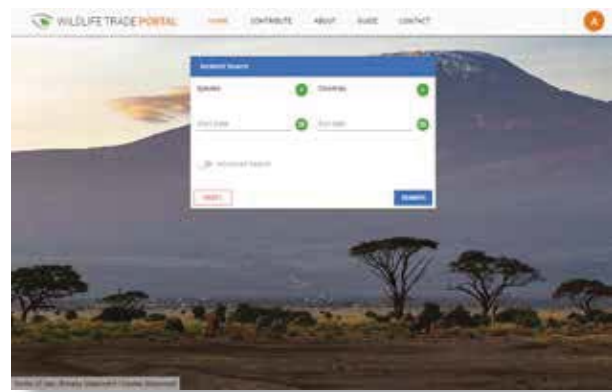In order to facilitate the sharing of data and cultivate collaboration with other NGOs, TRAFFIC has developed the *Wildlife Trade Portal*—the most comprehensive open-access portal of wildlife seizure data. Designed for NGOs, researchers and law enforcement agencies, it was developed with the generous support of Arcadia, a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin, via the ReTTA (Reducing Trade Threats to Africa's wild species and ecosystems) project. The *Portal* gives users unprecedented access to the open-source area of TRAFFIC's wildlife trade incident database.

Search: At its core, the *Portal* allows users to search through records of wildlife trade incidents—these include seizures,

THE WILDLIFE TRADE PORTAL

poaching events and court cases from around the world. The *Portal* interacts directly with TRAFFIC's existing database, ensuring that changes to the underlying data synchronise in real time with the *Portal* while also guaranteeing that any confidential data are protected. The comprehensive search function allows users to access the information that is relevant to their needs—filtering by the species seized, the countries in the trade chain, the date of the event, and so on.

Results: The results of a search are presented not only as a summarised list but also as a dashboard displaying a range of interactive charts and maps. These visualisations are dynamic, allowing users to analyse the contents of their requested dataset at a glance. They are also interactive—for example, a user might want to view more details by hovering over a pie chart segment, or further filter their results list at the click of a button. Selecting on a country on the map, for instance, allows a user to focus their results on this location.

Record View: Users can drill down into individual records to get a greater insight into the specifics of a single wildlife trade incident. The *Portal's* Record View displays in-depth data, such as the information sources, the smuggling methods, the enforcement outcomes, the quantities seized, the trade route, and more. Likewise, any noteworthy images or relevant media associated with the event are stored here. Suggestions and updates to a record can be sent directly within the Record View, facilitating straightforward two-way interactions between the users of the *Portal* and TRAFFIC.

Export and Upload: The *Portal* data can also be exported to CSV format, allowing users to run their own analysis of the information on their computers: users can either specify a selection of records to download or simply export their entire results list. Moreover, the *Portal* allows a variety of export formats to suit a range of analytical tasks.

In addition to exporting data, TRAFFIC is encouraging NGOs, researchers and other partners to upload their own datasets or files via the *Portal's* "Contribute" function.

Virtual Launch: On 2 April 2020, TRAFFIC launched the *Wildlife Trade Portal* to a virtual audience of nearly 280 participants based in NGOs, universities, media outlets and government agencies from around the world. Within the first 24 hours of the launch, the *Portal* saw over 200 new registrations and nearly 150 separate searches for incident

data. The launch was supported by a social media push which, in the first week of April, had reached over 2,100 people on Facebook and overall garnered 13,500 impressions on Twitter. This level of interest, corroborated by dozens of messages of support and gratitude, is testament to the desire for increased collaboration within the worlds of conservation and data.

> *Finally, a global wildlife trade dataset that we can all benefit from and contribute to. This is truly massive progress. I hope it will result in a better understanding of the illegal wildlife trade and more effective strategies to tackle it.*
>
> Pauline Verheij, Ecojust.

Impact and Outcomes: After extensive data checks are completed, the *Portal* will hold around 15,000 open-source incident records linked to over 8,000 separate locations and 25,000 wildlife commodities. This number will continue to increase as time goes on; based on data entry from 2019, it is expected that approximately 6,000 open-source incident records will be added to the *Portal* every year. In addition to this, the *Portal* will continue to receive regular user-driven updates and improvements.

The *Portal* is a mutually-beneficial tool through which outbound information leads to action by augmenting the datasets of law enforcement agencies, policy makers and researchers, while inbound information supplements the *Portal's* data and broadens global understanding of international wildlife trade. Increased inter-organisational data sharing will not only contribute to a solid body of evidence to guide conservation strategy effectively, but will also help to reduce the silo effect caused by a lack of communication and support between organisations, leading to more efficient workflows and reducing duplication of work.

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Wildlife Trade Portal: www.wildlifetradeportal.org

With the launch of the* Portal*, the wildlife seizures and prosecutions section that has been a longstanding feature of the* TRAFFIC Bulletin *to highlight enforcement action, is being replaced with a brief analysis of the trade relating to a particular species or taxon. We start in this issue with a focus on sharks and shark fins (see pages 32–36).