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I am a conservation scientist working for TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, in Cambridge, UK. With a BSc. Ecology and MSc. Conservation Science, I have worked in conservation for roughly 10 years. I first got a taste of the reality of conservation challenges in 2010, when studying for my MSc thesis in a remote part of Kenya, assessing the livelihood needs of villagers surrounding a forest reserve and how they were impacted by the wildlife. This experience took my career along a path of sustainable development and community-based natural resource management, which involved a fascinating year in rural Tanzania working with local communities to set up a wildlife management area. Following this I worked as a consultant on various largescale UNDP-GEF (United Nations Development Programme – Global Environment Facility) project proposals for sustainable landscape management in regions across Africa and Asia.

As poaching and wildlife trafficking became more prevalent, my consultancy work became more focused in this area, and eventually led me to my current role at TRAFFIC, where I have worked for over two years on the ROUTES Partnership – an initiative aiming to tackle wildlife trafficking in the air transport sector (www.routespartnership.org). I am the Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Research Officer for the partnership and also help coordinate activities. I never imagined when first venturing out into the Shimba Hills forest reserve that 10 years later I would be working within the complexities of air transport supply chains!

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.