

stances that scientists are now synthesizing. Yet many TCM adherents believe that whether or not their medicines work cannot be assessed from a solely Western perspective. Richard Ellis points out that public statements and education explaining that such medicines are endangering species is the most powerful way to save these animals.

A 21-page bibliography shows the thorough research Ellis has conducted and the wealth of material he has distilled from reliable sources. A bonus is the 47 illustrations, 18 of them the author's own animal drawings. Maps are lacking, however, and it might have been helpful to have places named in the text

and animal ranges shown on maps, along with a few more tables of animal numbers for clarity and easier referral.

This is an excellent overview for the layman, and for the scientist who perhaps has not been able to read all the academic journals and popular magazine articles covering these subjects. It is easy, compelling and informative reading in its painful portrayal of man's blind greed for wildlife products. It proclaims the urgent need to address the issue through public awareness, to stop the suffering and illegal killing of wild animals, many of them now endangered, in order for them to provide traditional Chinese medicines.

No oasis: the Egyptian ivory trade in 2005

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This monograph updates the ivory market status in Egypt, previously last reported in Martin (2000), Martin and Stiles (2000) and Stiles and Martin (2001). The last two CITES Conferences of the Parties called for assessment of both compliance of target countries with CITES Resolution 10.10 (Rev. CoP 12) and the internal ivory markets of African elephant range states (Decision 12.39 and Decision 13.26). Martin and Stiles (2000) demonstrated that Egypt was an important player in the illegal movement, working and selling of ivory in Africa (third overall). Since it is not an elephant range state, this survey was made to ensure that Egypt was not overlooked in implementing Decision 13.26.

This report contains much information not seen in previous publications on Egyptian ivory, such as a detailed treatment of wildlife trade legislation and policy and Egypt's participation in the Elephant Trade Information System, which I found most useful for understanding the context of Egyptian ivory trading over time. The monograph also contains a detailed account of where retail ivory is being sold, including the types and quantities of items.

The authors spent about three weeks in March–April 2005, carrying out work in Cairo, Luxor, Aswan, Hurghada and Sharm el-Sheikh, the main tourist

centres in Egypt. Using the ivory market monitoring and assessment methodology developed by Martin and Stiles (2000, 2002, 2003, 2005), the authors' overall findings showed that Egypt was still a country that affected elephant conservation negatively, but that since 1998 ivory market size and activity have decreased. Unfortunately, the report does not contain a table that compares trade indicators from 1998 and 2005 to enable a quick quantitative assessment of the changes. As it took me considerable time searching the report to find the data, I present one here so that the reader can readily appreciate what has happened (table 1). Complete comparative data were available only for Cairo, as it is apparently the only place in Egypt where ivory is worked today. Former ivory craftsmen in Luxor have seemingly stopped work except for ivory repair.

Although the number of active ivory craftsmen and the number of retail items seen for sale have dropped considerably since 1998, usually good news, the other indicators show that there is little basis for thinking the trend downwards is irreversible. The indicators, together with learning from the monograph about Egyptian government actions over the past few years, suggest a situation of strong latent demand, limited only by raw ivory

Table 1. Ivory trade indicators in Egyptian markets, 1998 and 2005

City	Year	Price USD/kg			Ivory craftsmen (no.)	Retail outlets (no.)	Min. no. of items
		1 kg	2–5 kg	6–9 kg			
Cairo	1998	34	62–80	98–137	100	88	11,627
	2005	138–173	173–207	259–311	25–50	79	8,930
Luxor	1998	?	?	?	< 12	33	6,445
	2005	–	–	–	0	25	1,308
Aswan	1998	–	–	–	0	21	3,388
	2005	–	–	–	0	15	373

supply and reinforced by retail price constraints on demand. In other words, if supply became once again plentiful, lowering both raw and thus retail ivory prices, demand would once again take off.

Up to 1999 Egypt had no national legislation to implement CITES obligations. Although selling most ivory was illegal, enforcement was lacking, and ivory was displayed openly for sale (Martin 2000). CITES pressured Egypt, along with other errant CITES Parties, to enact appropriate national legislation. In September 1999 Ministerial Decree No. 1150 made it a violation to sell, import or export a specimen of any species listed on a CITES appendix without complying with the relevant requirements. The Customs Department was issued with the necessary legal basis to enforce the decree. These actions effectively outlawed the import, export or sale of undocumented ivory.

Seizures of illegal ivory imports were made over the next few years, which lowered supply, driving prices up. Table 1 shows that tusk prices have almost tripled since 1998, indicating that high demand persists. The number of retail outlets selling ivory has fallen only slightly. Since the authors visited only six carving workshops, information on their status is not precise. The estimates they made of active carvers are probably fairly accurate, but if they had been able to interview those who have stopped working since the 1998 survey, they would have found that the carvers are most likely ready to resume work if the tusks and retail buyers can be found. Worked ivory is still displayed with impunity in Egypt and seizures of these predominantly illegal pieces are extremely rare.

Another factor affecting the supply of raw ivory to Egypt is the growing ivory market in Khartoum–Omdurman in Sudan (Martin 2005). Most of Egypt's ivory supply must pass through Sudan, with tusks originating mainly in central Africa. More tusks remaining in Khartoum, combined with the Egyptian ivory seizures, largely explain the trade indicator pattern seen in

table 1. The rest of the explanation comes from the demand side. Martin and Milliken found that the main buyers of the worked ivory were Spanish, Italian and French. In spite of terrorist actions, tourism remains strong in Egypt, and buyers would appear to be available. Spanish, Italian and French tourists to Egypt numbered 1,631,400 in 2004, along with almost 7 million tourists of other nationalities. The great rise in retail prices of worked ivory has limited demand, resulting in fewer craftsmen working on ivory, fewer shops selling it, and fewer items being displayed.

The monograph makes several recommendations for the government, to improve legislation and enforcement, to raise awareness of wildlife trade laws, and to include Egypt in the CITES Standing Committee assessment of domestic ivory markets. More should also be done to limit demand, such as working with the craftsmen to engage them in elephant conservation as outlined in Stiles (2004).

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