

# Mozambique to increase measures to tackle wildlife crime

In response to increasing pressure from the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), South Africa and the global conservation community, Mozambican government officials have pledged their commitment to escalate measures to combat wildlife crime, especially rhino and elephant poaching.



"Mozambique recognises the economic and security threats from trans-boundary criminal networks undertaking these activities, and the country is committed to finding solutions to these problems," says Marcelino Foloma, head of Mozambique's Wildlife Department at the Ministry of Agriculture.

Hosted by TRAFFIC and the Mozambican National Directorate of Land and Forestry, the three-day workshop was attended by representatives from several ministries, including Agriculture, Tourism, Customs, Finance, Home Affairs and Environmental Co-ordination. The event afforded a key opportunity to improve communication and collaboration between governmental institutions and civil society, to address serious defects in current wildlife legislation and to establish formal mechanisms for sharing information about illegal wildlife trade and taking law enforcement actions.

## Conditions imposed on Mozambique

TRAFFIC also rolled out a series of species identification materials in Portuguese to assist Mozambique's law enforcement community to identify contraband wildlife products, including elephant ivory, rhino horn, lion bone, pangolins and several protected timber species.

"This is the first time Mozambique's law enforcement community is equipped with species identification materials in their own language," says TRAFFIC elephant and rhino co-ordinator who attended the workshop, Tom Milliken. "It's critical that these valuable tools are available to fight increasing wildlife crime."

Discussions also focussed on how Mozambique can meet conditions imposed upon it at the recent meeting of CITES that took place in Thailand in March 2013.

To avoid CITES trade sanctions, Mozambique must amend its legislation and make the illegal killing of elephants and rhino and possession of ivory and rhino horn criminal offences with significant judicial penalties. The country also needs to beef up law enforcement actions to control the illicit movement of wildlife products in the region and at its borders. In addition Mozambique is expected to submit a detailed progress report to the convention's secretariat by January 2014.

## **Collaboration vital to address the crisis**

"Aside from the direct threat to Mozambique's wildlife, criminal networks operating with impunity in southern Africa are also threatening to undermine national security and the region's vital tourism industry," says director of WWF's programme in Mozambique, Anabela Rodriques.

Last week's meeting coincided with an announcement from the South African Department of Environmental Affairs that 514 rhinos have been illegally killed in South Africa so far this year. The majority of these incidents (321) occurred in the Kruger National Park, which is adjacent to Mozambique and are believed to involve Mozambican nationals.

"These concerning statistics emphasise the need for countries to collaborate in addressing the threat to wildlife from organised criminal networks," says WWF-SA's rhino co-ordinator, Dr Jo Shaw.

Meanwhile, figures in Mozambique indicate that the country lost more than 2500 elephants between 2009-2012, most of them poached inside the protected areas of Niassa and Cabo Delgado. Recent data indicate that about three elephants are killed every day in these two provinces. High poaching activity is also being reported in Limpopo National Park.

This workshop and the Portuguese language wildlife product identification materials were generously funded by New York-based Liz Claiborne and Art Ortenberg Foundation to address Africa's elephant crisis.

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