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Popular Article

## Poaching And Illegal Wildlife Trade

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### Introduction:

Poaching is estimated to run into billions of dollars and thus this Wildlife crime is a big business which is done by dangerous international networks, wildlife and animal parts are trafficked much like illegal drugs.

### The Black Market for Exotic Animals and Plants:

Wildlife trade escalates into a crisis leading to directly threatening the survival of many species. Illegal wildlife trade is well known as the poaching of elephants for ivory, bear and tigers for their organs, skins and bones (Fig.5 and 6), and the other examples are similarly overexploited, from sea turtles to trees. For the purpose of food, pets, ornamental plants, leather, tourist ornaments and medicine, the wild plants and animals are caught or harvested from the wild and then sold illegitimately.

- **Demand Drives Crime:** In Vietnam, the recent myth that rhino horn can cure cancer has led to massive poaching in South Africa and pushed the price of rhino horn to rival gold. Rhino horn, elephant ivory and tiger products continue to command high prices among consumers, especially in Asia.
- **Gaps in Protection:** The factors like corruption, toothless laws, and weak judicial systems make illegal wildlife trade a low risk business with high returns. The poachers which are used to be often poor locals of particular area, are the usually the only ones caught and the real masterminds escapes easily and thus their network remains safe and operational with the ability to strike again. "Wildlife trade hotspots" like China's international borders, trade hubs in East/Southern Africa and Southeast Asia, the eastern borders of the European Union, some markets in Mexico, parts of the Caribbean, parts of Indonesia and New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands are the certain places in the world, where wildlife trade is particularly threatening. The survival of many keystone species depends on stopping and preventing the spread of large-scale poaching. Poaching might seem like a far-off problem, but it's part of a greater relationship with our environment and our society.

### **Effect of Poaching in Humans:**

Wildlife loss can lead to economic and social impacts, from the loss of tourism revenue to gaps in our natural heritage. It affects humans as much as it affects the environment we live in. It is vital and very important to protect trafficked animals and educate the public about our connection to wildlife. A compassionate person might ask themselves: What are ways to stop poaching? Are there solutions to the effects of poaching? Are there careers in poaching prevention? There are different strategies to stop poaching using a range of approaches, including: Legislation, Technology and Community involvement.

Due to poaching, people illegally kill fish, wolves, black bears and bighorn sheep. Even killing deer in an area where hunting is not allowed or a permit is needed is considered poaching. Due to our ever-expanding drain on natural resources, human populations all over the world are expanding further into wild territories. This expansion creates opportunities for poaching as access increases to previously remote natural spaces. For farmers and ranchers, government-subsidized programs to protect livestock could reduce the illegal killing of predatory wildlife. To remove their motivation to engage in poaching, in rural communities where poaching occurs, people should be offered other economic opportunities, which in turn can lead to overcome the poaching. As it is one of the largest, most vicious threats to biodiversity, it threatens the survival of countless species. Moreover, it came to notice that as it is a million- to billion-dollar industry, poaching is run by international networks that traffic animals across the globe for their parts, traditional medicine, the pet trade and numerous other nefarious activities. The iconic species such as tigers, elephants and rhinos that are being slaughtered and thus this ruthless trade is reducing the forest flora and fauna. WWF is putting the spotlight on 10 lesser-known Asian species that are being poached to supply the multi-billion dollar black market. Poaching encompasses a variety of illegal activities targeting wildlife, including hunting, trapping and trade.

### **Effect of Poaching on Environment:**

Poaching is linked to global illegal wildlife trade of whopping value at up to USD 23 billion annually. Poaching is a serious environmental stressor. It is surely going to show devastating consequences for both wildlife and human populations. It pushes animal and plant species towards extinction which spoils the balance that exist in the ecosystem. As a result, it also disrupts the balance of food chain which can even create a stress on non-target animals. This also causes migration of animals towards human habitats and human-animals confrontation.

It can be stamped that this disruption in the ecosystem will surely hamper the life of local human communities which are highly dependent on wildlife and natural resources for their sustenance and cultural practices. This is also going to affect the wildlife tourism which is a source of bread and butter for local people. One of the biggest risks of poaching for the entire world is the possibility of emergence and transmission of new zoonotic diseases since wild animals can be carriers of unknown viruses which can

be a risk to human life. For example, the SARS outbreak was linked to the poaching of civet cats for food. Even the COVID-19 pandemic can be linked to poaching and wildlife trade.

### Poaching Impact on Endangered Species:

Poaching can be categorized into consumptive poaching (for meat), trophy poaching (for body parts like horns or skins), and **opportunistic poaching** (accidental capture or killing exploited for profit). Furthermore, there's a distinction between subsistence poaching (for personal needs) and commercial poaching (for profit). **Consumptive Poaching:** It involves killing animals for their meat, often for personal consumption or local markets. It can include hunting game species out of season or harvesting bushmeat. **Trophy Poaching** is focused on acquiring valuable animal parts, such as horns (rhino horns), tusks (elephant ivory) (Fig.1), skins (tiger and other animal furs) or bones (Fig.4) and walrus teeth along with hippopotamus incisors with canines including tiger claws (Fig.2 and 3). These parts are often sold for profit, sometimes used in traditional medicine or as decorative items. Opportunistic Poaching occurs when animals are killed or captured incidentally, and their parts or the animals themselves are then exploited for commercial gain such as a snare set for one animal might accidentally capture another, which is then poached and the Subsistence is in which the individuals or small groups poach animals to meet their own nutritional needs whereas Commercial Poaching is done on a larger scale, with the primary goal of generating profit from the sale of animal parts or the animals themselves and the other forms of Poaching like Illegal fishing which includes fishing without a license, exceeding bag limits, or fishing out of season and the **Wildlife smuggling** involves illegally transporting animals or their parts across borders, often for the exotic pet trade or other commercial purposes and the Examples of Animals Targeted by Poachers are-

- **Elephants:** Poached for their ivory tusks
- **Rhinos:** Poached for their horns, which are used in traditional medicine and for decorative items
- **Tigers:** Poached for their skins, bones, and other body parts, often for use in traditional medicine and as trophies.
- **Pangolins:** The most trafficked mammal, poached for their scales, which are used in traditional medicine and for food
- **Sea turtles:** Poached for their eggs, meat, and shells, which are used in jewellery
- **Deer:** Poached for their meat and antlers
- **Antelopes:** Poached for their meat, horns, and skins

thus, as it is observed that due to declining population of these iconic species the harmful activity has devastating effects on animal populations, ecosystems and local communities. It can lead to population declines, endangerment and even extinction.

### The Role of Organized Crime in Wildlife Trafficking:

Many magnificent animals across the world have been pushed to the brink of extinction due to

poaching. Humans have a storied history of nearly poaching many species to extinction, including the American beaver in the 1830s and the African elephant in modern times. Black Rhinos are critically endangered due to the high demand for their horns, and without intervention, they may become extinct as well. The loss of these species is often detrimental to the health of the ecosystem and biodiversity. To stop poaching, a multi-faceted approach is needed, including stronger legislation, community involvement, and technological advancements. This involves increasing law enforcement presence, supporting local communities with alternative livelihoods, and using technology like camera traps and AI for monitoring and prediction.

Here's a more detailed breakdown: Strengthening Legislation and Law Enforcement: Implementing and enforcing stricter laws against the sale and trade of animal parts and products as well as the illegal trade of exotic pets, is crucial, there is need of more wildlife conservation officers and game wardens to patrol protected areas and enforce existing laws and the addressing of corruption within law enforcement and legal systems is essential to ensure effective enforcement, to supporting the local communities to provide economic alternatives like providing alternative economic opportunities for communities reliant on poaching can reduce their motivation to engage in this activity and involving the local communities in conservation efforts, recognizing their knowledge and perspectives, is vital for sustainable solutions and also through the educating local communities about the importance of wildlife conservation and the consequences of poaching is crucial and utilizing technology like deploying camera traps to monitor wildlife and detect poacher activity provides valuable data for anti-poaching efforts, AI and Data Analysis through machine learning to analyse poaching patterns, predict future poaching hotspots and optimize patrol route. Utilizing satellite technology to monitor protected areas and track poacher movement and utilizing the robotic decoys to lure out poachers for arrest and by raising public awareness about the impact of poaching and the illegal wildlife trade can reduce demand for products derived from poached animals. By encouraging consumers to purchase sustainably sourced products and avoid products that contribute to illegal wildlife trade and by Focusing efforts on reducing demand in key markets for illegal wildlife products can have a significant impact.

Through protecting and restoring wildlife habitats is crucial for reducing poaching, as it limits access for poachers and provides safe havens for animals and the collaboration between countries is essential to combat the global trade in illegal wildlife products and to share best practices in anti-poaching efforts. Educating the public about the importance of wildlife conservation and the impact of poaching can help to create a culture of respect for wildlife. Thus, by implementing these strategies, we can work towards effectively stopping poaching and protecting wildlife for future generations. Poaching contributes to extinction and systemic loss of biodiversity. In addition, local communities suffer a loss of natural resources, which has economic repercussions. The United Nations Convention Against Transnational

Crime is working with countries to increase the punishment for illegal wildlife trafficking. A general offence under the wild life (protection) act, 1972, attracts a maximum sentence of three years imprisonment or a fine which may extend to Rs 25,000 or both. Illegal ivory trade generates billions of dollars a year & DNA analysis of ivory can trace the origins of the tusks and identify poaching hot spots. And it shocking to know the elephants have to be killed for poachers to extract their tusks.



Fig: 1 Photograph showing the elephant ivory used as ornamentals collected after Poaching.



Fig:2 Photograph showing the tiger claws and skull bones used as ornamentals and trade as crafted jewelry pieces.

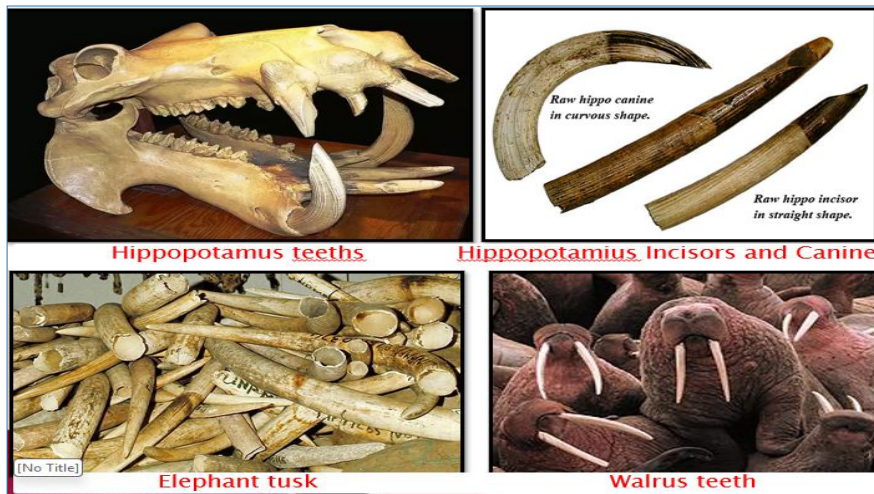


Fig:3 Photograph showing the hippopotamus teeth, elephant tusk and walrus teeth used in Poaching.



Fig :4 Photograph showing the different bony parts used in wildlife trade after poaching.



Fig: 5 Photograph showing tiger farm (B) raised for obtaining different body parts to make various Chinese medicine (C) including chinese wine (D) from collected bone (A).

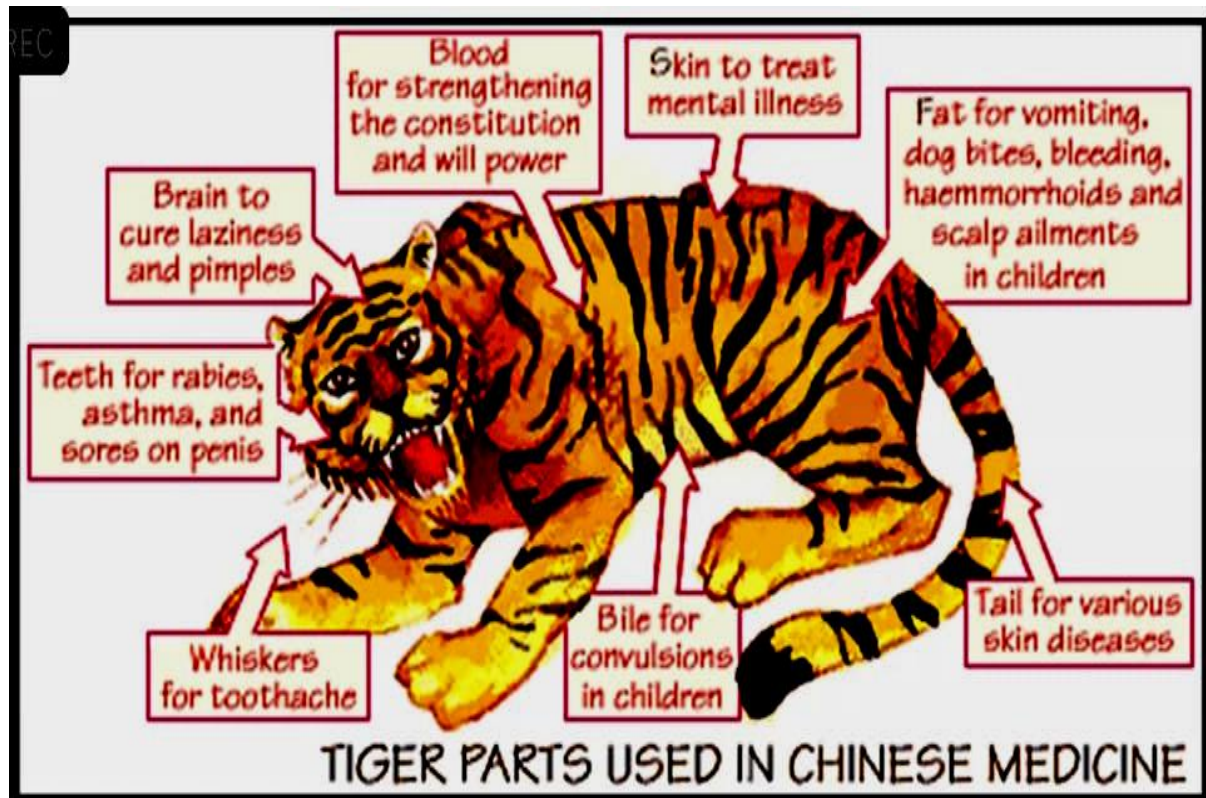


Fig:6 Photograph showing different parts of the body of tiger used to make and treat different medicine used in various disease.

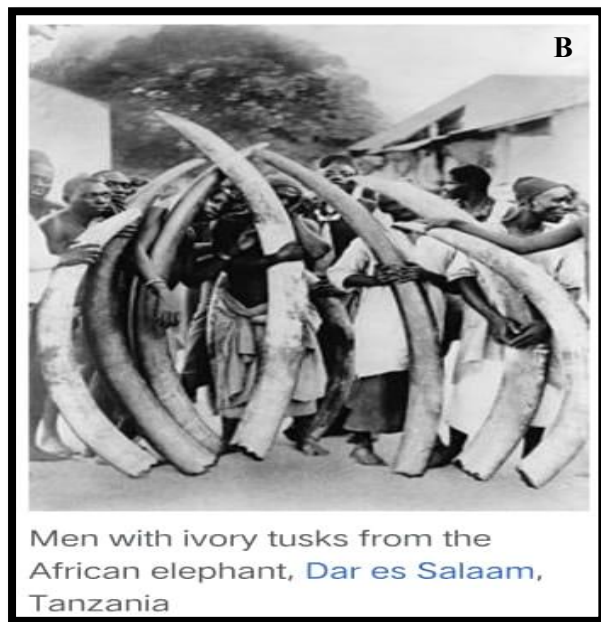


Fig: 7 Photograph of Ivory trade in earlier time (A) and very large sized ivory collected in Africa (B)



Fig: 8 Photograph showing the 3500 kg Seized illegal ivory, in march 2018.



Fig: 9 Photograph showing the 2500 Rhino horns collected and turned to Ashes.



Fig.10 Photograph of Ivory collected over 100 tons were burned in Kenya, largest ivory burned in history.

### Case Studies:

African Elephants known for their intelligence, size, and distinct appearance, face a major threat from poaching driven by the demand for ivory and other elephant products. They are one of the most heavily poached mammals in the world, with a majority of African elephants being killed by poachers within the last 100 years (Fig.7 and 8). Poaching endangers individual elephants and the wider species, destabilises entire ecosystems, and poses a significant challenge to global biodiversity efforts. IFAW is an organisation dedicated to conservation and rescue around the world. Elephant poaching is usually driven by a demand for their tusks. Elephant tusks are made out of ivory. Ivory is in high demand in various parts of the world, particularly in Asia, where it is used for ornaments, jewellery, and traditional medicine. A 2023 study by the Centre for Advanced Defence Studies (C4ADS) found that geographical patterns of elephant ivory continue to adhere to Africa-to-Asia trafficking routes, meaning elephants are being poached for their tusks in African countries and being illegally transported overseas to supply the demand in Asian countries. Poaching is a complicated issue that often arises from a lack of income sources for people who live close to wildlife. It is evident from many studies that elephant poaching increases where there is a lack of income-generating opportunities. Human-wildlife conflict can also be a source of tension between humans and elephants, which can lead to humans ignoring legal measures taken to protect the species. Where elephants may destroy crops and agriculture, it can lead to humans killing or harming the animals to protect their livelihoods or in retaliation. In a study it was found that an elephant conservation programme monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE), found that around majority of elephant deaths were due to poaching. African elephants were originally treated as one species, but as of 2021, they are now recognised as two separate species: the African forest elephant and the African savannah elephant. Both species saw steep declines in their populations when poaching surged in 2008. This surge in illegal elephant hunting peaked around 2011, though it continues to threaten African elephant populations today. In 2016, the African Elephant Status Report estimated that 415,428 African

elephants lived across the continent, with a decline of approximately 110,000 individuals over the previous decade. Their combined estimated population as of 2021 is 415,000 elephants. According to the 2023 report by C4ADS, the most common countries of origin for shipments of elephant ivory seized from traffickers were Ethiopia (18.4%), Nigeria (17.6%), Democratic Republic of the Congo (8.8%), and Mozambique (8.8%). However, these countries where the shipment originated do not necessarily reflect where the elephants were initially poached, as many of these countries have much sparser or non-existent elephant populations in comparison to southern African states. Over 100 Tons of Ivory turned to ashes after recovery from poachers. (Fig.9 and 10)

**PANGOLIN** (*Manis javanica*): The Sunda pangolin is critically endangered and IUCN reports that wild populations have halved in the past 15 years. Pangolins are among the most trafficked mammals in Asia. They are in high demand both for their meat and for their scales, which are used in traditional medicine—and as love charms. Tens of thousands of Sunda pangolins have been poached from the wild, headed primarily to China where it is considered a luxury food. Listed in CITES Appendix II, there is a zero annual export quota for this species removed from the wild and traded for primarily commercial purposes.



Fig: 11

**ORCHID: Gold of Kinabalu Orchid** (*Paphiopedilum rothschildianum*) This orchid species is found only on Mount Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. Admired for its beauty, rare orchids can fetch huge sums of money. After its discovery in 1987, this slipper orchid was stripped from the wild by smugglers bringing it close to extinction. Traders scour the globe for new species of orchids, sometimes removing whole populations of plants before anyone else knows of their existence. This orchid is listed as CITES Appendix I, which bans international commercial trade.



Fig: 12

Other examples of most poached species are **Siberian Musk Deer** (*Moschus moschiferus*): As hunting is often indiscriminate of sex and age, four to five musk deer are estimated to be killed per one musk-pod harvested. Musk deer populations from Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan are listed in CITES Appendix I, which bans international commercial trade. All male musk deer are highly sought after for their musk pod, a scent gland, which is used in the perfume trade and for traditional medicines. Each male produces only around 25g of musk and although it can be extracted from live animals, most “musk-gatherers” kill the animals to remove the entire sac. An estimated 25,000 adult male Siberian musk deer were killed between 1990 and 2001.



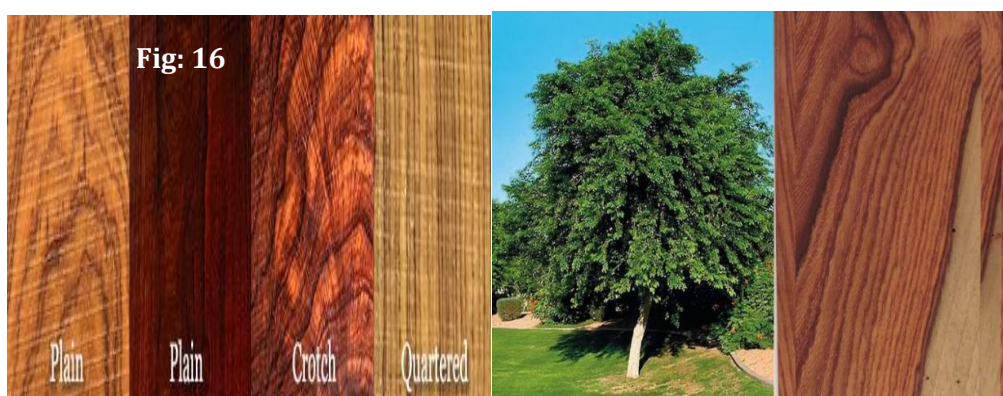
**SUN BEAR** (*Helarctos malayanus*) The gall bladders of all bears are in high demand for use in traditional Chinese medicine. While bile is milked from commercially-farmed bears, bears are routinely removed from the wild to stock or restock these small commercial farms. Bear meat, particularly the paws, is considered a culinary delicacy. Killing bears is illegal in all bear range countries but is largely uncontrolled. The species is extinct in Singapore and has possibly become extinct more recently in Bangladesh and China. Sun bears are listed in CITES Appendix I, which bans international commercial trade.



another species is **TOKAY GECKO** (*Gekko gekko*) Since 2009, demand for tokay geckos was reported to have sky-rocketed following rumours that extracts from the lizard could cure HIV/AIDS, a claim refuted by the World Health Organization (WHO). A TRAFFIC report found that millions of tokay geckos are being taken from the wild to supply the traditional medicine trade in East Asia. In 2011 a shipment of 6.75 tonnes (an estimated 1.2 million individuals) of dried tokay geckos, illegally harvested in Java, was intercepted en route to Hong Kong. The species is not listed under CITES.



**ROSEWOOD** (*Dalbergia cochinchinensis*) The species has a slow growth rate and natural regeneration is often poor. The last remaining stronghold is found in a protected area in Thailand. Rosewood is listed as a CITES Appendix II species, which allows for international commercial trade under strict regulations. Rosewood is a highly sought after timber species, used in premium furniture, carvings, wood turnery, fine-art articles, musical instruments and sewing machines. The root, bark and sap is often used in traditional medicine. Rosewood has disappeared from most of its habitat.



**BURMESE PYTHON** (*Python bivittatus*) A skin sold in an Indonesian village for \$30 can fetch up to \$15,000 as a python skin handbag from a famous fashion house. Pythons are listed as CITES Appendix II species, which allows for international commercial trade under strict regulations. Pythons are among the most heavily traded species in Southeast Asia with approximately 340,000 skins exported annually for use in the fashion industry. Although more than 20 percent of exports are declared as captive-bred, a TRAFFIC report argues that the cost of breeding, feeding and maintaining the snakes to reach slaughter size appears much higher than the market price.



**BURMESE STAR TORTOISE** (*Geochelone platynota*) Commercial harvest and trade of this species is illegal under Myanmar law although export of captive specimens is permitted from one facility within the country, which also contributes to a future release program. It is listed in CITES Appendix II, which allows for international commercial trade under strict regulations. This critically endangered species is in high demand for meat and traditional medicines in Asia. There are concerns that there may now be no viable wild populations. It is also highly sought after for the international pet trade with collectors in Europe and North America willing to pay thousands of dollars for an individual. Found only in Myanmar, the species appears to be extremely depleted in the wild.



Fig: 18

**JAVAN SLOW LORIS** (*Nycticebus javanicus*) Ranking high on the cute-and-cuddly scale, slow lorises have long been in demand as exotic pets. Today, severe and persistent poaching of the critically endangered Javan slow loris from the wild has resulted in a dramatic population decline of at least 80 percent over the past few decades. This species is protected by Indonesian law and is listed in CITES Appendix I, which bans international commercial trade. The only venomous primates found in nature, poachers cut or remove their teeth, a process that almost invariably leads to the animal's death.



Fig: 19

**PROBOSCIS MONKEY** (*Nasalis larvatus*) This species is endemic to Borneo, found in Brunei, Indonesia (Kalimantan) and Malaysia (Sabah and Sarawak). The proboscis monkey is poached, not only for the illegal pet trade and bush meat but is also hunted for bezoar stones, an intestinal secretion, used in traditional medicine. In Sarawak, less than 1,000 animals are thought to remain in patchily distributed populations with populations in Borneo ranging between 1,000 and just 100. The IUCN have listed the species as Endangered and is listed on CITES Appendix I in CITES Appendix I, which bans international commercial trade.

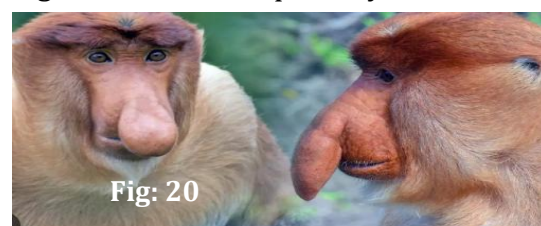


Fig: 20

**Exotic Pet Market:**

The **exotic animal market** poses a significant **threat to global and Indian wildlife** by fueling the **illegal capture, trade, and poaching** of rare and endangered species. Driven by demand for exotic pets, fashion products, traditional medicine, and status symbols, this market incentivizes the removal of animals from their natural habitats, often violating wildlife protection laws. As wild populations are depleted, especially of species like star tortoises, parrots, lorises, and big cats, entire ecosystems become imbalanced, threatening biodiversity. Additionally, the exotic trade causes immense suffering and high mortality during transport, while increasing the risk of **zoonotic diseases** due to close human-animal contact. Ultimately, the exotic animal market undermines conservation efforts, weakens ecological stability, and promotes transnational wildlife crime, making it one of the most pressing challenges to sustainable wildlife protection today.

Impact	Details
<b>Biodiversity loss</b>	Wild populations decline due to unsustainable removal
<b>Ecosystem imbalance</b>	Removal of key predators or pollinators
<b>High animal mortality</b>	70–80% die in transit or captivity
<b>Zoonotic disease spread</b>	Contact with wild pets increases risk (e.g. monkeypox, salmonella)
<b>Invasive species threats</b>	Escaped pets (like iguanas, red-eared sliders) harm natives

Species	Group	Part(s) Targeted	Illegal Uses
<b>Tiger</b> ( <i>Panthera tigris</i> )	Mammal	<b>Skin, bones, whiskers, claws, genitals</b>	Chinese medicine, talismans, aphrodisiac, rugs, ceremonial robes
<b>Leopard</b> ( <i>Panthera pardus</i> )	Mammal	<b>Skin, claws, teeth, bones, fur</b>	Rugs, jackets, wall mounts, <b>fur for traditional brushes (miniature painting)</b>
<b>Elephant</b> ( <i>Elephas maximus</i> )	Mammal	<b>Tusks (ivory)</b>	Carvings, idols, jewelry, antique trade
<b>Rhinoceros</b> ( <i>Rhinoceros unicornis</i> )	Mammal	<b>Horn</b>	Traditional medicine, dagger handles (Yemen), status symbol
<b>Pangolin</b> ( <i>Manis crassicaudata</i> )	Mammal	<b>Scales, meat, skin</b>	Chinese medicine, tonics, leather accessories, <b>exotic meat</b>
<b>Red Sand Boa</b> ( <i>Eryx johnii</i> )	Reptile	<b>Whole body</b>	Superstitions, rituals, <b>“double-headed snake” myth</b> , black magic
<b>Indian Star Tortoise</b> ( <i>Geochelone elegans</i> )	Reptile	<b>Whole animal</b>	<b>Illegal pet trade</b> , black magic
<b>Monitor Lizard</b> ( <i>Varanus spp.</i> )	Reptile	<b>Hemipenes, fat, skin, meat</b>	Aphrodisiacs, oil, leather belts/wallets, bushmeat
<b>Crocodile</b> ( <i>Crocodylus palustris</i> )	Reptile	<b>Skin, teeth, meat</b>	Luxury leather (bags, belts), shoes, boots

<b>Indian Cobra</b> ( <i>Naja naja</i> )	Reptile	<b>Skin, venom</b>	Leather trade, <b>illegal venom for "medicine"</b> , snake charming
<b>Turtle/Softshell Turtles</b> ( <i>Nilssonina spp.</i> )	Reptile	<b>Meat, shell</b>	Bushmeat, souvenirs, magic potions
<b>Slender Loris</b> ( <i>Loris lydekkerianus</i> )	Mammal	<b>Whole body</b>	Used in <b>black magic</b> , tribal healing, pet trade
<b>Otter</b> ( <i>Lutrogale perspicillata</i> )	Mammal	<b>Pelt, fur, meat</b>	<b>Paintbrushes (high-end art brushes)</b> , fashion industry, meat delicacy
<b>Mongoose</b> ( <i>Herpestes spp.</i> )	Mammal	<b>Hair/fur (tail &amp; back)</b>	<b>Traditional miniature paintbrushes</b> , shaving brushes, superstition
<b>Peacock</b> ( <i>Pavo cristatus</i> )	Bird	<b>Feathers, meat</b>	<b>Decorative items</b> , religious use, illegal meat trade
<b>Owls</b> ( <i>Various spp.</i> )	Bird	<b>Whole bird, claws, eyes, feathers</b>	Used in <b>black magic</b> , rituals (especially during Diwali), illegal pet trade
<b>Hornbill</b> ( <i>Buceros spp.</i> )	Bird	<b>Beak (casque), feathers</b>	Tribal headgear, souvenirs
<b>Parakeets</b> ( <i>Psittacula spp.</i> )	Bird	<b>Whole bird</b>	Illegal <b>caged bird trade</b>
<b>Hill Mynah</b> ( <i>Gracula religiosa</i> )	Bird	<b>Whole bird</b>	Pet trade for mimicry and talking ability
<b>Sea Cucumber</b> ( <i>Holothuroidea</i> )	Marine	<b>Whole body</b>	Aphrodisiac, <b>delicacy in East Asia</b> , traditional medicine
<b>Sharks/Rays</b>	Marine	<b>Fins, meat, skin</b>	Shark fin soup, leather

**Case Studies:****1. Spix's Macaw (*Cyanopsitta spixii*) - "Extinct in the Wild (2000)"****Region:** Brazil- (Caatinga Biome)**Status:** Reintroduced in the wild; previously extinct in the wild**Case Summary:**

- Spix's Macaw, a stunning blue parrot, was decimated by illegal capture for the pet trade starting in the 1980s.
- The species' rarity increased demand among exotic bird collectors worldwide.
- Habitat destruction (deforestation of the Brazilian Caatinga) further pushed the population to extinction in the wild.
- The last known wild individual disappeared in 2000.
- Recovery efforts with captive breeding programs (mainly in Germany and Qatar) have led to small reintroduction attempts.

**Key Cause:** Illegal pet trade + habitat loss**2. Carolina Parakeet (*Conuropsis carolinensis*) - "Extinct (early 1900s)"****Region:** United States (Eastern and Midwestern)**Case Summary:**

- Only native parrot species of the U.S., extinct by 1918.

- Though not primarily traded as exotic pets, trapping for the pet market, feather trade for hats, and habitat destruction wiped them out.
- Birds were often shot for crop protection and kept in captivity until their population crashed.

**Key Cause:** Feather trade + pet keeping + habitat loss

### 3. Hawaiian Honeycreepers (*Drepanidinae*) – Multiple Extinctions

**Region:** Hawaii

**Status:** Many species extinct or critically endangered

**Case Summary:**

- While habitat destruction and avian diseases are primary causes, illegal capture for aviculture (pet bird trade) contributed significantly to some species' declines.
- Their rarity made them highly desirable in aviculture markets in the early 20th century.

**Key Cause:** Pet trade + introduced diseases + habitat loss

### 4. Philippine Eagle-Owl (*Bubo philippensis*) – Critically Threatened

**Region:** Philippines

**Status:** Critically endangered

**Case Summary:**

- Endangered due to capture for exotic pet markets and wildlife tourism.
- Owls are sometimes traded illegally as exotic pets due to their striking appearance.
- Nesting areas are also destroyed for logging and agriculture.

**Key Cause:** Exotic pet demand + habitat destruction

### 5. Bali Myna (*Leucopsar rothschildi*) – Near Extinction in Wild

**Region:** Bali, Indonesia

**Status:** Critically endangered; <100 wild birds in 2000s

**Case Summary:**

- Stunning white bird with blue facial skin, caught extensively for illegal international bird trade.
- Despite full protection, they were trapped due to their high value (~\$1,000–2,000 per bird in the black market).
- Private collectors and aviculturists fueled demand, even creating fake "captive breeding" claims to sell wild-caught birds.
- Intensive captive breeding and guarded reintroduction sites are keeping the species alive.

**Key Cause:** Illegal exotic bird trade

### 6. Yellow-crested Cockatoo (*Cacatua sulphurea*) – Critically Endangered

**Region:** Indonesia, especially Lesser Sunda Islands

**Case Summary:**

- Targeted by the pet trade, particularly in the 1980s–1990s.
- Thousands were captured for the international market.
- Even after CITES Appendix I listing, smuggling continues due to high demand and price.

**Key Cause:** Pet trade (mainly for international collectors)

### Birds Effected:

Species	Region	Cause of Decline	Status
<b>Spix's Macaw</b> ( <i>Cyanopsitta spixii</i> )	Brazil	Exotic pet trade	Extinct in wild (2000), reintroduced
<b>Bali Myna</b> ( <i>Leucopsar rothschildi</i> )	Indonesia (Bali)	Caged bird trade, poaching	Critically Endangered
<b>Yellow-crested Cockatoo</b> ( <i>Cacatua sulphurea</i> )	Indonesia	Illegal bird trade	Critically Endangered
<b>Palm Cockatoo</b> ( <i>Probosciger aterrimus</i> )	Papua New Guinea	Smuggled for pets	Threatened
<b>Pesquet's Parrot</b> ( <i>Psitttrichas fulgidus</i> )	New Guinea	Feather trade, illegal collections	Vulnerable
<b>Hyacinth Macaw</b> ( <i>Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus</i> )	South America	Exotic bird trade	Vulnerable
<b>African Grey Parrot</b> ( <i>Psittacus erithacus</i> )	Africa	Massive trapping for pet trade	Endangered
<b>Philippine Eagle-Owl</b> ( <i>Bubo philippensis</i> )	Philippines	Exotic pet trade	Critically Endangered
<b>Indian Hill Mynah</b> ( <i>Gracula religiosa</i> )	India, Southeast Asia	Trapping for talking ability	Declining
<b>Carolina Parakeet</b> ( <i>Conuropsis carolinensis</i> )	USA	Pet and feather trade	Extinct

### Reptiles Effected:

Species	Region	Cause	Status
<b>Radiated Tortoise</b> ( <i>Astrochelys radiata</i> )	Madagascar	Pet trade, smuggling	Critically Endangered
<b>Ploughshare Tortoise</b> ( <i>Astrochelys yniphora</i> )	Madagascar	Exotic collectors	Critically Endangered
<b>Green Tree Python</b> ( <i>Morelia viridis</i> )	Indonesia, PNG	Illegal reptile trade	Declining in wild
<b>Indian Star Tortoise</b> ( <i>Geochelone elegans</i> )	India	Heavily traded despite protection	Vulnerable

### Mammals Effected:

Species	Region	Cause	Status
<b>Slow Loris</b> ( <i>Nycticebus spp.</i> )	Southeast Asia	Exotic pet trade (videos, selfies)	Endangered
<b>Pygmy Marmoset</b> ( <i>Cebuella pygmaea</i> )	South America	Captured for exotic pet market	Threatened
<b>Cotton-top Tamarin</b>	Colombia	Exotic pet market	Critically Endangered

( <i>Saguinus oedipus</i> )			
<b>Pangolins</b> ( <i>Manis spp.</i> )	Asia, Africa	Scales for traditional medicine; exotic pets	All 8 species endangered
<b>Fennec Fox</b> ( <i>Vulpes zerda</i> )	North Africa	Sold as exotic pets in illegal markets	Trade-restricted

### Flow Chart Showing Decline of Species from Wild Due to Exotic Pet Market Demand:

#### 1. High Demand For Exotic Animals



#### 2. Illegal Capture From The Wild

- Poaching, trapping, smuggling
- Often juveniles or breeding adults



#### 3. Population Decline In The Wild

- Fewer breeding individuals
- Genetic diversity loss



#### 4. Disruption Of Natural Reproduction

- Nest destruction
- Parent birds killed or removed



#### 5. HABITAT DEGRADATION (Often Linked)

- Capture methods destroy habitats
- Logging, agriculture often follows



#### 6. Inbreeding + Disease Vulnerability

- Small, isolated populations
- Prone to infection, infertility



#### 7. Extirpation From Local Areas

- Species vanish from part of native range



#### 8. Complete Extinction In The Wild

- No wild individuals remain
- Only captive ones (if any) survive