007, wild *M. fascicularis* were reportedly smuggled from Cambodia to Viet Nam where they were kept on a farm in Tay Ninh, and from whence they were exported as captive-bred.<sup>24</sup>

A 2008 study of wildlife farms in Viet Nam reported that provincial officials were not clear on methods used to monitor wildlife farms in the country, and that they did not visit regularly and make spot to checks to all the farms in their province. In addition, enforcement officers in Viet Nam had problems making accurate distinctions between wild and farmed stock.<sup>25</sup>

In 2013, T. Nadler (in litt to UNEP-WCMC) reported that wild-caught *M. fascicularis* were smuggled from Cambodia to breeding facilities in Viet Nam, from whence they were exported as captive-bred animals.<sup>26</sup> In 2007, evidence was obtained that Tan Hoi Dong farm had used forged documents to claim that *M. fascicularis* smuggled into the country from Cambodia had originated from Lao PDR.<sup>24</sup> A 2008 investigation revealed that thousands of illegally-taken *M. fascicularis* (likely sourced from Cambodia) were being laundered into *M. fascicularis* breeding farms in Viet Nam.<sup>18</sup>

A 2015 report stated that *M. fascicularis* trapped in Cambodia were bought for around US\$75 each by dealers in Viet Nam, and sold on for about US\$100 each. For an extra fee, documents could be obtained from a farm to (falsely) label animals as captive-bred in Viet Nam. Dealers provided advice on smuggling animals across the border; some claimed that they had good relationships with rangers and border officials.

*M. fascicularis* is considered to be “one of the most common primates in the illegal trade in Viet Nam.”<sup>27</sup> This species is among the most commonly-smuggled animals through illegal crossings along the Viet Nam-China border.<sup>28,29,30</sup> In January 2015, at least 100 infant *M. fascicularis* were found being smuggled from Viet Nam to China.<sup>31</sup> Even more recently, field investigators in Viet Nam were told about a dealer who had a team of trappers capturing wild *M. fascicularis* in a village close to the border at Hoang Dieu.<sup>13</sup>

Viet Nam is identified as a major player in the illegal wildlife trade, as a key player in the illegal wildlife trade network and as a major thoroughfare for wildlife goods<sup>12</sup>. It is estimated that 3,000 tonnes of wildlife and wildlife products are shipped out of Viet Nam every year<sup>32</sup>, with an estimated annual revenue and profit valued at USD66.5 million and USD 21 million respectively.<sup>33</sup> Half is exported mainly across the Chinese, Laotian and Cambodian borders.

There are a vast number of illegal trade networks operating across Viet Nam, trading rare and endangered wildlife including, tiger, panther, bear, elephant, snake and pangolins.<sup>24</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The foregoing information indicates that trade in *M. fascicularis* is fluid among the three countries, with frequent illegal movement across borders supplying animals to “breeding” farms that are in fact laundering wild-caught animals into international trade. Actions taken against one country alone may therefore be of little use as animals can simply be moved to one of the others for eventual export. Concerted action by CITES, possibly including trade suspensions, will be necessary to stop illegal trade and misuse of source codes. These actions should be taken, on the basis of lack of compliance, against all three countries regardless of the outcome of the Significant Trade Review.



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The UNEP-WCMC CITES Trade Database records 203,624 live *M. fascicularis* reported to have been exported from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam between 2006 and 2013<sup>i</sup>.

#### **Cambodia (Possible Concern)**

According to the UNEP-WCMC CITES Trade Database, 92,915 live *M. fascicularis* were reported to have been exported from Cambodia between 2006 and 2013 (Table 1).

**Table 1. Gross exports of *M. fascicularis* from Cambodia, 2001-2013.**

|               | 2003 | 2004  | 2005  | 2006   | 2007  | 2008   | 2009   | 2010   | 2011   | 2012  | 2013  |
|---------------|------|-------|-------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|
| <b>Code C</b> | 0    | 1,590 | 7,550 | 15,990 | 5,780 | 2,480  | 2,720  | 3,000  | 6,400  | 2,220 | 0     |
| <b>Code F</b> | 0    | 0     | 0     | 0      | 1,800 | 14,820 | 16,460 | 7,580  | 4,320  | 5,684 | 3,661 |
| <b>TOTALS</b> | 0    | 1,590 | 7,550 | 15,990 | 7,580 | 17300  | 19180  | 10,580 | 10,720 | 7,904 | 3,661 |

#### **Lao People's Democratic Republic (Urgent Concern)**

According to the UNEP-WCMC CITES Trade Database 46,235 live *M. fascicularis* were exported from Lao PDR between 2004 and 2013 (Table 2).

**Table 2. Gross exports of *M. fascicularis* from Lao PDR, 2001-2013.**

|               | 2003 | 2004  | 2005  | 2006  | 2007  | 2008  | 2009   | 2010  | 2011  | 2012 | 2013 |
|---------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|------|------|
| <b>Code W</b> | 0    | 5,985 | 2,000 | 0     | 0     | 0     | 120    | 0     | 0     | 0    | 0    |
| <b>Code F</b> | 0    | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 900    | 0     | 0     | 0    | 0    |
| <b>Code R</b> | 0    | 0     | 0     | 1,000 | 1,000 | 6,580 | 8,500  | 0     | 0     | 0    | 0    |
| <b>Code C</b> | 0    | 0     | 0     | 2000  | 7,500 | 2,050 | 2,000  | 4,600 | 2,000 | 0    | 0    |
| <b>TOTALS</b> | 0    | 5,985 | 2,000 | 3,000 | 8,500 | 8,630 | 11,520 | 4,600 | 2,000 | 0    | 0    |

#### **Viet Nam (Possible Concern)**

According to the UNEP-WCMC CITES database, between 2006 and 2013, 64,174 live *M. fascicularis* were exported (Table 3).

**Table 3. Gross exports of *M. fascicularis* from Viet Nam, 2001-2013.**

|               | 2001  | 2002  | 2003  | 2004  | 2005  | 2006   | 2007  | 2008   | 2009  | 2010  | 2011  | 2012  | 2013  |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Code W</b> | 390   | 0     | 4,200 | 1,400 | 2,500 | 2,000  | 0     | 0      | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     |
| <b>Code C</b> | 5,365 | 5,139 | 5,794 | 7,911 | 6,021 | 10,324 | 7,912 | 8,258  | 7,089 | 6,823 | 2,931 | 5,520 | 5,105 |
| <b>Code F</b> | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 1,190 | 1,690  | 790   | 2,420  | 1,200 | 0     | 0     | 892   | 1,220 |
| <b>Total</b>  | 5,755 | 5,139 | 9,994 | 9,311 | 9,711 | 14,014 | 8,702 | 10,678 | 8,289 | 6,823 | 2,931 | 6,412 | 6,325 |

<sup>i</sup> CITES Trade Data Dashboards [online]. <http://dashboards.cites.org/global?id=Mammals>. Accessed February 2015