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The Illegal Trade in Great Apes

A Report Prepared by the Project to End Great Ape Slavery (PEGAS)



Sponsored by Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya



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This report was prepared expressly for the 17th CITES Conference of the Parties.

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The Illegal Trade in Great Apes

A report by PEGAS

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The Illegal Trade in Great Apes

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Hundreds of infant great apes are captured live in the wild every year to become pets, commercial photo props, zoo attractions or safari park entertainment. Thousands of adult great apes are killed in connection with these captures as suppliers of bushmeat and trophies, or simply as collateral damage.
2. For many years the taking of infant great apes in the wild was primarily a by-product of habitat destruction and bushmeat hunting. In recent years, as great apes have gained in popularity as prestige pets and money-makers in commercial wildlife facilities, the captures have become targeted.
3. All great ape species are CITES Appendix I and are classified by the IUCN Red List as Critically Endangered or Endangered. In spite of the clear threat that illegal trade poses to great ape survival, very little is being done by the international community – including CITES – and national governments to stem the trafficking.
4. Evidence has been gathered since the late 1990s that demonstrates that there are organized trafficking networks that capture and illicitly export great ape infants. The main source countries for the illegal trade are Guinea, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in Africa, and Indonesia in Asia. Traffickers based in these four countries have established networks of collectors and middlemen that operate throughout West and Central Africa and South East Asia.
5. Egypt was one of the early entrepôt and destination countries. CITES records show that great apes have been smuggled into Egypt since the 1980s to go into commercial use in zoos, safari parks, pet stores and tourist hotels. Great ape breeding and illegal exporting have developed in Egypt, with nothing effective being done to stop it.
6. Similar to Egypt, other entrepôt and destination countries that have emerged are the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Armenia and Thailand. Large scale wildlife dealers are based in these countries that supply local demand and re-export great apes to other destination countries. These dealers have close ties with the source country suppliers and with destination country importers.
7. Main destination countries for prestige pets are located in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) sub-region and in the Confederation of Independent States area. China and Thailand are the principal destinations for great apes used as photo props and performers, though other South East Asia nations are also involved.
8. Trade routes in Africa allegedly involve the ASKY-Ethiopian Airlines network that allegedly ships orphan infants from main cities via Addis Ababa to destination cities, or charters and private planes are used. Methods involve the use of fraudulent CITES permits, or mixing in great apes with other species that are legal to trade, or direct smuggling employing concealment.
9. Prices in source countries range from USD 50-100 in the village to USD 500-2,500 in main cities. The prices rise to USD 15,000-40,000 for chimpanzees, bonobos and orangutans to USD 150,000 for gorillas in destination countries.
10. An investigation of Internet social media and e-commerce websites has identified more than 80 sites displaying over 200 illegally traded great apes. The investigation is still in its early stages.
11. When presented with evidence of this illegal trade, national authorities have been reluctant to take law enforcement action. Even countries that have strengthened their laws to stem abuses rarely enforce them.
12. To restrict the illegal trade, CITES should revise Resolution Conf. 13.4 'Conservation of and trade in great apes' to include recommendations that urge Parties to (1) register all great apes possessed by facilities or individuals, recording age and sex, (2) require permits for possessing great apes, and (3) request Parties to submit annual reports that include the numbers, age and sex of all great apes that are registered. This would curtail the current situation in which great apes are illegally imported and moved unmonitored to different facilities and individuals.

The Illegal Trade in Great Apes

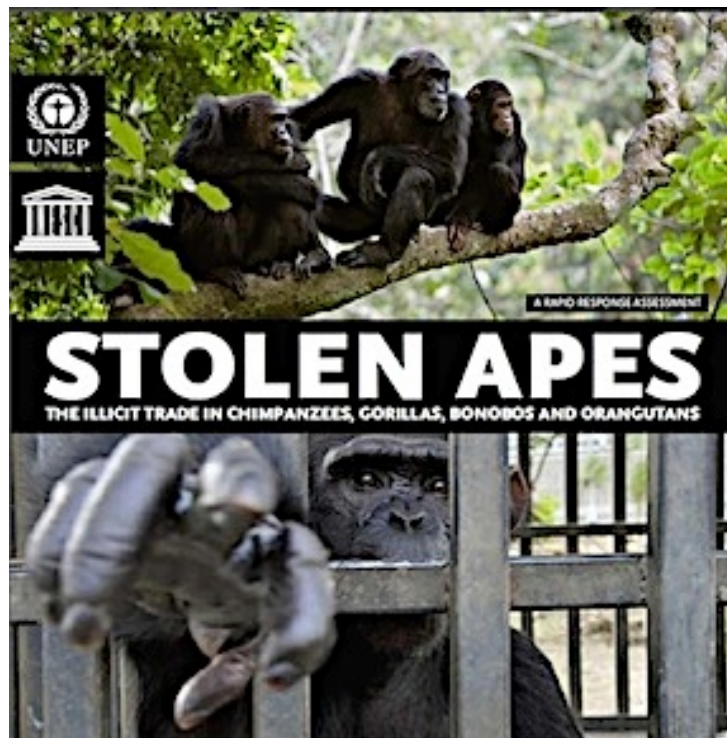
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OI Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya

Introduction

In the past decade, a series of reports from international experts, United Nations (UN) agencies, conservation organizations and media outlets have revealed numerous cases of organized trafficking of chimpanzees, bonobos, gorillas and orangutans. Environmental crime now ranks among the most significant illegal activities in the world, and the live trafficking of great apes is part of this global multi-billion dollar trade.

There is also evidence that the illegal trade has shifted from being a by-product of the usual conservation threats such as deforestation, bushmeat hunting and disease to a more sophisticated commercial enterprise driven by demand from international markets. In the past decade thousands of great apes have been documented in illegal trading incidences¹. Young orphans are targeted and captured in the wild and are smuggled clandestinely or shipped abroad 'legally' with fraudulent CITES permits for use in commercial and private zoos, safari parks, or as pets. For each infant captured, up to ten adults can be killed.



UN-GRASP estimates that the rate of illegal great ape trade is actually increasing², and current CITES practices are failing to control this illegal trade. An example is the case of Guinea, in which over a period of five years (2007-2012) more than 150 chimpanzees, bonobos and possibly gorillas were exported to various countries using fraudulent CITES permits. Even after CITES sanctioned Guinea with a commercial trade ban³, the former head of the Guinea CITES Management Authority (M.A.) continued to issue fraudulent CITES export permits for great apes and other CITES-listed species. After more than a year of investigations, the Guinea Police (National Central Bureau of Interpol) arrested the former head of the CITES M.A. of Guinea in

¹ *Stolen Apes: The Illicit Trade in Chimpanzees, Gorillas, Bonobos and Orangutans. A Rapid Response Assessment. United Nations Environment Programme, GRID-Arendal.* <http://www.grida.no/publications/rr/apes/>

² The GRASP Coordinator stated in September 2016 that the weekly average great ape illegal trade seizure rate had doubled from the 2005-2011 period to 2.11 since 2012.

³ <http://www.cites.org/eng/notif/2013/E-Notif-2013-017.pdf>.

August 2015 for his suspected role in corrupt and fraudulent actions in the issuance of CITES export permits⁴. A notorious wildlife trafficker who had been working with the former head of the Guinea CITES office was also arrested⁵.

Employing a 'C' source code and non-commercial purpose code (e.g. Z, S, or E) on CITES permits designates the transaction as 'non commercial'. CITES sanctioned Guinea with a commercial trade ban, which failed to tackle the continued fraudulent non-commercial trade. It is evident also that the responsible ministry in Guinea did not take effective action to stop the fraudulent issuance of CITES permits.

It should be noted that CITES is not a law enforcement body and that it does not have the authority to initiate arrests and prosecutions. However, it can provide information that it possesses to international law enforcement entities, such as INTERPOL, and to national law enforcement bodies to enable them to take effective action. In addition, it has within its power to issue warning notifications and trade sanctions, and to conduct assessment missions to investigate great ape and other species trade irregularities.

In regard to great apes, the Secretariat has issued notifications warning of permit irregularities or missing permits, carried out assessment missions to countries such as Guinea, Egypt, Malaysia and Indonesia, and made recommendations for remedial action⁶. CITES suspended trade for Nigeria⁷ in 2005 and Guinea⁸ in 2013 for offenses related directly to great ape illegal trade. These are commendable actions.

The image shows a CITES export permit from Guinea. At the top left is the CITES logo and the title 'CONVENTION SUR LE COMMERCE INTERNATIONAL DES ESPECES DE FAUNE ET DE FLORE SAUVAGES MENACES D'EXTINCTION'. The permit number is 'N° 003949'. The species listed is 'PAN TROGLODYTES' and the quantity is '2 PIÈCES'. The exporter is 'BARRY PETS COMPANY - IMPORT - EXPORT' located in 'P.O. BOX 6 898 CONAKRY REPUBLIQUE DE GUINEE'. The permit is signed on '07/07/2014'. The official seal of the 'MINISTRE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT ET DU DEVELOPPEMENT DURABLE' is visible. The permit is categorized as 'EXPORTATION' and 'Origine'.

Fraudulent Guinea CITES export permit for two Pan troglodytes (chimpanzees) signed on 7 July 2014 by the former head of the CITES M.A., who left office in early 2013. The exporter is Barry Pets Company, owned by the trafficker who was arrested with the former Guinea CITES head.

Source code – C.

⁴ https://cites.org/eng/guinea_arrest_20150903

⁵ <http://freethapees.org/2015/08/24/former-head-of-cites-in-guinea-arrested/>

⁶ See <https://cites.org/eng/prog/ape.php>

⁷ <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/notif/2005/038.pdf>

⁸ <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/notif/2013/E-Notif-2013-017.pdf>

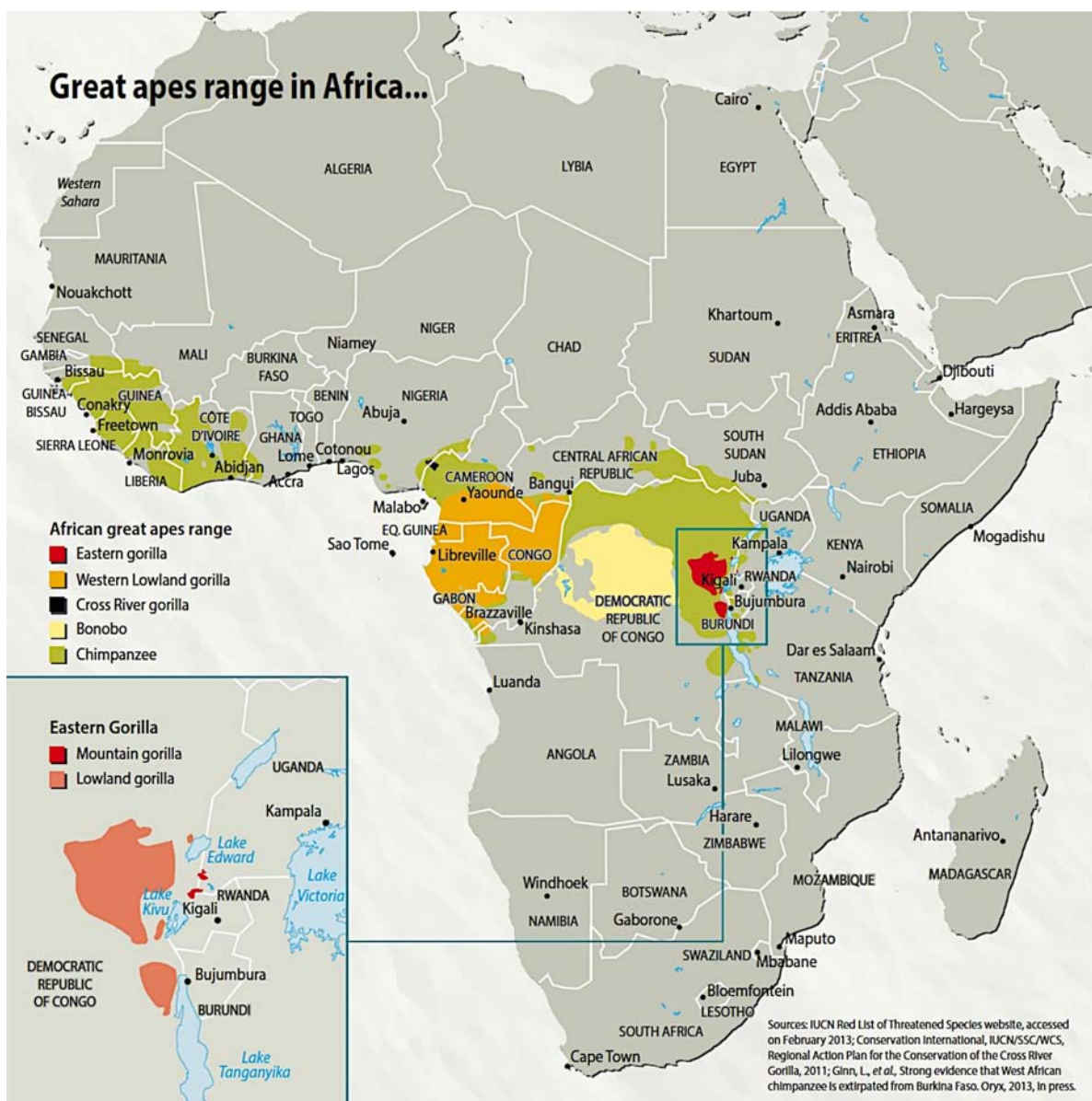
In spite of these actions, illegal great ape trade continues. The following sections give examples of the history of great ape trafficking in the CITES context and known recent cases.

Great Ape source countries

The chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*) is found in 21 countries in Africa and is classified as Endangered on the IUCN Red List since 1996. There are four sub-species of the Chimpanzee: the Eastern chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes schweinfurthii*); the Central chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes troglodytes*); the Cameroon – Nigeria chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes ellioti*); and the West African chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*). These four sub-species are distributed from southern Senegal and Guinea in West Africa, across the Congo Basin to western Uganda and western Tanzania in East Africa.

Bonobos (*Pan paniscus*) are found only in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), south of the Congo River.

Gorillas are divided into two species: the Eastern gorilla (*Gorilla beringei*) and the Western gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla*). In addition, each species has two sub-species: Mountain gorillas and Eastern Lowland gorillas belong to the Eastern gorilla species, and the Western Lowland gorillas and the Cross River gorilla belong to the Western gorilla species. The Eastern gorillas are found in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Uganda, while the Western Lowland gorillas are in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Congo, DRC and the Cabinda region of Angola. The Cross River gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla diehli*) is found on either side of the border between Nigeria and Cameroon.



Orangutans are found today in the wild only in Sumatra (*Pongo abelli*) and Borneo (*Pongo pygmaeus*).



Source: Footnote 1.

All great ape populations are in decline, except the Mountain Gorilla. The Mountain Gorilla population has grown from about 250 to over 800 in the past two decades primarily because it has been given economic value in the form of high-cost tourism. The Eastern Lowland (Grauer's) gorilla, the West African chimpanzee and both species of orangutan were recently classified as Critically Endangered by IUCN⁹. All great apes are on CITES Appendix I.

The two maps above show from where wild great apes are captured in the wild for export. While CITES deals only in international trade, the cross-border seizures make up only 12 per cent of all seizures, the other 88 per cent being domestic. Many of the domestic seizures were of apes that would have been exported, therefore the reported international seizures under-report the scale of the problem.

Trafficking example 1

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), formerly known as Zaire, has long been known to CITES as a source of great apes in illegal trade. For example, between 1985 and 1990 the CITES Trade Database indicates 13 exports involving 16 chimpanzees to various countries with no source code and a P (Personal) purpose code. It is highly unlikely that all of these chimpanzees were being exported as personal effects (i.e. pets), and with no source code these were illicit trades. 'Alleged infraction' CITES Docs. 8.19 (Rev.), 9.22 (Rev.) and 10.28 (Rev.) also report examples of great apes being illegally traded from Zaire/DRC to various countries between 1989 and 1992. At the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2000, CITES decided to stop reporting illicit wildlife trade in the 'Alleged infraction' reports, as they were providing a potentially negative view of the named countries¹⁰. Thus, since 2000 it is no longer possible to track illicit trade from this CITES report.

In October 2014 an investigator from the Project to End Great Ape Slavery (PEGAS) visited Kinshasa, DRC. Over the course of twelve days, working in collaboration with a local Congolese NGO, six middlemen wildlife traffickers were identified. They offered a range of wildlife live specimens for sale, including chimpanzees, bonobos and gorillas. The different middlemen offered for sale chimpanzees each at USD 550-800, bonobos for USD 1,000-2,500 and gorillas for USD 2,500. The procedure employed by the middlemen was to take an order from the buyer, call their collectors in the interior by mobile telephone to place the order, and the collectors would go into the forest to capture the specimen(s) and then send them to Kinshasa by river or road.

⁹ <http://iucnworldconservationcongress.org/news/20160904/article/four-out-six-great-apes-one-step-away-extinction-iucn-red-list>

¹⁰ https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/11/doc/20_01.pdf

The buyer was required to place a deposit in order for the capture command to be placed, and pay the balance upon delivery.

The middlemen operated on a road next to a military base in Kinshasa and were protected by soldiers stationed there, indicating that senior military officers were involved with the trafficking. Photographs and videotape were taken of the middlemen, of some animals on location for sale, and of soldiers on location.



Middlemen in Kinshasa sell animals captured in the wild on the roadside and are protected by the military (in blue ovals, monkeys in red ovals). Great apes are arranged on order.

CITES CONVENTION SUR LE COMMERCE INTERNATIONAL DES ESPÈCES DE FAUNE ET DE FLORE SAUVAGES MENACÉES D'EXTINCTION

PERMIS / CERTIFICAT N° 5275 Original

1. Importateur ou exportateur: **UPRÉSENTÉ PAR N° 775 1 153 11101 BERTAN BERTON, PULAN (ADONIS) ISLANA**

2. Pays d'importation: **INDONESIA**

3. Description des parties ou produits: **2 PAN TROGLODYTES**

4. Date de délivrance: **09/09/2014**

5. Lieu de délivrance: **KINSHASA / GOMBE**

6. Signature: **Le Directeur Chef de Service B. MUAMBA KANDA**

7. Date: **09/09/2014**

8. Lieu: **KINSHASA**

9. Signature: **[Signature]**

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The source locations in the interior were identified along with the transport methods and routes to Kinshasa. Chimpanzees and bonobos were collected in the forest east of Mbandaka, Equateur Province, and brought to Kinshasa by boat down the Congo River. Western lowland gorillas and chimpanzees were captured in the Mayombe Forest to the west, sometimes even in the Angola portion, and brought by road to Kinshasa¹¹.



In November 2014 the Congolese assistant who had aided the PEGAS investigator contacted the investigator to inform him that a chimpanzee for sale had been found in Kinshasa. However, before anything could be done the chimpanzee had been sold and exported to an unknown destination. The assistant sent PEGAS photographs of the chimpanzee.



Chimpanzee captured in the DRC and exported from Kinshasa in November 2014.

¹¹ See <http://freetheapes.org/news/page/4/>

Trafficking example 2

This incident is reconstructed from Instagram photographs. The activity dates are based on the dates of the photograph posts, therefore they might not be precisely accurate, but the events themselves did take place¹².

In October 2014 a known wildlife trafficker with previous court convictions travelled from Dubai, UAE to Accra, Ghana, attested by the photograph showing a known Accra restaurant and Marina Mall building in the background. There were other photos of an Accra market.



Accra restaurant and Marina Mall in background.

He met with a suspected local wildlife dealer and arranged to buy three infant chimpanzees. The chimpanzees were held prior to shipment in the infamous 'blue room'¹³, which appears with chimpanzees in several other postings on various accounts. The room is located most likely in Mali, near Bamako, or possibly in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. All the chimpanzees seen in the various photographs appear to be the West African subspecies *P.t. verus*. The three chimpanzees pictured here were in posts dated 15 March, 2014, so they were most likely smuggled to Dubai about that time.



The Dubai trafficker met with a local wildlife dealer, probably in Accra, Ghana, in March 2014.

¹² Photographs on social media sites such as Instagram and Facebook may be posted at any time after the date the photograph was taken, and they can be re-posted from earlier posts, or even be re-posted from other accounts. Therefore, caution should always be taken when interpreting the photographs.

¹³ See <http://notanngo.tumblr.com/post/140796760081/where-is-the-blue-room>.



Captured chimpanzees in the village



Transferred to the 'Blue Room' for holding

The most likely route was by air from Bamako or Abidjan to Lome, Togo, with ASKY and then to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and on to Muscat, Oman with Ethiopian Airways. From there the chimpanzees would have been taken by vehicle to the destination in the UAE.

Networks

Both examples above probably involved wildlife trafficking networks known to exist in West and Central Africa. The EAGLE (Eco Activism for Governance and Law Enforcement) group of NGOs that operates in eight African countries has defined two family networks, which they have termed 'S' and 'T'. The letters are the first letter of the family name of the leader of each (Sidibe and Traore). They are both of Guinean nationality and arose in Conakry, but over the past several years have expanded into Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin and the DRC. They have links with traders in South Africa. They began as primarily bird collectors and exporters, but have expanded into a wide variety of species, even manatees, pygmy hippos and elephants. One of the networks supplied the 130+ chimpanzees and purported 10 gorillas to China in 2007-2012.

Transit countries

Some transit countries, such as the Sudan, Ethiopia and Libya, constitute true transit points to transport great apes simply because they have urban airports that flights must stop off at on the way to the final destination. Great apes do not remain in these countries for any appreciable length of time before they continue their journey to the final destination. Other transit countries, such as Egypt, the UAE and Armenia, act as both quick transit and longer stay transit, or even as the destination country. These three countries constitute key hubs for a wide variety of wildlife trade, in the same way that Thailand does for eastern Asia.

Egypt has been involved in great ape trafficking at least since the 1980s. Since the inception of the CITES Trade Database in 1975 there are only three recorded cases of chimpanzee import, the last being in 1998, and only five cases of export, the last in 1991. There are *no* reports of gorilla trade in Egypt in the Database. Between 1989 and 1991 the Database reports that Egypt exported a total of six chimpanzees to Japan, four of them for commercial purposes. They were all C source code, thus supposedly second generation raised in captivity in conformance with Resolution Conf. 10.16 (Rev.). Since no chimpanzees were reported as imported into Egypt between 1975 and 1989, where did the six chimpanzees originate?

CITES Doc. 8.19 (Rev.), Reference 50325, provides the answer to the question above, at least for the 1991 case. A wildlife dealer in Egypt imported two chimpanzees from Zaire (now the DRC) for scientific purposes. This trade is unreported by either the DRC or Egypt in the CITES Trade Database in 1991. An investigation by the Secretariat revealed that the purpose of the import was commercial, as the Egyptian dealer sold the chimpanzees to Japan. Apparently the four chimpanzees reported as exported from Egypt and imported into Japan in 1989 and 1990 possibly used the same method as that in 1991.

The CITES Trade Database reports that two chimpanzees with a source code W (Wild) and no purpose code were exported from the DRC to Egypt in 1992. In 1998 Egypt reports importing three chimpanzees from

Suriname for scientific purposes (S purpose code) with no source code. Apart from the fact that Suriname, a small country in South America, has no indigenous apes of any kind, the lack of a source code renders the trades irregular. These two incidents were cases of apparent illegal trade in response to which action by CITES would have been appropriate.

In 1994 CITES reported what appears to be the beginning of an organized great ape trafficking enterprise operating from Kano, Nigeria, to Egypt. CITES Doc. 9.22 (Rev.), Reference 50893, reported two incidents of the same wildlife trafficker attempting to use forged CITES permits from Guinea to send two pairs of chimpanzees in 1992 and an unspecified number of chimpanzees in 1993 via Kano, to Cairo, Egypt.

CITES Doc. 10.28 (Rev.) reported that in 1995 the CITES M. A. of the Philippines notified the Secretariat that it had seized a gorilla and other primates with no CITES permits, but with a trophy permit from Nigeria (Reference 51478). In the same year the Secretariat received a re-export permit from the Chad CITES M.A. for a chimpanzee originating in Nigeria bound for the Russian Federation. Upon investigation, Nigeria had issued no CITES export permit and it appeared that the chimpanzee was actually being held in Cameroon (Reference 51470).

An investigation carried out by the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) in April 1996 and July 1997 strongly suggests that the cases described above were all part of the same network. A WSPA investigator visited Kano and found it to be thriving centre of illegal wildlife trade. A great variety of animals were in Kano for trade, including western lowland gorillas and chimpanzees. Nigerian government and airline officials were facilitating the trade with veterinary and transport documents, for a fee. The primates seized in the Philippines reported above were traced back to Kano.

WSPA found that an Egyptian woman wildlife trafficker operated from Kano, along with other documented traffickers. Great apes were captured in Cameroon and other countries, transported to Kano, and smuggled to Cairo and from there on to India, Pakistan and other countries. In the 1990s, she had been smuggling up to 40 chimpanzees and 8 gorillas a year to Cairo, Egypt. Other dealers were also selling great apes for export in Kano¹⁴.

At the 10th Conference of the Parties in 1997, the Parties adopted Decision 10.18, which specifically singled out Egypt and Zaire (now DRC), amongst others, as countries involved in significant trade in wildlife but generally lacking effective national legislation with which to implement CITES. These countries were given deadlines by which they needed to rectify the situation or face suspension of all trade in wildlife under the Convention. As the process for this Decision unfolded under the CITES Standing Committee, various deadlines for action were set and, later, numerous extensions given without any imposition of sanctions. Two years later things came to a head at the 41st meeting of the Standing Committee (8-12 February 1999). At that meeting, a decision was taken to recommend that all trade in CITES specimens with Egypt be suspended from 30 September 1999, unless the CITES Secretariat could verify that Egypt had enacted legislation that generally met the requirements of the Convention.

In September 1999, Ministerial Decree No. 1150 was published in the Official Journal of Egypt. The Secretariat received a copy on 20 September 1999 and reported at the 42nd meeting of the Standing Committee that Egypt had fully met the requirements established by the Conference of the Parties. It is a violation of the Decree to possess, offer or display for sale, export or re-export or introduce from the sea any specimen of a CITES-linked species contrary to the provision of the Decree. The Secretariat understands that persons in possession of a specimen would be expected to demonstrate either:

- a) legal ownership (which would relate primarily to pre-Convention specimens); or
- b) proof of legal importation (which might again involve pre-Convention specimens but which would primarily mean showing compliance with CITES via relevant permits or certificates).

The Decree also makes clear that confiscation is expected in the case of violations. Ministerial Decree 1150 has been violated several times since 1999, which will be demonstrated below

On 26 September 1999, the Ministry of Finance's Customs Department issued Procedures Circular No. 17 of 1999. This document further outlined procedures and conditions for Customs officers handling the import, re-export and export of CITES specimens. The ministry designated scientific and management committees to

¹⁴ Unpublished WSPA report 'Investigation into the International Trade in Great Apes and other Endangered Species from Kano, Nigeria', 1997 and <http://www.nytimes.com/1997/08/17/world/unrelenting-contraband-in-nigeria-animals.html>.

advise CITES in Egypt and established a wildlife office at the airport in Cairo to assist with law enforcement. In recognition of these improvements, the 42nd meeting of the Standing Committee (28 September-1 October 1999) commended Egypt for enacting new legislation and withdrew its threat to impose sanctions in the form of a suspension of trade.

A demonstration of Egypt's willingness to enforce its new wildlife trade measures came in September 2001 when the Egyptian Customs seized a gorilla and a chimpanzee following their arrival at Cairo International Airport without the necessary CITES permits. The great apes were coming from Nigeria and were accompanied by the same woman described above, whom we learn from a statement made by the CITES Secretary-General is a "a known wildlife smuggler of Nigerian-Egyptian" nationality¹⁵. The Egyptian veterinary service decided to dispose of the animals by drowning in chemicals for fear of health risks, which raised considerable outrage amongst the animal welfare community.

At the 13th Conference of the Parties in 2004, Resolution 13.4 'Conservation of and trade in great apes' was adopted. The Resolution urged in part for all Parties to adopt national legislation that would prohibit trade of wild-caught great apes for any commercial purpose, including sale, display, purchase, offer to purchase and acquisition for commercial purposes. The legislation should include deterrent penalties aimed at eliminating illegal trade in great apes and parts and derivatives thereof.

Because CITES no longer published the 'Alleged infraction' reports after 2000 (see above) it is not possible to know whether the Egyptian-Nigerian woman trafficker was subsequently identified by CITES authorities in relation to wildlife trafficking. However, press reports identify her and associates in operation again in January 2005¹⁶. Six infant chimpanzees and four monkeys were shipped in a crate from Kano via Khartoum to Cairo, accompanied by the woman trafficker and an Egyptian pediatrician. Airport officials refused to allow the primates to be imported, and ordered that the crate be returned to Nigeria, in spite of the fact that Ministerial Decree No. 1150 calls for confiscation of the primates and arrest and prosecution of the offenders. In addition, the actions of the airport officials were contrary to Resolution Conf. 9.9, which recommends that,

a) when specimens are exported or re-exported in violation of the Convention, importing Parties:

i) consider that the seizure and confiscation of such specimens are generally preferable to the definitive refusal of the import of the specimens; and

ii) notify as soon as possible the Management Authority of the State from which the specimens were consigned of the violation and of any enforcement actions taken concerning the specimens; and

b) when the import of specimens that have been exported or re-exported in violation of the Convention is refused by the country to which the specimens are consigned, the exporting or re-exporting Party take the measures necessary to ensure that such specimens are not re-entered into illegal trade, including monitoring their return to the country and providing for their confiscation.

The two traffickers were allowed to leave the airport. The trafficker's daughter accompanied the crate on a flight to Nairobi, Kenya, where a flight connection to Nigeria was intended. While in transit storage, airport employees detected the chimpanzees. They were ultimately seized and five (one died) were relocated to the Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary in Kenya, where they reside today.

There is no evidence that the Egyptian authorities complied with any of their own laws or CITES recommendations seen in Annex 1 to Resolution Conf. 10.7 relating to the disposal of confiscated live animals related to this incident.

At its 49th and 50th meetings, the Standing Committee noted reports from the Secretariat expressing concern regarding the implementation of the Convention and the serious incidents of illegal trade in wildlife in Nigeria. At its 53rd meeting the Standing Committee reported that in early February 2005, the Secretariat became aware of an incident regarding illicit trade in primates involving Nigeria, referring to the primate seizure in Nairobi described above involving six chimpanzees. The report went on to state that, '...the Secretariat believes that it is now appropriate for the Standing Committee to issue a recommendation that the Parties should not accept any imports of specimens of CITES-listed species from Nigeria and should not authorize any exports or re-

¹⁵ See http://www.cites.org/eng/news/press/2001/011011_cairo_statement.shtml.

¹⁶ See https://www.academia.edu/7372088/The_Great_Ape_Slave_Trade

exports of specimens of CITES-listed species to Nigeria.' No mention was made of the intended destination country, Egypt, in any of these reports.



The two chimpanzees put on this artificial island at the African Safari Park in Egypt appeared from an unknown source. The Egyptian authorities allow great apes to be imported with no CITES documentation and then moved to commercial facilities.

The Nairobi seizure prompted a number of private researchers and an NGO to launch a 'Cairo Connection' investigation, which has been in operation since 2005¹⁷. To summarize, the investigation found a thriving wildlife trafficking industry operating in Egypt. Great apes and other species were being smuggled in on a regular basis and were ending up in safari parks, circuses, private breeding farms, pet shops, hotel entertainment facilities and Egyptian public zoos. The great apes were being used for commercial purposes in all of these facilities. Some of the great apes were illegally re-exported to buyers in other countries. The investigators periodically monitored the facilities that could be accessed publicly and the number of great apes present in each was constantly changing, suggesting that smuggling into and out of Egypt was occurring regularly, as well as movement between facilities in Egypt. They also alleged that the CITES officials in Egypt and Syria were complicit in the great ape trafficking. An investigative reporter wrote in an Egyptian newspaper that in 2008 an estimated 100 or more great apes languished in captivity in Egypt, all illegally imported¹⁸. A Pan African Sanctuary Alliance (PASA) report in 2009 estimated that approximately 25 great apes illegally were leaving Egypt every year for the Middle East and Asia.¹⁹

The CITES Secretariat conducted an assessment mission to Egypt in November 2007 (see document SC57 Doc. 20 Annex). The mission found many irregularities in respect of great apes present in the country and recommended *inter alia* that all Appendix-I live animals in Egypt should be registered with the CITES M.A. and records should indicate their origin, legal status, owner, possessor and their location. Any changes in ownership, possession or location should be notified to the authorities. Any deaths or births should be similarly notified. Such animals should be subject to regular inspections, preferably of an unannounced nature.

In March 2009, the executive director of PASA visited Egypt as a follow-up to the CITES mission made in 2007. He accepted to visit Egypt on the condition that all of the facilities known or suspected to hold great apes be open for inspection. The Egyptian CITES authority agreed, but in the end, after several excuses and delays, only four of eight facilities that PASA requested were visited. The visit could not verify the whereabouts of previously known gorillas, and new young gorillas were known to have arrived from photographs provided to PASA by a visitor, but the CITES M.A. could produce no documents to show when, how or from where they had arrived. Chimpanzees were observed being used commercially, in contravention of CITES Res. Conf. 13.4. PASA found CITES officials to have 'a surprising lack of familiarity with CITES protocols or policies' and 'the role of PASA and its member sanctuaries also seemed to be a mystery to Egyptian CITES officials'. The CITES officials made several allegedly inaccurate statements regarding young chimpanzees seen by PASA in a safari park and the Giza Zoo, and they made contradictory statements about supposed wildlife rescue centres in existence.

¹⁷ See various reports and a documentary film at <http://www.karlamann.com/writings.php#preports>.

¹⁸ See <http://gulfnnews.com/unheeded-call-of-africa-s-apes-1.40644>

¹⁹ <https://freetheapes.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/pasa-cites-report-2009.pdf>.



In 2009, PASA found great apes at Egyptian facilities of unexplained origins, such as these four gorillas at the Tower Hotel breeding facility in Sharm el-Sheikh. The CITES Trade Database reports no gorillas ever imported to Egypt.

(Source: Footnote 19)

In Appendix II of the PASA report an open letter was addressed to the 58th Standing Committee meeting held in July 2009. The open letter, which was signed by 99 experts, organizations, and institutions that are gravely concerned about the ongoing illegal trade in great apes in Egypt, noted that 'Egypt has made almost no progress with regard to halting illegal trade and possession of primates'. The signatories called on the Standing Committee to take urgent measures against Egypt's non-compliance with CITES and to issue a suspension of trade in CITES-listed specimens to and from Egypt, until the 17 recommendations in the document SC57 Doc. 20 Annex are implemented.


In spite of the deficiencies noted in the PASA report and the call by dozens of the world's foremost experts on great ape conservation and welfare to sanction Egypt with a trade suspension, the Standing Committee reported at its 58th meeting only that 'The Secretariat continues to liaise with the CITES authorities of Egypt...'.

The Secretariat conducted a second mission to Egypt in February 2010, focusing particularly on great apes (see document CoP15 Inf. 25 which summarizes the findings). The full report of the 2010 mission has never been made public. The Secretariat found that Egypt had made great progress in implementing the Convention. Document CoP15 Inf. 25 concluded by stating, 'The Secretariat believes that Egypt has made significant efforts to implement the recommendations of the Standing Committee. It also believes that the Management Authority of Egypt has developed all the necessary tools to monitor and keep trade in Appendix-I specimens under control, and it congratulates it for its work. This is very commendable given that the Egyptian CITES Authorities seem to have very limited resources ... In conclusion, the Secretariat sees no reason to reopen this issue unless new and reliable information showing resumption in illegal trade or in violations of the Convention were to emerge'.

New and reliable information that traffickers in Egypt were still engaging in illegal great ape trade and CITES violations was published in August 2011 in 'Cairo Connection II'²⁰. The publication reported that the Egyptian-Nigerian woman trafficker was allegedly still smuggling great apes via Nigeria to Egypt, that chimpanzee and gorilla babies were offered for sale in Cairo pet shops, that visitors to Giza Zoo could still pay to have their photographs taken with 'confiscated' chimpanzees held there, that a commercial safari park had added another artificial island with new young chimpanzees not previously seen, and a prominent Egyptian wildlife dealer had offered investigators two young chimpanzees for sale with a Syrian re-export permit. The re-export permit was signed by a Syrian former CITES officer who currently works for the Middle East and North Africa Regional Office of a major U.S. animal welfare NGO. The wildlife dealer said that the chimpanzees were in Sharm el-Sheikh and the price for the pair was USD 40,000. Four chimpanzees arrived from Syria at the Qingdao Zoo in China in August 2012, quite possibly originating from Egypt²¹.

²⁰ <http://www.karlamann.com/pdf/cairo-connection-2.pdf>.

²¹ See https://freetheapes.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/chimpanzees-in-china_jun141.pdf.

 CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA		PERMIT/CERTIFICATE NO. <input type="checkbox"/> EXPORT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RE-EXPORT <input type="checkbox"/> IMPORT <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER		Original 11/SY/000310/AN 2. Valid until November 17, 2011	
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3a. Country of import ITALY		5. Name, address, national seal/stamp and country of Management Authority Syrian Arab Republic Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs Directorate of Biodiversity and Protected Areas Tel: 60963 11 2320884 Fax: 00963 11 2320884			
5a. Purpose of the transaction Z 5b. Special condition For animals, this permit or certificate is only valid if the transport conditions conform to the CITES Guidelines for transport or, in the case of air transport, to the IATA Live Animals Regulations					
7.8. Scientific name (genus and species) and common name of animal or plant 7.9. Description of specimen(s) including identifying marks and number (age, sex, etc.) 7.10. Appendix I or II 7.11. Quantity (including unit) 7.12. Total export of quota		7.8. <i>Pan troglodytes</i> 7.9. Live 7.10. Appendix I 7.11. 2 7.12. 11a.			
12. country of origin* Syria		12a. country of last re-export Syria			
12. country of origin* Syria		12a. country of last re-export Syria			
12. country of origin* Syria		12a. country of last re-export Syria			
12. country of origin* Syria		12a. country of last re-export Syria			
*Country in which the specimens were taken from the wild, bred in captivity or artificially (only in case of re-export) ** Only for specimens of Appendix I species bred in captivity or artificially (only for commercial purposes) *** For pre-convention specimens					
13. This permit/certificate is issued by: Damascus Place Director of Biodiversity and Protected Areas Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs May 18, 2011 Date					
14. Export endorsement 15. Bill of lading/ Air waybill Block Quantity A B C D Part of export Date Signature Official stamp and title					

Fraudulent Syrian CITES re-export permit for two chimpanzees. Syria is indicated as the country of origin and the Source code is C – there are no chimpanzee breeding facilities in Syria.

Investigations from 2005 to 2008 confirmed that a wildlife breeding centre existed in Sharm el-Sheikh, associated with a tourist hotel. Investigators found that this hotel and at least one other hotel in Sharm el-Sheikh had acquired young chimpanzees that were illegally imported and they were using them in tourist activities, such as playing with children and in photographic sessions. The open display of chimpanzees at Sharm el-Sheikh hotels ceased after the CITES 2007 mission and a system of registration of animals kept in these facilities was instigated. The Egyptian Scientific Authority, which is the General Organization of Veterinary Services (GOVS), maintains the registration and in principle inspects and monitors the facilities that are permitted to hold great apes and other CITES-listed species. Egypt reported in document CoP15 Doc. 23 (Annex 3) in March 2010 that the Giza Zoo is the only Egyptian governmental facility authorized to keep confiscated live specimens. The illegal origin of the great apes in private facilities is ignored by Egypt. By providing licenses to hold the great apes through the registration system, the Egypt CITES authority is in effect legalizing private possession of the trafficked Appendix I specimens.

A Cairo Connection III report was released at the time of the 62nd Standing Committee meeting in July 2012²². A veterinarian investigator gained access to the breeding facility in Sharm el-Sheikh from 3rd to 5th January 2012 and observed operations, interviewed staff and took photographs. The investigator counted five gorillas and 11 chimpanzees, along with a wide range of other species, some of them Appendix I. A staff member admitted that one group of five chimpanzees had come from Nigeria. The gorillas were too young to breed, so must have been imported relatively recently, most likely provided by the Egyptian-Nigerian woman trafficker. The great apes are being intentionally bred for sale, which breaches CITES regulations. Since the owner cannot produce CITES import permits for any of the great apes, possession of them contravenes Ministerial Decree No. 1150.

²² <http://www.karlamann.com/pdf/cairo-connection-3.pdf>.



PEGAS visited the Tower Hotel (Safage) breeding facility in November 2014 and witnessed the sale of three Appendix I addax, in the crate in the back of the pick-up truck in the photo. PEGAS was not allowed to see the great apes.

The 61st Standing Committee meeting in August 2011 did not mention the Cairo Connection II report. In fact, CITES upgraded Egypt to a Category I country on 18th April 2012 in Notification 036/2012, which indicated that Egypt possessed 'legislations which are generally believed to meet the requirements for implementation of CITES'. The 62nd Standing Committee meeting in July 2012 did not mention either the Cairo Connection II or III report. It is not clear whether the lack of reference to these reports suggests that the CITES Secretariat and Standing Committee do not consider the photographic and documentary evidence of continued illegal importation of great apes to be reliable.

At the 16th Conference of the Parties in March 2013, UNEP released a Rapid Response Assessment report entitled *Stolen Apes – The Illicit Trade in Chimpanzees, Gorillas, Bonobos and Orangutans* (see footnote 1). This publication summarizes the great ape trafficking activities taking place in Egypt from the early 1990s to 2012, and affirms the fact that facilities exist in Egypt for breeding great apes. In spite of this, the document reporting on Great Apes (CoP16 Doc. 49) and the Enforcement Matters document (CoP16 Doc.29 (Rev. 1)) do not mention Egypt and these questionable activities.

In November 2014 the manager of PEGAS visited Egypt to assess the situation regarding great apes in the country. He met with senior officials of the State Ministry of the Environment, local animal welfare activists, visited most of the facilities where great apes were known to be kept previously, including the hotels and breeding centre in Sharm el-Sheikh that earlier were reported to hold great apes²³. PEGAS tried for two weeks to obtain a meeting with officials of the Egypt CITES authority, but they refused to grant an appointment, in spite of the fact that before his arrival they had told an Egyptian animal welfare activist that they would meet with him.

In late 2014 PEGAS recorded 5 gorillas and 43 chimpanzees at these same four facilities. In 2009 the PASA mission documented 4 gorillas and 26 chimpanzees at four facilities in Egypt. In five years it would have been impossible for the 26 chimpanzees to have naturally reproduced to 43. PEGAS observed chimpanzees openly displayed in a commercial safari park and in the Giza Zoo, which breaches recommendation 12 in the CITES 2007 mission report which states in part, 'no illegal-origin Appendix-I animals in a rescue centre or private collection should engage in any form of public performance or direct interaction with the public... Placement of seized and confiscated specimens in rescue centres or private collections should only take place where the facility is demonstrably engaged in work of conservation benefit to wildlife generally or to specific species.' The safari park and breeding centre in Sharm el-Sheikh, and another breeding centre containing 8 chimpanzees at a farm outside Cairo, are not engaging in conservation activities. The owner of the breeding farm outside of Cairo holds the five chimpanzees that were removed from his Sharm el-Sheikh hotel following the 2007 CITES mission, plus three additional ones in 2014. He took the PEGAS manager to a large safari park that he is

²³ See <http://freetheapes.org/2014/12/01/developments-in-egypt/>.

constructing in Sharm el-Sheikh, which was planned to hold over 800 animals, including four chimpanzees, completely against Egyptian law and promises by the government to CITES that the great apes would not be used for commercial purposes. He also told PEGAS that two baby chimpanzees were smuggled out of the Sharm el-Sheikh breeding centre by road earlier in 2014. This was confirmed by the Egyptian animal welfare activist.



Enclosures in the safari park under construction in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. Four chimpanzees were planned to be exhibited behind glass.



Recommendation 12 states in part: "...no illegal-origin Appendix-I animals in a rescue centre or private collection should engage in any form of public performance or direct interaction with the public." The chimpanzees to be displayed were imported illegally.

The red circle encloses a mock-up of what is supposed to be a chimpanzee. Egypt accepted the recommendations made in SC57 Doc. 20 Annex, the Secretariat's 2007 mission report.

The man who owns the Sharm el-Sheikh hotel and breeding farm outside of Cairo, and who is building the safari park, offered to acquire the 25 chimpanzees held at the breeding facility in Sharm el-Sheikh. He additionally promised to allow PEGAS to arrange for their relocation to a sanctuary in Kenya and requested that the Kenya sanctuary manager send a 'letter of intent' to himself and to GOVS, which monitors the registered wildlife holding facilities, guaranteeing to cover the transport and future caretaking costs of the chimpanzees. The letter, dated 22 December 2014, was sent to both recipients. PEGAS sent several follow-up emails in January and February 2015 to the breeding centre owner and to GOVS, but no replies were received.

On 8th February 2015, a baby chimpanzee was seized at the Cairo International Airport in possession of a Kuwaiti man who was attempting to smuggle it to Kuwait²⁴. In contravention of Egyptian law, to CITES resolutions and recommendations made in the 2007 mission report, and to statements made by Egypt in document CoP15 Doc. 23 (Annex 3), the trafficker was not prosecuted and was allowed to depart Egypt on the flight. The chimpanzee was sent to the Giza Zoo. PEGAS wrote to the Egyptian CITES authority offering to relocate the chimpanzee to a sanctuary in Kenya, but has received no reply.

The chimpanzee seized in the Cairo airport on its way to Kuwait, named Dudu, now languishes in the Giza Zoo. PEGAS has written to CITES-Egypt offering to pay for his transport to Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary, but has received no reply.



In March 2015 PEGAS engaged the Chairman of Ape Alliance to visit Egypt to see if he could stimulate action on the rescue and relocation of the chimpanzees in Sharm el-Sheikh²⁵. Ape Alliance met with CITES-Egypt officials at the Giza Zoo and with both breeding facility owners in Sharm el-Sheikh in March. The two great ape owners seemed open to the possibility of relocating the chimpanzees to Kenya, but they said that the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, under which the CITES authority rests, would need to approve it. At this meeting the owner of the Sharm el-Sheikh breeding facility said that he currently possessed three gorillas. This would indicate that two gorillas had disappeared. Has this been reported to the Egyptian CITES authority, as required by their licensing system for possession of CITES-listed species? Where did the gorillas go? In addition, Ape Alliance was told that the baby chimpanzee seized in February had originated in the Sharm el-Sheikh breeding facility, and that the breeding facility owner is currently selling chimpanzees for USD 10,000 each.

Since that March 2015 meeting, no communications have been forthcoming from the two great ape owners or from the Egypt CITES authority concerning relocation, in spite of numerous emails sent and attempted telephone calls.

²⁴ See <http://freetheapes.org/2015/02/13/baby-chimpanzee-seized-in-cairo-airport/>.

²⁵ See <http://freetheapes.org/2015/03/10/further-efforts-to-free-trafficked-great-apes-in-egypt/>.



Ian Redmond, Chairman of the Ape Alliance, discusses great ape trade matters on behalf of PEGAS in March 2015 with Dr. Ragy Toma, deputy head of the CITES M.A. Dr. Ragy told Redmond that relocation to a sanctuary would be the best outcome, but 18 months later Dudu is still in Giza Zoo.

On 1st August 2016, PEGAS received information from a reliable source in Egypt that the two hotel owners/exotic animal breeders were in financial trouble because of the drop in tourist business resulting from the downing of the Russian passenger plane departing Sharm el-Sheikh on 31st October 2015. They were selling off their great apes. They had submitted requests to GOVS for permission to sell chimpanzees, claiming they were third generation, born in captivity specimens. Several known wildlife dealers in Egypt were anticipating buying. Other chimpanzees were alleged to have already been sold (see Annex 1). There are unsubstantiated reports that the gorillas have been or soon will be shipped to foreign buyers.

It is evident that great ape trafficking is continuing in Egypt, and concerted action is needed under CITES in order to effect action to bring this to an end, and to ensure these trafficked animals can be relocated to sanctuaries where they can receive appropriate care.

Destination countries

Eastern Asia

Great apes are used in eastern Asia primarily in commercial activities such as photographic props and public entertainment; not for use as pets.

China has been reported as an important destination country for great apes illegally exported from Africa with CITES permits issued by Guinea. Even after China stopped importing chimpanzees with Guinea permits in 2011, it continued to import specimens from other countries. The CITES Trade Database indicates the 6 were imported from Chad in 2012 and 8 were imported from Syria, 4 in both 2012 and 2013, all with C source codes. There are no chimpanzee breeding facilities in those countries. Chimpanzees were known to be exhibited in at least 20 commercial facilities in China in 2014 (see footnote 21). In spite of the fact that China has pledged not to allow the illegally traded great apes to be used in commercial performances, the chimpanzees illegally imported with Guinea CITES permits by the Shanghai Wild Animal Park were sent to perform in the 2nd China International Circus Festival, which was held in Chimelong International Ocean Resort in Zhuhai, Guangdong Province, from 1 to 12 November, 2015²⁶, according to a Chinese informant to PEGAS.

PEGAS visited China in January-February 2016 and observed great apes being used in photo op situations and as entertainment in shows. The largest safari park in Asia is located in Guangzhou. In 2009, Animals Asia observed two chimpanzees there. PEGAS counted 11 chimpanzees in 2016. Where did the additional nine come from? PEGAS also saw 4 orangutans, one infant used as a photo prop and a juvenile used in a show. Two adults were on display. Chimelong claims to have bred 10 orangutans in captivity²⁷. Where are they all?

PEGAS also found 6 gorillas, 10 chimpanzees and 5 orangutans at the Shanghai Zoo; 5 chimpanzees and 2 orangutans at the Shanghai Wild Animal Park; and no great apes at the Guangzhou Zoo. All except the gorilla numbers were different from previous reports, indicating movements.

²⁶ See http://www.newsgd.com/news/2015-10/14/content_134771296.htm

²⁷ See <http://int.chimelong.com/GZ/safari/news/detail/debut-exhibition-of-the-primate-kingdom>



Chimpanzees perform at the China International Circus Festival in Zhuhai in November 2015.

PEGAS visited Viet Nam in January 2016 and expected to find great apes at the newly opened Vinpearl Phu Quoc Safari Park, which advertises chimpanzees and orangutans on its website, but neither were yet present. The facility was only opened on Christmas Day 2015, barely a month prior to the visit, and it was still incomplete. The staff were very uncooperative answering questions about whether and when the great apes would be coming.



A trainer consoles an orangutan infant used as a photo prop at Chimelong Safari Park. Its mother is held elsewhere. Great Apes are still used in performances at Chimelong.



An orangutan rides a horse at Chimelong Safari Park on 30 January, 2014, to celebrate the beginning of the Year of the Horse. These frivolous portrayals of great apes severely diminish the public's understanding of the serious threats to their survival that they face. (Photo: Wu Weiyong, China News Agency).

PEGAS also visited Thailand in January 2016 and found at least 41 orangutans, 38 chimpanzees and one gorilla in nine facilities. In some, apes known to be present could not be seen at the time of the visit because they were in the sleeping quarters, so there were more than the 80 seen. There are other great apes located in several facilities not visited. Judging by records in the CITES Trade Database, many of the apes must have been illegally imported. Since 1975, Thailand has reported importing only 17 chimpanzees, three orangutans and no gorillas. Since 2004, Thailand has repatriated 62 orangutans illegally imported back to Indonesia. Unless a facility has obtained express permission from the government to propagate a species, even locally born apes could be illegal to possess.

Several cases of using great apes as photo props and in entertainment shows were found in Thailand, and older great apes are caged up in appalling conditions and used for breeding.



Great apes seen in Thailand in January 2016 used as photo props and in shows.



When great apes become too old to be used as photo props or in entertainment they are caged up, often in appalling conditions. They can live 30 or 40 years like this.

A method used to conceal the origins of illegally imported great apes that is employed in both China and Thailand is for owners to transfer them to another facility after import. The paperwork at the current holding facility then shows that the origin of a great ape is another zoo or safari park. To find the country origin and import documents, an investigator would have to go to the first facility to make enquiries, which most likely would result in no answers.

There is no system of registration or permitting to possess great apes, so they can be smuggled in and moved about within China and Thailand unmonitored. PEGAS compared the great apes seen with the great apes reported in the zoos that participated in studbook reporting and found massive discrepancies. Studbooks are not adequate to track great ape possession and movements in commercial zoos.

CIS countries

Great apes in the Confederation of Independent States nations are used primarily in private menageries and public safari parks of oligarchs (i.e. the wealthy and influential), though if the CITES Trade Database is to be believed there is a thriving travelling circus industry using them.

The countries of the former Soviet Union have only recently come to light as a relatively active area that engages in illegal great ape trade. In 2014, IFAW published a report²⁸ on Internet wildlife sales that identified the Russian Federation and Ukraine as sources of illegal live chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans. A newspaper article²⁹ published in January 2015 described a number of facilities near Moscow that sold orangutans and chimpanzees, with prices of up to approximately USD 35,000 per specimen. The CITES Trade Database reports that between 2005 and 2013, 99 chimpanzees and 4 bonobos were imported into former USSR countries – all Parties to CITES – under questionable circumstances. Most were ostensibly imported for travelling circuses with a C Source code, but there is no record of their return to the country of origin, as is required with a Q Purpose code. In addition, Russia imported 4 chimpanzees in 2011 and 4 chimpanzees and 4 bonobos in 2012 from Guinea, with what are now known to be fraudulent C Source code export permits. Armenia imported 4 bonobos and at least 4 chimpanzees in 2010-2012, which Armenian government records state are from Guinea, but these are not reported in the CITES Trade Database³⁰.

An Armenian journalist has written a number of stories outlining how a large Armenian wildlife dealer has trafficked chimpanzees and bonobos from the DRC to Armenia with fraudulent CITES permits signed by the former head of the Guinea CITES M.A., now being prosecuted as described above³¹. The Armenia CITES M.A. denied that any bonobos or chimpanzees had been imported to Armenia, despite photographs and video of the bonobo and chimpanzees in Armenia at a privately owned zoo and safari park. The wildlife dealer was eventually charged with illegal wildlife trading, but the case has stalled. In a separate incident, the safari park owner and his brother were arrested in Tanzania in March 2016 trying to export illegally to Armenia dozens of

²⁸ <http://www.ifaw.org/united-states/resource-centre/wanted-dead-or-alive-exposing-online-wildlife-trade>

²⁹ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2891073/Shocking-Russian-trade-baby-orangutans-bred-playthings-super-rich-25-000-each.html>

³⁰ <https://reportingproject.net/occrp/index.php/en/ccwatch/cc-watch-indepth/2596-endangered-animals-enter-armeniaand-then-go-where>

³¹ Example <https://reportingproject.net/occrp/index.php/en/ccwatch/cc-watch-indepth/2596-endangered-animals-enter-armeniaand-then-go-where>

wild-caught monkeys in a chartered Antonov.³² They were still being held by the Tanzania authorities in mid September.

CONVENTION SUR LE COMMERCE INTERNATIONAL DES ESPÈCES DE FAUNE ET DE FLORE SAUVAGES MENACÉES D'EXTINCTION

PERMIS D'EXPORTATION

N° 003681

04/11/2011

3. Importateur (nom et adresse): ZOO FAUNA ART, 148 ST. YEREVAN, ARMENIA

2a. Pays d'importation: ARMENIA

2b. Conditions particulières:

7. NOM COMPLET (ET NOM GÉNÉRIQUE (genre et espèce))

1a. L'espèce, ou de LA PLANTE

1b. PAN PANISCUS

1c. VIVANT

1d. IF

1e. "2 DEUX"

12. Pays d'origine: N° permis Date

12a. Pays de provenance: N° certificat Date

12b. N° de l'habilitation N° de la date d'expiration

13. CE PERMIS EST DÉLIÉ À L'IMPORTATION DÉCLARÉE

MR. ANSOUMANE DOUMBOUR

CONAKRY, LE 04/05/2011

14. APPROBATION DE L'EXPORTATEUR

15. Commentaires: L'ordre de transport est N°

Fraudulent CITES export permit for two bonobos to be exported supposedly from Guinea to Armenia. There are no bonobos in Guinea.

The importer's address is that of Zoo Fauna Art, owned by Artur Khachatryan, who was charged with illegal wildlife trading by the Armenian authorities.

There has been a demand for great apes in the Russian Federation at least since the 1990s. CITES Doc. 10.28 (Rev.) reports four cases between 1994 and 1996 involving 12 chimpanzees and one gorilla imported by Russia from Central and West African countries. CITES Trade Database records, press and NGO reports demonstrate that this demand still exists and that it is being satisfied through illegal trade.

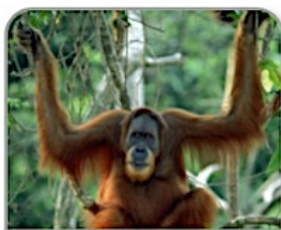
Press reports³³ describe how Russian, Armenian and other CIS oligarchs are establishing private menageries to hold expensive exotic animals as status symbols and pets used for showing off, in much the same way that the Middle Eastern wealthy do.

³² <http://hetq.am/eng/news/66703/proscribed-animal-shipment-owner-of-armenias-jambo-exotic-park-arrested-in-tanzania.html>

³³ Examples <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/70596> and <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2891073/Shocking-Russian-trade-baby-orangutans-bred-playthings-super-rich-25-000-each.html>



Despite photographs of a bonobo at Jambo Park, owned by Artyom Vardanyan, the Armenia CITES M.A. insisted that no bonobos had been imported. Vardanyan is now under arrest in Tanzania, charged with wildlife smuggling. (Photo: Hetq newspaper)



Orangutan

Pongo pygmaeus

Рост самцов может достигать 1,5 м (обычно меньше), масса тела — 50—90 и даже 135 кг. Самки значительно меньше: около 1 м ростом при весе в 30—50 кг. Продолжительность жизни в неволе до 60 лет.

[Read more](#)

1 250 000-1 820 000

rub.

Orangutans, chimpanzees and bonobos offered for sale in Russia online in September 2016. The prices on this website range from USD 19,500 to USD 28,400 at Russian ruble to USD rates.



Common chimpanzee or robust chimpanzee

Pan troglodytes

Взрослые достигают высоты 150—165 см при массе 45-80 кг. Самцы крупнее самок. Продолжительность жизни до 60 лет.

[Read more](#)

1 200 000 rub.



Bonobo, or oygmy chimpanzee, or gracile chimpanzee, or dwarf chimpanzee

Pan paniscus

[Read more](#)

1 200 000 rub.

The Middle East

The primary use of great apes in the Middle East is as status symbol pets, and secondarily as attractions in Safari Parks and zoos, where in some cases they might also be used as photo props. A survey is being carried out by PEGAS of Instagram, Facebook and website accounts, mostly in the Middle East, with a few in South and eastern Asia, which display photographs of great apes in captivity. Most if not all of these apes have been imported illegally as pets or are being offered for sale as pets. All of the ones offered for sale are young, below the age of three years. Most are dressed in clothes or are wearing baby diapers. Over a period of 18 months from March 2015 to mid September 2016, a minimum of 200 great apes were found on over 80 online accounts, mostly chimpanzees and orangutans. On many of the sites, specimens remained for only a short time to be followed by new ones appearing³⁴. This is not a comprehensive survey, there remains much work to be done to follow the posts made on the current known sites to find other great ape owners and dealers.

Owners and dealers of great apes and other protected and CITES-listed species brazenly display and trade online, occasionally with prices even being mentioned. PEGAS and its closest collaborator the Cheetah Conservation Fund have reported different alleged traffickers to the CITES Secretariat, INTERPOL and national authorities, with no law enforcement action being taken. Names, locations, telephone/WhatsApp numbers, online links and photographs of the animals, with actual price negotiations present in the comments, are included, yet the national authorities take no action.



Chimpanzee infant offered for sale in the UAE for about USD 33,000 in April 2016.

In February 2016 a dealer in Qatar made several posts of an infant chimpanzee, asking 75,000 rials (USD 20,600) for it. He bargained with different buyers in posts on Instagram. In March, a Qatari newspaper announced that a baby chimpanzee had been seized by the authorities in Doha, the capital of Qatar, from a man who was trying to sell in town³⁵. The photograph of the seized chimpanzee showed it wearing the exact same clothes as seen in a video post on the dealer's Instagram account. PEGAS tried to find out what was done with the chimpanzee and if the dealer had been arrested, writing to the journalist who wrote the story, to the CITES M.A. of Qatar and to the Doha Zoo. PEGAS also wrote twice to the CITES M.A. offering to relocate the infant to the Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary. The expatriate journalist stopped communicating with PEGAS and no replies were received from the M.A. or zoo.

³⁴ See <https://news.mongabay.com/2016/05/great-ape-trafficking-expanding-extractive-industry/>.

³⁵ See <https://freetheapes.org/2016/03/27/great-ape-trafficking-to-qatar-for-pets-and-safari-parks/>



An infant chimpanzee offered for sale in Qatar for USD 20,600 in February 2016. The dealer bargains with one prospective buyer in the UAE, who asks to be called.



A chimpanzee of the same age and appearance, wearing the exact same clothes as seen in the Instagram post, is pictured here in a newspaper story in March 2016 reporting that the chimp had been seized in Doha from a man trying to sell it. The CITES M.A. refuses to respond to queries requesting information on what was done with it, or to offers to relocate it to a sanctuary.

As is the case with zoos, safari parks and circuses, personal owners of great apes have no obligation to register or obtain permits to possess the animals. The great apes can be bought and sold and moved about with no government monitoring, which facilitates illegal trade greatly. The UAE Federal National Council passed a draft law³⁶ restricting the ownership, trading and breeding of dangerous animals, including great apes, on 15 June, 2016, but it has yet to be signed by the president. If this draft is signed into law, it still remains to be seen whether its provisions will be respected or enforced.

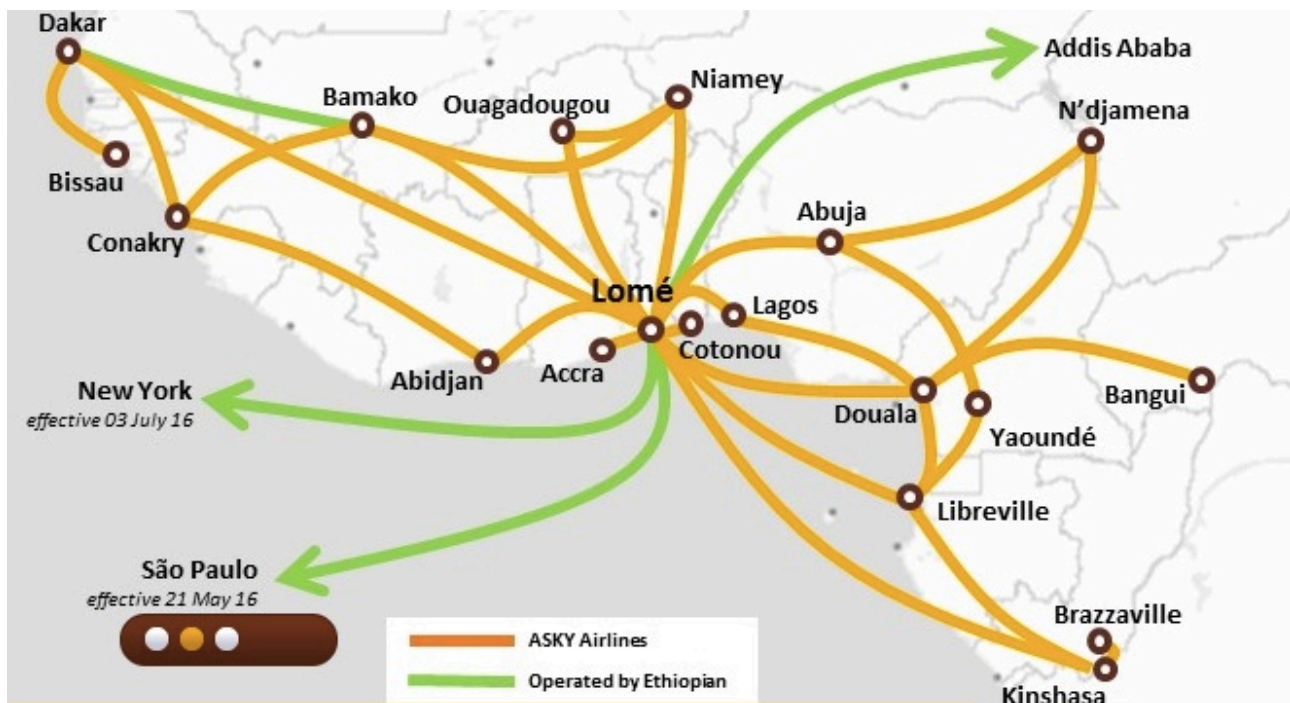
³⁶ <http://www.ifaw.org/united-states/news/uae-ban-ownership-exotic-dangerous-animals>

International Trade Routes and Methods

The departure cities from Africa and Asia vary over time somewhat due to various factors – mainly changes in law enforcement effort, corrupt CITES officials, airline personnel and flight scheduling. After the arrest of Ansoumane Doumbouya and Thierno Barry in Guinea³⁷, for example, traffickers have shifted operations to Guinea-Bissau and Mali until things cool down, according to informants. The transit cities change as well, but the destination cities appear to remain fairly stable, based on current information.

The airlines of choice for transporting illegal great apes within and leaving the African continent are alleged to be Ethiopian Airlines, along with its strategic partner ASKY. Egypt Air is also alleged to transport trafficked great apes. Ethiopian Airlines has an extensive network, in partnership with ASKY, throughout Africa, with all flights to the Middle and Far East transiting Addis Ababa first. Turkish Airlines has designs to establish an important network in Africa connecting major cities with the rest of the world via Istanbul, and this needs monitoring.

Informants have told PEGAS that the most common route to supply the Gulf with smuggled animals is from Addis Ababa to Muscat. From Muscat the animals (not only great apes, but other CITES Appendix I specimens as well) are driven overland to the Hatta border crossing connecting Oman with the United Arab Emirates. From there they go to various destinations, such as Dubai, Sharjah, Abu Dhabi and further afield to Qatar, Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



There are numerous routes out of Borneo and Sumatra (Indonesia) to reach other South East Asian countries, China and the Gulf countries used for orangutans. Orangutans are taken by boat from Borneo ports to Singapore and then by road or rail to Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok, where they go to the zoos and safari parks that have purchased them. They are also transported to Jakarta by boat and to a holding farm in central Java owned by a big trafficker before being flown out to Bangkok, Muscat, Guangzhou and other Chinese cities.

If the great apes have CITES paperwork and the buyers have the requisite finance, they can arrange a plane or ship through Asian Dragon³⁸ to transport the animals from anywhere, to anywhere. In 2012, Asian Dragon allegedly advertised chimpanzees for sale from Conakry, Guinea for USD 20,500 and eastern lowland gorillas for USD 37,000 each. This included CITES C source code re-export permits issued by Syria³⁹. Asian Dragon has offices in the UK, the UAE, Hong Kong SAR, Thailand, Cambodia, the Philippines and the Seychelles. There is a link to 'zoo animals' for sale on their website, but it is restricted. Users must register with a company name, website, contact and reason for wanting access.

³⁷ <http://www.express.co.uk/news/nature/602475/Wildlife-trafficker-selling-chimpanzees-arrested>

³⁸ <http://asiandragonintl.com/asp/welcome.asp>

³⁹ See <http://www.karlammann.com/pdf/cairo-connection-3.pdf>.

South Africa also has a number of companies that specialize in exotic animal transport, thus there are multiple transport types and routes that traffickers have available to choose from. The super-wealthy, such as the Middle East royal families and CIS oligarchs, use their personal planes.



A common route to transport great apes from Africa is transit via Addis Ababa to Muscat, for the Middle East,



Great apes fly to Bangkok and Guangzhou from Addis Ababa, from Jakarta to Bangkok, and Bangkok to Muscat and Guangzhou. These are just major routes, there are many others.

The most common methods of shipping great apes consist of: (1) using fraudulent CITES permits to make the export and/or import appear legal, (2) concealment in a carry-on or cargo container and (3) concealment by mixing the great ape infant(s) with monkeys or other species that are being shipped legally.



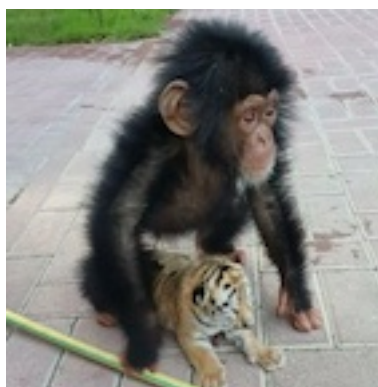
Above: Great ape infants can be shipped mixed with monkeys.



Left: The crate in which the six chimpanzees smuggled from Nigeria to Egypt were in, seized in Nairobi in 2005. Today it is displayed at the education centre of the Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary.

Prices for different types of Great Apes

For the pet trade, infants in the 8-month to 2-year old range are preferred, and females are more highly valued than males. Infants over the age of 3 years drop in value quickly with greater age. All species of great apes are very docile and dependent in infancy and make good pets at that age, hence their popularity. Over the age of 5 or 6 they become stronger and more unpredictable, especially chimpanzees. Chimpanzees and male orangutans must be caged at puberty, or even before, usually in the 6 to 8 year old range, as they become aggressive. Orangutan and chimpanzee juveniles can be used in entertainment shows up to about the age of 10-12, but they will be in cages before and after the show. After the age of 12 or 13, most great apes can look forward to a long life of being permanently caged up, often in appalling conditions. Adult female orangutans seem to remain unaggressive and photographs of adult females mingling with people are posted on social media. Gorillas are not used as pets, but either go into the private zoos of the very wealthy or into public zoos.



A desirable age for a pet or photo prop



4-10 years old for shows



Adult great apes can expect a long life behind bars

Prices vary tremendously depending on the species, age, sex, trade chain position and country. At the village level at the base of the trade chain, infant chimpanzees, bonobos and orangutans can be purchased for as little as USD 50 each. Prices between source countries vary very little, USD 50-100 being common everywhere in tropical Africa and South East Asia.

Prices rise as the animals are transported to provincial and national capital cities in source countries, reaching the USD 500 to 1,500 range for local buyers, with bonobos and gorillas being the most expensive. The market for infant gorillas locally is quite limited, as most people know that they are notoriously difficult to keep alive without their mothers. A baby gorilla seems to lose the will to live and simply dies, unless someone is willing to spend a great deal of time with it and foster bonding.

If an international customer buys a great ape for export in a capital city such as Conakry, Kinshasa or Jakarta in person on the ground, they can expect to pay USD 500 to 1,000 for a chimpanzee or orangutan and USD 1,000-2,500 for a bonobo or gorilla. If a CITES export permit is desired, an extra USD 3,000 is the average bribe price in Africa. If the buyer orders from another country outside of the source country and requires shipment included, the price rises to about USD 15,000-20,000 for all but a baby gorilla, which is approximately USD 40,000. The CITES permit will be USD 3,000 extra, except for gorillas, which will be about USD 5,000.

As an example, PEGAS negotiated a price for a 3-year old orangutan in August 2016 in Indonesia for USD 13,000, including transport but no CITES permit. The video showed that it was not in good condition and the 3-year age was too old to make a suitable pet for very long (the starting price was USD 17,000). Following these negotiations, a 1-year old infant orangutan, including shipment from Indonesia to the Middle East, was offered for USD 15,000.

Prices in import-export entrepôt cities such as Cairo, Damascus, Dubai, Yerevan and Bangkok vary greatly, depending on the buyer and age, behaviour and sex of the animal. Buyers do not want aggressive and uncooperative animals. It should be kept in mind that all great apes captured in the wild and transported long distances will have suffered extremely traumatic psychological and emotional stress, which can result in dangerous behaviour. In general, chimpanzees can be offered for sale for as low as USD 5,000 in Cairo up to

USD 40,000 in Dubai. A 1-year old male chimpanzee was purchased in 2013 in Damascus, Syria, and transported by road to Erbil, northern Iraq, for USD 15,000. This was done with no CITES documentation, but veterinary health certificates were obtained. The average prices seen online and known from correspondence in the Gulf countries is USD 20,000-30,000 for a chimpanzee, somewhat less for an orangutan.

Destination countries such as Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Armenia, Thailand and China pay the USD 20,000-30,000 seen in the Middle East for chimpanzees today (prices dropped 2014-2015 during the Ebola crisis in West Africa). Orangutans are USD 15,000-20,000 in the Gulf and considerably cheaper in Thailand, because of their proximity to Indonesia. No prices have been obtained for orangutans in China. A dealer in Africa offered baby gorillas for sale to a buyer in Dubai in August 2016 for AED 500,000 (USD 137,300) each.

The financial incentives for traffickers to engage in illegal great ape trade are clear. Source country middlemen can purchase an infant for USD 50-100 in a village and transport it to a city with an international airport and sell it for USD 500 or more to an international dealer. This dealer can sell it overseas for USD 15,000 or more.

Conclusions

The UN-GRASP great ape illegal trade database currently under preparation should provide a more comprehensive picture of the scale and extent of great ape trafficking, but it is apparent from this report that there is a steady stream of wild-caught great apes flowing from their African and Asian ranges into captivity in foreign countries, without legal permits. Action is clearly required to stem this trade.

A great ape working group should be established under the Conference of the Parties, followed up by the Standing Committee in its meetings, in order to examine this evidence in more detail with the objective to formulate a revision of Resolution Conf. 13.4 (Rev CoP16) to address weaknesses in current wording. The working group should also contribute views specific to great apes to fulfill Decision 16.63, which deals with problems related to trade in specimens claimed to be derived from captive breeding or ranching, and Decision 16.67, which seeks to establish an illegal trade reporting mechanism for great apes. The working group would also review the Secretariat's report addressing Decision 16.64, on significant cases where the Secretariat has taken initiatives or entered into a dialogue with Parties on trade in specimens declared as bred in captivity or ranched where there is serious doubt about the identified source of the specimens in trade.

Investigations have shown that the main areas of weakness in destination countries is the lack of registration, permitting, monitoring and reporting of facilities and individuals possessing great apes. Knowledge of the numbers, age and sex of great apes in captivity, reported periodically to CITES or to another designated body, would make the illegal trade in great apes much more difficult for traffickers.

The use and depiction of great apes wearing clothes and acting as pets or performing in entertainment diminishes the public's perception of the critical nature of great ape conservation. If great ape conservation is to succeed, they must be seen as free species living in the wild.

ANNEX

Permit fraud: a business with a bright future?

By Christopher Haslett, independent wildlife trafficking researcher

Independent investigations show that the two main trafficking strategies – sending hidden cargoes without CITES permits and sending non-concealed animals with improper or fake permits – are both enjoying popularity. One of the most recent cases to come to light involves an ongoing effort by a group of Egyptian dealers to “legally” ship chimpanzees, and possibly other Appendix I species, to buyers outside Africa.

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA		<input type="checkbox"/> EXPORT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RE-EXPORT <input type="checkbox"/> IMPORT		CITES PERMIT No. RS/49/2016 ORIGINAL 2. Valid until Dec.13.2016	
3. Importer: GUANGDONG CHUANLORD HOLIDAY MANSOR CO, LTD. JIANSHE EAST RD, LUNJIAO SANZHOU, SHUNDE DISTRICT FOSHAN, GUANGDONG PROVINCE		4. Exporter : ZOO BUSSINESS AND ANIMALS FARMS JORDAN - AMMAN			
3a. Country of Destination : CHINA		<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div> THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM of JORDAN The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) P. O. Box 1215 11941 Amman – Jordan/ </div> </div>			
5. Special Conditions Live Birds (Trading) <small>For live animals, this permit or certificate is only valid if the transport conditions conform to the guidelines for the transport of live animals or, in the case of air transport, to the IATA Live Animals Regulation.</small>					
7./8. Scientific name (genus and species and common name of animal or plant. <div style="text-align: center;"> PAN TROGLODYTES LAST ITEM </div>		9. Description of part or derivative including identify marks or numbers (Age/sex if live)		10. Appendix No. and source (W.C.A. or O) IIO	
				11. Quantity Number of Specimens and/or net weight Kg (3) Heads Only	
				12. Country of origin * Permit No. and date 163285:18.Jun.2015	
				12. Country of origin * Permit No. and date	
				12. Country of origin * Permit No. and date	
				12. Country of origin * Permit No. and date	
				12. Country of origin * Permit No. and date	
				12. Country of origin * Permit No. and date	
				12. Country of origin * Permit No. and date	
<small>* Indicate country in which the specimens were taken from the wild, bred in captivity or artificially propagated (only in case of re-exportation).</small>					
13. THIS PERMIT IS ISSUED BY ::					
Amman Place		09.July.2016 Date		 Signature	
				 Official stamp and title	
14. EXPORTED ENDORCEMENT:					
15. Bill of Landing/Airway – Bill Number :					
See Block 7		Quantity			
A					
B					
C					
D					
E					
F					
		Port of Exportation		Date	
		Signature		Official stamp and title	

The permit pictured here was offered to an undercover buyer in July 2016 by an established Egyptian reptile breeder named Ramadan who may be supplementing his income by exporting chimps. Ramadan asked USD 5000 to provide a hard copy of the permit, a price that would be paid on top of the cost of the animal(s).

The permit is issued ostensibly in the name of the Kingdom of Jordan and appears to bear the signature and seal of the CITES MA there. (Jordan has denied any involvement with this permit and has asked for more information about the trafficker, which was provided. Jordan replied that it had taken action, but did not specify what the action was).

To the trained eye, the permit has some obvious flaws that would disqualify it when compared with the actual cargo. The “O” designation can only be used for pre-Convention chimps, that is, those born before 1975. Ramadan’s chimps for sale are all apparently babies (see accompanying photo). Since it purports to be a re-export permit, the fake document should also mention the animals’ country of origin and include a copy of the original

export permit, but doesn’t. The true source country of these chimps, and the permits used to export them, if any, are still the subjects of investigation.

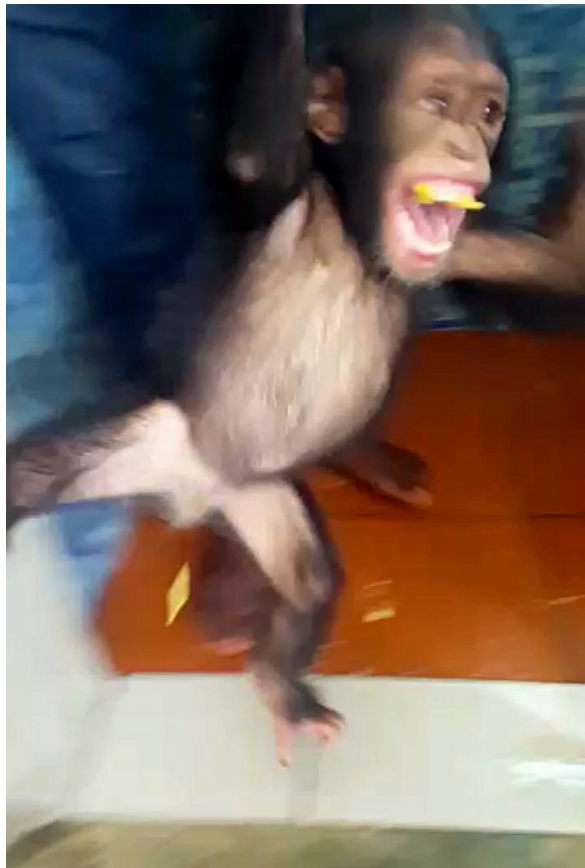
At this point we’re unable to say whether this permit has already been used with success⁴⁰. Anyone familiar with the CITES reporting system should readily understand why: the hard copy permits aren’t available for subsequent public inspection, unless the Parties concerned agree to it, and the brief data summary that goes

⁴⁰ Chimpanzees belonging to one of the Sharm el-Sheikh hotel owners could have been illicitly exported in this manner.

into the public database can take years to show up there. That is assuming the permits are ever sent in by the Party authorities – in numerous cases, including the Guinea-China exports of 2007-12, they were not submitted by the exporter, Guinea.

After many years watching corrupted authorities in several range States offer fraudulent CITES permits in exchange for bribes, we may be confronting a new and dangerous phenomenon where completely faked permits issued by no CITES official are being passed off. Enabling this forgery, of course, is the availability of computers with Photoshopping tools.

Adhesive seals are unlikely to stem this problem either as they can also be forged by a skilled graphic designer, and serial numbers are very unlikely to be checked by officials at ports of entry.



One of the babies offered by the trafficker (from video clip)

Always a risky proposition, the non-centralized, paper-based permit issuing system now faces more threats to its integrity than ever before. As the Working Group on Information Technologies and Electronic Systems encourages member states to adopt digital permitting⁴¹, the need to police the paper permitting system hasn't diminished. If anything, it is growing. There needs to be a more robust effort to close the leaks in the permit system created by computer-based graphic design tools, as well as the more traditional acts of corruption.

⁴¹ <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/E-CoP17-44-R1.pdf>

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