

## Wildlife Smuggler Arrested on Indo-Nepal Border - Leopard Skin Seized

*A Nepalese Wildlife trader was arrested with a Leopard skin in an Anti-poaching operation carried out by Uttar Pradesh Forest Department on a tip off from Wildlife S.O.S's Wildlife Crime Intelligence Network 'Forestwatch', run with support from One Voice Association, France*

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***A Nepalese trader was arrested with a Leopard skin in an intelligence operation carried out by the U.P. Forest Department with assistance from Wildlife S.O.S's wildlife crime prevention unit called "Forestwatch", run in collaboration with One Voice, France***

The future of India's big cats is under threat with rampant trade in leopard skins on going at the Indo-Nepal border. This seizure indicates the presence of illicit wildlife trade and trafficking of wildlife contraband freely moving at the Indo-Nepal border.

"Forestwatch" received information through its informer network about the trader who took advantage of the porous indo Nepal border. He poached the animals in India through poachers that he would buy the leopard skins from and then conceal the contraband in Nepal. He would strike his deals in Uttar Pradesh with smugglers to send the material onto international markets.

The operation resulted in the trader being arrested red handed in a raw-leather market of Naugarh district at the Indo-Nepal border where the trader had cleverly hidden the leopard skin inside a bundle of 100 buffalo skins in a bid to outwit the authorities.

A decoy customer was used to confirm the accuracy of the information after which the seizure was carried out by a team comprising of a 6 forest officers from the headed by Mr. Javed Akhtar, SDO - Farenda, Gokarkhpur Division. Investigator from Wildlife S.O.S - Mr.Rohit Singh was also present throughout the operation.

The accused Mr.Sumiran Raidas is a resident of ToliHawa Village of Kapilvastu district in Nepal..

According to Mr. Javed Akhtar, SDO-Farenda District, "On interrogation, the trader has revealed that he was killing the animals from forests in both India and Nepal but he kept the material in Nepal. He used to work on the principle of demand and supply. In 2007 alone, the accused has confessed to selling over 30 skins to different traders of Lucknow, Kanpur, Hardoi and Delhi."

According to Mr.D N S Suman, IFS - Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) and Chief Wildlife Warden of Uttar Pradesh State, "I have constituted a committee consisting of senior wildlife officers to look into the matter and expedite the investigation process. We shall use every opportunity to curb wildlife crime in the state".

**According to Kartick Satyanarayan, Co-founder, Wildlife S.O.S, "We are very happy to provide assistance and information to the enforcement authorities. This kind of collaborative efforts will help us detect, prevent and control the roots of wildlife crime that is threatening India's endangered wildlife."** According to Rohit Singh, "Investigations are ongoing and the Forest Department is hopeful to track down other traders from the leads of this case." Muriel Arnal, President of One Voice Association, France said, "This arrest is a major breakthrough for us and we

hope that the interrogation of the accused would aid in nabbing more people carrying out this illicit and illegal wildlife trade, which is threatening India's much revered wildlife heritage"

**- END -**

**Wildlife S.O.S** is an Indian Non-Governmental organisation working in the field of Wildlife rescue and Rehabilitation since 1995. Our main project is the rescue and rehabilitation of 'dancing bears', which are Indian Sloth Bears exploited by a gypsy tribe, called Kalandars for street entertainment purposes. In collaboration with the State Forest Departments, Wildlife S.O.S runs the World's largest Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre for Sloth Bears in Agra along with 3 other centres in Bhopal, Bangalore and Hyderabad. Working in tandem with the government law enforcement agencies, including state forest departments, Wildlife S.O.S has rescued around 400 Sloth bears from leading miserable lives with Kalandars and with the recent extension to the Agra Bear Rescue Facility, we hope to eradicate the profession of 'bear dancing' by rescuing the remaining around 500 bears off the Indian streets and rehabilitating the bear dancers as well, so that they and their generations to come don't revert to 'dancing or poaching bears' ever again. Join hands with us in giving both man and animal a life of Dignity and Freedom!!! The Bear Rescue & Kalendar Rehabilitation Programs of Wildlife S.O.S are primarily funded by International Animal Rescue. Other international partners are Free the Bears Fund Inc - Australia, Humane Society International - Australia and One Voice Association, France.

For more, visit our website, [www.wildlifesos.org](http://www.wildlifesos.org)

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