

Observation on the Wildlife Trade at the Daily Market in Chiang Khan, Northeast Thailand

In a recent study into the wildlife trade between Lao PDR. and Thailand SRIKOSAMATARA *et al.* (1992) found that it was a major threat to wildlife resources in Lao. They surveyed 15 locations along the Thai Lao border, including Chiang Khan. Only a single visit was made to the market in Chiang Khan, on 8 April 1991, and no wildlife products were found.

The border town of Chiang Khan, Loei Province in northeast Thailand is situated on the banks of the Mekong river which separates Lao PDR. and Thailand. In Chiang Khan there is a small market held twice each day. The market, situated in the centre of town, sells a wide range of products from fresh fruit, vegetables, meat and dried fish to clothes and household items. A morning market begins around 0300 h and continues until about 0800 h. The evening market starts at 1500 h and continues until about 1830 h.

During the period November 1992 to November 1993 visits were made to Chiang Khan evening market, to record the wildlife offered for sale. Only the presence of mammals, reptiles and birds was recorded. Although frogs, insects, fish, crabs and ant eggs, as well as meat from domestic animals, were sold, no record of this was made.

The evening market was visited on 112 days, out of which wildlife was found to be sold on 66 day (59%). Visits were made in every month except June, August and October, on average 10 days/month (range: 4-18 days/month). Only one stall holder regularly sold wildlife, although on occasions it was sold by two to three people, and on one occasion four people. On 34 days stall holders were asked the origin of the wildlife. The reply was always Laos. The animals sold in the course of the year can be seen in Table 1, along with the prices of some items, converted from Baht to \$US (exchange rate of B25/\$US).

Animals were usually sold dead, although on 14 days live animals including bats, bamboo rats, turtles, tortoises and monitor lizards, were seen for sale. Live animals were usually restrained with cord or in the case of turtles and tortoises, placed on their backs to prevent escape. On two occasions several live bats were seen impaled through their wing membranes on a single vertical stick to prevent escape.

With the exception of the Scaly-breasted Munia and the tail feathers of two Oriental Hornbills, the feathers and fur had been removed from all dead birds and mammals. This made identification of individual species such as the squirrels difficult. All wildlife was sold for food. On no occasion were trophies such as horns or skins seen for sale. This is in contrast to SRIKOSAMATARA *et al.* (1992) who found horns and antlers frequently sold for trophies in the same area.

Chiang Khan customs post was open for only two days each week up until 23 June 1993, after which it opened daily. However, prior to 23 June, wildlife products could be found for sale on any day of the week. The Mekong River can be easily crossed by boat so allowing the possibility of illegal free trade to occur.

Geoffroy's roussette, *R. amplexicaudatus*, is not currently recorded from Laos (ROOKMAAKER & BERGMANS, 1981, CORBET & HILL, 1992). However, it was seen for sale on nine days and on each occasion the stall holder claimed they were from Laos. A

specimen was examined to confirm its identity (\bar{Q} , $c^1-m^2=12.8$, $m_3=1.45 \times 1.05$). If it could be said with certainty that they originated from Laos this would represent a new record for the country.

REFERENCES

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- SRIKOSAMATARA, S., B. SIRIPHOLDEJ AND V. SUTEETHORN. 1992. Wildlife trade in Lao PDR. and between Lao PDR and Thailand. *Nat. Hist. Bull. Siam Soc.* 40: 1-47.

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Figure 1. Live fruit bats, Geoffroy's Rousette, offered for sale at Chiang Khan market, Northeast Thailand.



Figure 2. A civet, monitor lizard and turtle meat for sale in Chiang Khan market, Northeast Thailand.

Table 1. Wildlife sold on Chiang Khan evening market, on 66 days between 18.11.92 to 18.11.93.

Species	Number of occasions seen	total number seen	Price (\$US)
MAMMALS			
Pholidota			
Pangolin* (<i>Manis</i> sp.)	8	9	20.00 each
Chiroptera			
Leschenault's rousette (<i>Rousettus leschenaulti</i>)			
Geoffroy's rousette (<i>R. amplexicaudatus</i>)+	9	77	0.20 each
Cave fruit bat (<i>Eonycteris spelaea</i>)	2	2	0.20 each
Short-nosed fruit bat (<i>Cynopterus</i> sp.)	1	1	0.20 each
Black-bearded tomb bat (<i>Taphozous melanopogon</i>)	1	8	
Carnivora			
Civet (Viverridae)	19	27	6-8.00 each
Artiodactyla			
Lesser mouse deer (<i>Tragulus javanicus</i>)	6	12	6.00 each
Common barking deer (<i>Muntiacus muntjak</i>)	2	2	
Large deer (<i>Cervus</i> sp.)	7	7	
Rodentia			
Squirrel (Sciuridae)	14	36	0.80 each
Large bamboo rat (<i>Rhizomys</i> sp.)	16	32	2-4.00 each
Small bamboo rat (<i>Cannomys badius</i>)	8	10	1-2.00 each
REPTILES			
Turtles (Trionychidae)	7	8	2.80/kg
Tortoise (Testudinidae)	3	7	2.80 each
Monitor lizard (Varanidae)	6	6	4.00/kg
BIRDS			
Oriental Pied Hornbill (<i>Anthraceros albirostris</i>)	1	2	
Scaly-breasted Munia (<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>)	1	12	0.10 each
Small unidentified birds	1	17	0.10 each

* CITES Appendix II. Threatened species, trade in which is controlled by permit.

+ Data for Geoffroy's rousette (*R. amplexicaudatus*) and Leschenault's rousette (*R. leschenaulti*) combined.