



# Reducing Illegal Saiga Trade and consumption in Guangzhou, China

## INTERIM REPORT

to the

Saiga Conservation Alliance

from the

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

### **Project Staff:**

Sun Fuping  
Huang Jianming  
Li Fenglian

### **Other Staff:**

In-country supervisor: Dr. Kang Aili, Director, Country Program, WCS China.  
Co-supervisor: Mr. Colin Poole, Director, WCS Regional Conservation Hub, Singapore.

**Reporting Period:** November 15, 2012 –June 30, 2013

**Grant Amount:** \$3,000

## INTRODUCTION

The Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) philosophy considers saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica*) horn to be an effective medicinal ingredient to reduce body heat and stop spasms. One of the most important causes of the dramatic decline of saiga is believed to be the market demand for saiga horns. Guangzhou is one of the biggest cities involved in the illegal trade of saiga products in Southern China.

This project aims to reduce the illegal saiga trade and consumption in Guangzhou, China, through market surveillance, coordination of intelligence-led enforcement by government authorities, and an education program in collaboration with the Chinese government. Our long-term market monitoring program aims to assess the patterns and dynamics of saiga horn occurrence in the TCM markets, and measure the impact of law enforcement on reducing illegal trade in saiga horn.

## METHODOLOGY

This year we continued to adopt the survey protocol for the TCM market monitoring we had previously revised in order to ensure a more systematic occupancy-based approach (Barber-Meyer, 2010). The approach is unique in that it attempts to directly address the concept of “clandestine” trade of endangered species by accounting for imperfect detection of saiga horn by the survey teams.

This updated methodology was designed between September 2011 and February 2012, building upon the baseline data of the Qingping market WCS had collected between 2009 and 2011. This data consisted of 100% sampling of all stalls at least once, during which target species, including saiga, were recorded as present or absent. Combining this data with a map of the TCM stalls, enabled us to focus our sampling area on those areas of the market we considered most likely to contain saiga and therefore of most interest for monitoring. We identified the 2nd floor of the Qingping TCM market H part (245 target stalls), 1st and 3rd floor of Qingping Medical Center (246 target stalls) and 1st floor of Qingping East market as being most likely to sell target species. We systematically divided the three markets up into

clusters of three consecutive stalls on the map. We then randomly selected 60 clusters in each of the three market areas. Because Qingping East Market 1st floor does not have enough stalls we just selected 30 blocks. As result of that, each of the three markets will have 180 sampling stalls to survey (except Qingping East which will have 90 sampling stalls).

Market observers consisted of volunteers acting as potential consumers.

Saiga products were grouped into five forms: whole horn with bone, whole horn without bone, top half of horn without bone, bone pieces, horn strips, pieces or powder.

# RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

## Market survey

We recruited 9 volunteers and trained them on basic investigation and data collection skills on May 25. Afterwards, a total of 450 stalls were surveyed during two consecutive weekends in May and June (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Surveyed stalls in Qingping TCM markets**

| Market   | Surveyed Clusters | Clusters found selling Saiga | Surveyed stalls | Stalls found selling Saiga | Survey date |
|--|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| 1st floor of Qingping East market              | 30                | 7                            | 90              | 7                          | May 26      |
| 1st and 3rd floor of Qingping Medical Center   | 60                | 8                            | 180             | 8                          | June 1      |
| 2nd floor of the Qingping TCM market section H | 60                | 12                           | 180             | 18                         | June 2      |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>150</b>        | <b>27</b>                    | <b>450</b>      | <b>33</b>                  |             |

According to the survey, 27 clusters (18%) were found to be directly or indirectly selling saiga products (while some stores had the product on display, others claimed that they could get it from the warehouse). 7 clusters on 1st floor of Qingping East market, 8 clusters on 1st and 3rd floor of Qingping Medical Center, 12 clusters on 2nd floor of the Qingping TCM market H part. Among these 27 clusters, 17 clusters were directly observed selling saiga products and 10 clusters claimed its availability but did not display it. Saiga horn strips, pieces or powder were directly observed in larger quantities (29.59kg) than half or full horns (Table 2).

It shall be noted that it is hard to distinguish saiga horn strips, pieces or powder from fake products. In one case a volunteer expressed doubts as to the horn strip's quality and challenged the stall owner over its origin. The seller eventually admitted that the product actually was goat horn and not saiga antelope.

In the next phase of data analysis, we will examine the data in an occupancy framework and provide recommendations for the method as part of a long-term monitoring program.

**Table 2. The frequency, quantity and price of different saiga products directly observed in May/June 2013**

| <b>Trade form</b>             | <b>Frequency*</b> | <b>Quantity(kg)</b> | <b>Price(RMB)</b>   |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Whole horn with bone          | 2                 | 2.2                 | 28000/kg            |
| whole horn without bone       | 1                 | 0.09                | 23000/kg            |
| Top half of horn without bone | 3                 | 0.8                 | 24000-33000/kg      |
| Horn strips, pieces or powder | 13                | 26.5                | 240-3000/kg         |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>19</b>         | <b>29.59</b>        | <b>240-33000/kg</b> |

\*Saiga horn was found being sold in 18 stalls, one of which was selling two forms of this product (bone piece and horn strips), hence the reported frequency is 19.

## **Education activities**

As part of our efforts to promote greater awareness about the conservation of the saiga antelope, WCS has disseminated 66 pieces of information for 5 times to a total of 228 people between September 2012 and May 2013, including 2 reports about the Mongolian Saiga.

Our target audience included government agencies such as the Forestry Police, the Customs Authority, and the Wildlife Conservation and Management Department of the provinces of Guangdong and Qinghai. Additionally, we also targeted non-governmental institutions including the Wildlife Rescue Center of Guangdong. Our close collaboration with the CITES Management Authority allowed us to approach both their national and provincial offices in Guangdong, and invite Mr. Wan Zhiming - director of CITES MA China - to further spread these news through ASEAN-WEN and Interpol.

## CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

During this reporting period, survey of the Qingping TCM market was only possible once. This was a consequence of the extensive renovation occurred to the Qingping TCM market 2nd floor section H. The project team has opted for such delay also to allow enough time for reviewing the monitoring methodology and ensuring more solid basis for the data collection.

In the next phase, capitalizing on the collected data and experience in the field we will perform 3 market surveys, and further advance the discussion around the survey methods. We plan to submit to SCA an interim report before November 2013, and the final report by the end of March 2014.

Towards the end of the project timeframe the project team will perform a comprehensive analysis of the data collected in the past 5 years (2009-13) to understand the scale and trends of Saiga illegal trade in Guangzhou TCM markets, and evaluate the impact of Saiga illegal trade on wild populations.

Reports will be regularly submitted to law enforcement authorities to help combating the illegal Saiga horn trade in the surveyed markets.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to the Saiga Conservation Alliance for its partnership in this endeavor. We also express our gratitude to the 9 volunteers who helped us with the market surveys.

## REFERENCE

Barber-Meyer, S. M. 2010. Dealing with the Clandestine Nature of Wildlife-Trade Market Surveys. *Conservation Biology* 24: 918-923.