



The Bear Trade and Bear Farms in Transboundary regions Regions in Eastern Myanmar

Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association(BANCA)

BANCA (Biodiversity And Nature Conservation Association) is a non-profit organization and based on members who are keen to conserve nature and biodiversity nationwide. BANCA was well established since 2001 and have conducted many surveys and made researches on their abundance and their threats.

The survey on bear trade and bear farms was conducted in 2016 and the aim of this report is to conduct a survey on farms holding Asiatic Black Bear products and the places of merchandising their products. This survey focused only on Asiatic Black Bear while two species of bears: Asiatic Black Bears and Sun Bears are residents in Myanmar.

In Asia, bears are captured for their bile, which is extracted using cruel, painful procedures and sold as traditional medicine. These captive bears are kept in filthy and cramped conditions and suffer often in cages no bigger than phone booths. However the bear bile industry is completely unnecessary as plentiful and inexpensive synthetic and herbal alternatives to bear bile are readily available (Animals Asia, 2014).

The main area conducted is in transboundary regions eastern Myanmar; Muse, Panghsang , Mongla, Tachilake in eastern Shan State and Kyaik Htee Yoe in Mon State.

In these areas, the researchers surveyed Traditional Medicine shops and markets that sell bear parts in transboundary areas and critical wildlife markets. They also visited and documented bear farms in these areas.

The survey was focused on Panghsang and Mongla as per the results of the desktop survey. Six bear farms were documented: Four of these keep bears for sale including entire gallbladders, and two keep bears for the purpose of bile extraction. According to Traditional Medicine shop owners who were interviewed, most of the bears in the farms were wild, caught from Shan State and not as a result of captive breeding. However, a few were said to have come from captive breeding from Vietnam. One of these farms, “Shin Long Bear Farm,” was not seen, but bear bile flakes from this farm were found in several Traditional Medicine shops in Mongla City.

In this survey, the researchers noted the prices of bears and bear products in Traditional Medicine shops. At this stage, the research team found out that apart form gallbladders and biles, prices for bear parts are relatively low compared to those of other species. In general, buyers are only interested in live bears and bile from bear farms.

According to the survey, in Myanmar, an increasing number of bears, particularly Asiatic Black Bears, are being killed for their bile, with some, resulting from bile extraction. The price of bear bile is relatively high compared to other products from bears such as claws, paws, teeth, and meat. Mongla City and its surrounding areas have the potential to play a large role in the farming of bears and trade of wildlife products in future. Steps must be taken to ameliorate the issue of wildlife farming and trafficking. The practices of killing bears and extracting their bile are a great challenge for conservationists and animal welfare campaigners. The researchers hope that this study could be the first step in ending harmful bear farms practices in Myanmar and also in ending the illegal wildlife trade for bears and other animals.

In other countries like China have been combating for ending bear farms in their countries. In the mean while reducing the number of bear farms, the investors have been started in

construction of bear farms and extracting the bile for producing bile medicine in Myanmar especially in cross-border cities.

Therefore law enforcement on protection of bears and not involving bear farms in Myanmar by collaboration with stakeholders including not only concerned departments from Myanmar Government but also ethnic authorities from cross-border areas where bear trade and bear farms are involving.