



**Michelle Owen**

## **ROUTES Lead, TRAFFIC**

Michelle is currently the lead for the USAID ROUTES Partnership, a transformational partnership that brings together transport and logistics companies, government agencies, development groups, and conservation organizations to disrupt wildlife trafficking through legal transportation supply chains. The partnership is led by TRAFFIC, a leading international non-governmental organisation that works globally on the trade in wild plants and animals for conservation and sustainable development.

Michelle has a B.Sc. in Biology and Geography, a M.Sc. in Conservation Science and over 15-years' experience working on conservation issues in South and South-East Asia with local and international NGOs. She has managed country-level conservation programmes that have built capacity in law enforcement, improved community nature-based livelihoods, conducted biodiversity research and partnered with companies to green their supply chains from sourcing through production and market access. Michelle has developed and led conservation programmes in Cambodia and Myanmar, working with governments and civil society to support the integration of conservation, sustainable development and natural capital approaches into government policies and national plans.

### **Q&A:**

#### **Is all movement of wildlife illegal? / Should we ban all carriage of wild animals and plants?**

No, international trade in plants and animals encompasses food, furniture, medicine etc. and is a large resource to society. Illegal trade is when resources that are protected, or are subjected to quotas to ensure sustainable use, are trafficked to prevent adherence to the legal requirements and oversight.

#### **Is industry expected to check and enforce the laws for transporting animals?**

No, the legal requirements rest with relevant agencies such as the CITES Management Authority or Customs. However, industry personnel are more likely to observe things that look or seem 'odd'. We hope that by being aware that wildlife trafficking occurs, industry can report suspicions to the relevant agencies and support their efforts in preventing criminal activity.

Industry can ensure that plants and animals are carried in compliance with the IATA regulations to ensure compliance with CITES and welfare aspects.

#### **What are companies doing to stop wildlife trafficking?**

Airlines and airports are taking a range of steps, these include making public commitments through the United for Wildlife Buckingham Palace Declaration and working with the ROUTES Partnership to develop industry relevant solutions such as general and role-specific training material, guidance documents and awareness material, as well as promoting their desire to stop wildlife trafficking to customers through in-flight magazines and on social media.