

SECTION TWO:

Bear Markets:

International and national trade in bear products



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Bear Markets: Global Trade Overview

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In section 1 of this report, the historical background to the international trade in bear gall bladders and bear bile was discussed. This trade has been the subject of several detailed studies during the past decade, which have included studies that have concentrated on both the Asian region specifically and also the global market^{1,2,3}. Two studies focused primarily on the trade in bear gall bladders^{2,3}, whilst the study by Mills et al in 1995, also evaluated the trade in bear bile and bear bile products, the majority of which were claimed to be sourced from China.

China has claimed that they are not exporting bear parts or products containing bear bile and gall outside of Mainland China. Since the bear species in China (Asiatic black bear, Malayan sun bear and Asian brown bear) are CITES Appendix I listed species, any export would violate both CITES and Chinese Law. But, the reality is that these products have been found on sale in many countries. In 1999 and 2000, during WSPA's investigations of bear farms in China⁴, bear farm personnel stated that farm products were exported to the Asian region, e.g. Japan, Philippines, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore. The products are also found in the USA, Australia, Canada, and UK.

In addition, bear bile and products were found on sale at Kunming and Guangzhou international airports. This violated a Chinese officials' statement to the 13th meeting of the CITES Animals Committee, where the MOF reported that the sale of bear bile in China's international airports had been stopped⁵.

Following WSPA's investigations of bear farms in China, several national surveys were carried out in countries suspected to be external markets for the Chinese bear bile industry. Surveys were conducted in Canada⁶, USA⁶, Indonesia⁷, Japan⁸, Malaysia⁹, Singapore¹⁰, Taiwan¹¹ and Australia¹². The primary purpose of this work was to determine the extent of the marketing of bear products, including manufactured bear bile medicines, bear bile powder and bear galls, within these countries. Information was obtained about the products, including the product range, price, and source. In addition, from these findings, some deductions could be made regarding the effect of this illegal international trade on wild bear populations both in the countries investigated, if applicable, and also in other bear range states.

Bear products on sale in Malaysia, note the intact bear gall on the scales at the rear.



Table 1: Manufactured bear bile medicines found during the national surveys

No.	Product	Type	Manufacturer	Price US\$	Country
1	Fel Ursi Haemorrhoids Ointment	Ointment	Chung Lien Drug Works, Hankow, Hubei Province, China	US\$2 – 4.00 US\$2 – 4.00 US\$0.70 US\$0.92 US\$1.93 US\$1.90 – 2.72	Canada USA Indonesia Malaysia Singapore Australia
2.1	Hsuing Tan Tieh Ta Wan	Wax egg containing pills	Yang Cheng Brand The United Pharmaceutical Manufacturer, Canton	US\$0.66	Malaysia
2.2	Tieh Ta Wan	Wax egg containing pills	The United Pharmaceutical Manufacturer, Kwangchow, China	US\$0.90 – 2.00 US\$0.90 – 2.00 US\$3.26	Canada USA Australia
2.3	Tieh Ta Wan	Wax egg containing pills	Guangzhou Pharmaceutical Import & Export Corporation	US\$0.30 – 0.56 US\$0.66 – 1.05	Indonesia Malaysia
3	Moschus Fel Ursi “Chufeng T’oukuwan”	Bile pill	China National Medicine & Health Products Import & Export Corp. Guang Xi Wu Chow Branch)	US\$2.60 US\$1.70 – 1.95	Canada Indonesia
4	Diedayaowang (Mao She Xiang, San Siong Dan Preparation)	Revival Pill For sprain	Produced under the supervision of the United Pharmaceutical Manufactory, Kwangchow, China	US\$3 – 4.00 US\$3 – 4.00 US\$1.60	Canada USA Indonesia
5	Fargelin For Piles (High Strength); Yang Cheng Brand New package, it does not list Fel Ursi in the ingredients	Haemorrhoid Pill	The United Pharmaceutical Manufactory, Kwangchow, China	US\$2.30 – 4.00 US\$2.30 – 4.00 US\$0.61	Canada USA Indonesia
6	Pien Tze Huang (Yin Dan Ping Gan)	Capsule	The United Pharmaceutical Manufacturers, Kwanchow, China	US\$11.10 – 33.30 / per pack US\$22.83 – 36.96 / per pack	Indonesia Australia

NB: Product 2 has been divided into three separate categories. There has been an increasing trend for certain TCM manufacturers to now remove the English wording bear bile or Fel ursi from the packaging of certain products (e.g. Hsuing Tan), in an attempt to ‘legalise’ the product. However, some TCM traders still state that the products contain bear bile and in some cases the Chinese wording for bear bile is still present. The 3rd example of this product indicates another manufacturer in China.

Types of bear products and range of products

A wide variety of different products were found during the national surveys (see individual country chapters for details). A selection of the more common manufactured bear bile medicines are shown in Table 1. These common bear bile medicines were all manufactured in China.

A broad range of types of bear bile powder were also found during the national surveys. Table 2 provides details of the types of bear bile, the majority of which can be sourced back to specific bear farms in China.

Whole, intact bear gall bladders were also found in all of the national surveys. Further details can be found in the chapters relating to each individual survey. It is interesting to note that in addition to China being quoted as a source for bear galls, numerous other countries are also quoted, including: Bhutan, Canada, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Tibet, Vietnam, and the USA.

Table 2: Bear bile powder found during the national surveys

No.	Product	Type	Manufacturer	Price US\$	Country
1	Bear Bile (No English Text)	Bile Crystal Powder	Kwangchow Pharmaceutical Industry Co. Kwangchow, China	US\$43/ bottle (US\$24/ gram)	Canada
2	Min Yue Shan - Xiang Dan Feng	Bile Crystal Powder	Yuan Hsin Bear Farm, Chin Lin Province	US\$40/ bottle (US\$8/ gram)	Canada
3	Xian Dan Fen	Bile Crystal Powder (Bear Bile)	Produced by Bear Farm of Mianjiang Hei Bao Medicine Group, Heilongjiang Province; Distributed by Beijing Tong Zen Dang	US\$50/ bottle	USA
4	Hu Tian Tai Bear Gall Powder	Bile Crystal Powder	Tian Ha Deer & Bear Farm, Guangdong Province, China	US\$15/ bottle (US\$7/ gram)	USA
5	Xian Dan Feng	Bile Crystal Powder	Produced by Bear Farm of Mianjiang Hei Bao Medicine Group, Heilongjiang Province	US\$38/ bottle (US\$7.6/ gram)	USA
6	Bear Bile	Bile Crystal Powder	Shiao Wu Wildlife Research Centre, Fo Kien Province, China	US\$150/ bottle	USA
7	Crystallized bear bile	Bile Crystal Powder	-	US\$5.30/ bottle	Indonesia
8	Bear bile crystals	Bile Crystal Powder	Chinese bear farm, Sichuan Province	US\$25.00 - 59.00/ gram	Japan
9	Qing Cheng bear bile	Bile Crystal Powder	-	US\$7.40/ bottle	Malaysia
10	Xiong Ling Shan bear bile	Bile Crystal Powder	Xiong Ling Shan Ziyang Bear Breeding Farm, Ziyang City, Sichuan Province, China	US\$33.70 / bear with 2 bottles US\$6.75 - 16.90/ bottle	Malaysia Singapore
11	Bear bile crystals	Bile Crystal Powder	No. 11 Redangred Animal Breeding Farm, Chengde City, Sichuan Province, China	US\$7.90/ bottle	Malaysia
12	"Bear Hunt" bear bile	Bile Crystal Powder	Yin Bei Bear Breeding Farm, Yaohan Changbai Shan Special Products, Jilin Province, China	US\$21.00/ bottle	Malaysia
13	Changbai Bear Gall Powder	Bile Crystal Powder	Yaohan Changbai Shan Special Products, Jilin Province, China	US\$21.00/ bottle	Malaysia
14	Deer Brand Bear Bile	Bile Crystal Powder	-	US\$6.75 - 16.90/ bottle	Singapore
15	Bear bile crystals	Bile Crystal Powder	Chinese bear farm, Sichuan Province	US\$4.15 - 24.24/ gram	Taiwan

Percentages of bear products on sale

When the results of the national studies are compared, it can be seen that the percentages of the three categories of products found in each country varies quite considerably. Table 3 provides a detailed breakdown.

Table 3: Data on the bear products found during the national surveys

Country	Number of TM shops	Shops selling bear bile medicine (%)	Shops selling bear bile powder (%)	Shops selling bear gall bladders (%)	Total shops selling bear products (%)
Canada	33	22 (66.7%)	2 (6.1%)	3 (9.1%)	22 (66.7%)
USA	32	27 (84.4%)	4 (12.5%)	5 (15.6%)	29 (90.6%)
Indonesia	124	69 (55.6%)	1 (0.8%)	12 (9.7%)	78 (62.9%)
Japan	128	61 (47.7%)	85 (66.4%)	48 (37.5%)	98 (76.6%)
Malaysia	73	23 (31.5%)	39 (53.4%)	21 (28.8%)	57 (78.1%)
Singapore	68	35 (51.5%)	4 (5.9%)	29 (42.6%)	50 (73.5%)
Taiwan	201	11 (5.5%)	35 (17.4%)	15 (7.5%)	61 (30.3%)
Australia	35	15 (42.9%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (8.6%)	17 (48.6%)
Totals	694	263 (37.9%)	170 (24.5%)	136 (19.6%)	412 (59.4%)

NB: 1) Percentages calculated from the total number of shops relevant to that category.
2) Some shops sold more than one type of product.

It can be seen that in all countries, except for Taiwan and Australia, over 60% of traditional medicine shops sold bear products, with high percentages in Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and the USA. A possible reason why only 30.3% of shops in Taiwan sold bear products, is because of extensive awareness campaigns regarding the ban on the use of bear gall bladders since 1994, and also the promotion of alternatives to bear products. In Australia, the relatively lower level of incidence can be explained by the comprehensive legislation, and more effective law enforcement at Customs.

In addition, when the three categories of products are compared, the figures suggest certain trends. It can be seen that in countries where historically the use of bear product traditional medicines is relatively unknown (e.g. Canada, USA and Australia), there is a higher incidence of manufactured bear bile products than intact bear gall bladders. However, other countries, such as Japan and Malaysia, have a more even distribution of the three product categories. This could be explained by national preference of products. In Taiwan, for example, bear gall and bear bile powder have been the traditionally preferred products, and manufactured bear bile medicines are not as popular and are therefore uncommon in the market place.

When the national surveys are compared, a general trend reveals that manufactured bear bile medicines have the main share of the market place (37.9%). If Taiwan is removed from the sample, then the percentage of shops selling manufactured bear bile medicines rises to 51.1%. This is a very concerning finding, as it substantiates the WSPA's findings from 1999 and 2000; that bear bile products are being aggressively marketed and illegally exported from China⁴. In several of the studies, it was also revealed that manufactured bear bile medicines were easier to import and received less attention from the authorities than bear galls.

In Japan and Malaysia there is a high presence (over 50%) of bear bile powder in the market place. These two countries, along with Singapore, were also found to have significant sales of bear gall bladders. In Japan, 37.5% of shops sold bear gall bladders, which is an increase from 30.7% quoted by Mills et al in 1995¹. However, in Taiwan during the same period, the percentage has dropped from 76.2% in 1994¹ to 7.5% in 2002. Again, this can be explained by the improved legislation and awareness work.

Prices of bear products

The prices of the bear products varied greatly, both within a country and also between countries. Within a country, there appeared to be a general trend whereby the price of products was greatest in the larger cities and lowest in smaller towns and villages. In table 4 the highest and lowest prices found in the different national studies are compared.

Table 4: Prices of bear products from the national surveys

Country	Bile Medicine Highest Price (US\$)	Bile Medicine Lowest Price (US\$)	Bile Powder Highest Price (US\$)	Bile Powder Lowest Price (US\$)	Gall Bladder Highest Price (US\$)	Gall Bladder Lowest Price (US\$)
Canada & USA	\$5.50 / bottle of pills	\$0.50 / pack of plasters	\$24.00 / gram	\$7.60 / per gram	\$650.00 / gall	\$50.00 / gall
China⁶	Not available	Not available	\$6.00 / gram (in pharmacy) \$0.24 / gram (from bear farm)	\$3.50 / per gram (in pharmacy) \$0.24 / gram (from bear farm)	\$50.00 / gall (in pharmacy)	\$30.00 / gall (in pharmacy)
Indonesia	\$33.30 / pack pills	\$0.61 / pack pills	\$8.30 / bottle	\$8.30 / bottle	\$111.00 / gall (in Jakarta)	\$8.30 / gall (from hunter)
Japan	\$336 / pack of tablets	\$17 / pack of tablets	\$252.00 / gram	\$21 / gram	\$168.00 / gall	\$25.00 / gall
Malaysia	\$0.92 / pack of pills	\$0.58 / pack of pills	\$78.90 / bottle of capsules	\$17.10 / bottle of capsules	\$5263.00 / gall	\$8.15 / gall
Singapore	\$2.83 / pill	\$0.44 / pill	\$16.60 / vial	\$6.60 / vial	\$290.00 / gall	\$8.25 / gall
Taiwan	\$12.12 / gram	\$1.62 / gram	\$28.29 / gram	\$1.21 / gram	\$40.41 / gram (\$1000.00 / gall)	\$2.42 / gram (\$60.00 / gall)
Australia	\$37.00 / box of capsules	\$1.90 / tube of ointment	-	-	\$10.90 / gall	\$10.90 / gall

With regard to bear bile powder, it can be seen that, compared to China, the price per gram in all other countries, is much higher. The highest price was found in Japan, at \$252.00 per gram of bile. This represents an increase of over 40 times the price of the most expensive bear bile found in China. Even if a lower range estimate of \$15/gram is taken, and then compared with an average price of \$5/gram in a pharmacy in China, then there is still a 3 times price difference. If this \$10/gram increase is multiplied by the estimated 3,000 kilos¹⁵ of surplus bile that China produces each year, the price on the international market would be a conservative \$30 million more than on the Chinese domestic market. This clearly highlights the amount of money that can be made selling bear bile powder around the world, and helps to explain why bear bile powder and manufactured bear bile medicines are marketed so aggressively by this industry, despite the fact that this is illegal.



A wide range of bear bile products, mostly originating in China, that WSPA investigators discovered being sold in the USA and Canada.

The prices of bear galls were also seen to be much higher in several countries when compared to China. The prices of galls also varied according to whether they were sold by hunters or sold in city shops⁷. Since the gall of a wild bear is viewed as more potent in TCM than the bile from a farmed bear, with these price differentials the poaching of wild bears will continue as long as there is market demand and ineffective enforcement of legislation. A particularly large number of galls were observed in Malaysia (over 90 galls).

Sources of products and trade routes

While there is some national production of manufactured bear bile medicines in countries other than China (e.g. Japan and Malaysia), the vast majority of these products, and the bear bile powders/crystals found in these surveys, originated from China. As has been stated, this international trade is totally illegal. The majority of the Chinese manufactured bile medicines can be sourced back to specific factories and corporations in China, and with regard to bear bile powder / crystals, to specific bear farms in China.

In addition, a major Traditional Medicine manufacturer in Japan was found to have strong links with a bear farm in the Sichuan province. Similarly, products found in Taiwan had also originated from Sichuan. Some products had been imported from Hong Kong by Taiwanese businessmen who had dealings in the region. In 1999, Taiwanese businessmen were identified as investors in one bear farm near Guangzhou⁴. Also, another bear farm near Guangzhou regularly supplied bile products to a Taiwanese dealer, who imported them into Taiwan⁴.

Apart from Singapore and Australia, the other countries surveyed all have national, wild bear populations. It is interesting to note that for both Taiwan and Australia the sources of the bear galls were unknown. In Taiwan, TCM traders were very unwilling to reveal sources of the galls. This contrasts with the situation in 1991, when sources were revealed far more openly², which was prior to the improved legislation and awareness work.

Table 5: Bear bile powder / medicines sourced to bear farms in Chinese provinces

Country	Chinese Province containing bear farm
Canada & USA	Fujian, Guangdong, Heilongjiang,
Japan	Sichuan
Malaysia	Jilin, Sichuan
Singapore	Sichuan
Taiwan	Sichuan
Australia	Heilongjiang

Table 6: Summary of sources of bear galls found during the national studies

Survey Country	Bear Gall Source Countries
Canada	Canada, Russia
USA	China
Indonesia	Indonesia, Korea
Japan	Bhutan, China, India, Japan, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Tibet, USA, Vietnam
Malaysia	China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, USA
Singapore	China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Russia, Vietnam
Taiwan	?
Australia	?

The impact of the trade in bear products on wild bear populations

Whilst it has been suggested that farming bears helps to prevent wild bears from being killed for TM purposes, there is continuing debate about the value of bear farming to conservation¹⁷ and some studies indicate that cheaper farmed bile has helped to expand the market for bear parts^{6,18}. Wild bear populations in North America continue to be hunted for their gall bladders¹⁹.

In the recent studies in Canada, Indonesia, Japan and Malaysia, bear galls were obtained from national wild bear populations, as well as imported from other countries. The majority of galls in Indonesia were sourced from local Malayan sun bears; 37 galls were counted in this study, with only one sourced from Korea⁷. This was a clear example where the promotion of bear bile products was having a significant negative effect on the wild bear population. In Japan, the galls were sourced from: imported wild bears (including a significant proportion from China); Japanese wild bears; and bears in Japanese bear parks.

The bear gall sources stated for Malaysia and Singapore were similar to those stated in 1991. Also, the sources for galls in Japan were similar to the official sources in 1991. However, in these three markets there appears to have been an increase in the number of source countries. This could be explained by the increase in communications between countries during the last ten years, or it could, more importantly, indicate decreasing bear populations in the original source countries. The Asiatic black bear and the Malayan sun bear have been hunted extensively in Asia. The capture of the sun bear is increasing in Indonesia, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Gall bladders have been recently seen for sale on the border between Myanmar and Thailand¹³, and on the border between Cambodia and Thailand¹⁴. Additionally, the sloth bear in India has been heavily poached in recent years, with several hundred bear galls seized in early 2002 in northern India. The pricing structure for bear galls can help explain the reason for the extent of this hunting. In Indonesia, for example, the forest hunter can obtain \$8.30 per bear gall. However, by the time the gall reaches Jakarta, the price is 10 fold, at \$111.00 per gall. In addition, wild bear populations in North America continue to be hunted for their gall bladders^{6,19}.



Products from Chinese bear farms, where conditions have been universally condemned by animal welfarists, were found throughout the world during WSPA's global study.

It is difficult to quantify the accurate numbers of wild bears killed for their galls, since only a small percentage of the illegally poached galls are seized by the authorities, either in the field or the market place. Accurate censuses of wild bear populations need to be carried out urgently to determine the real picture. However, the best solution would be to stop the demand from the international market.

In addition to the illegal international trade in bear galls, the international smuggling of live bear cubs to supplement the captive stocks in China's bear farms is a continuing problem. China has stated that captive breeding on the bears farms is successful. However, in 1999 and 2000, bear farm workers stated that some of their bears were obtained from Myanmar⁴. Also, in early 2002, 17 bear cubs were confiscated in the Russian Far East, on the border between Russia and China. Smugglers were attempting to take them into China, to be used in China for the production of medicines¹⁶.

Supply patterns of products

In the Singapore and Malaysia national surveys, the regularity of supply was assessed in detail. In Singapore, 13 out the 50 shops selling bear products (26%) had a regular supply¹⁰. In Malaysia, traders in Peninsular Malaysia stated they had regular supplies of bear galls, bear bile and manufactured bear bile medicines. In Sarawak and Sabah, there was an irregular supply of galls, but some availability of bear bile and manufactured medicines⁹. In the latter study, China was named as the main source of galls for Peninsular Malaysia.

Methods of importation

The extent of the trade in bear products in some countries clearly indicated that there were well-established illegal import channels, where companies were importing in large quantities and then



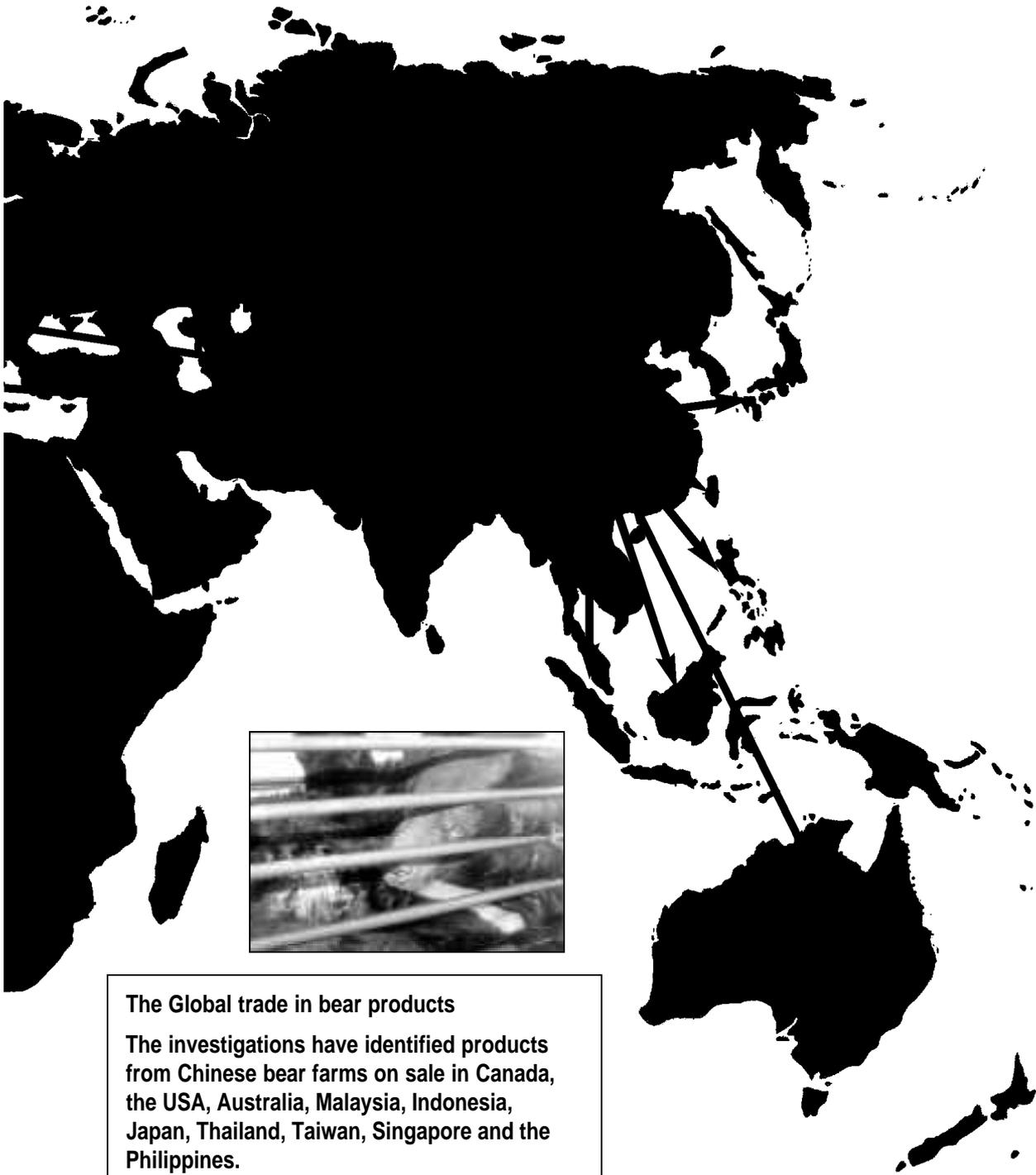
distributing the products to the shops. This was the case for the majority of the countries surveyed, particularly Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and the USA. In addition, products were imported by individuals, the items being smuggled in the personal possessions of the shop keepers, dealers, or consumers, travelling between two countries.

Legality of the trade

All eight countries covered by the national surveys are Parties to CITES, and therefore any international commercial trade in Appendix I listed bear species is prohibited.

International trade of Appendix II listed bear species (American black bear, Polar bear, and populations of the brown bear, apart from those in China, Bhutan, Mexico and Mongolia) is controlled with requisite export permits. However, it was evident that the required permits had not been obtained for the galls of Appendix II listed bear species that were found to have been traded during these surveys.

The implementation of CITES is dependent on effective national legislation of the member Parties. The national surveys revealed that some countries had effective legislation, such as Australia and Indonesia. However, the level of enforcement varied greatly. In Australia the enforcement was



The Global trade in bear products

The investigations have identified products from Chinese bear farms on sale in Canada, the USA, Australia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore and the Philippines.

moderate, but in Indonesia, it appeared to be lacking at many times. In Taiwan, improved legislation and enforcement appeared to have had a significant effect on the level of illegal international trade during the previous ten years. The legislation in Singapore could be further improved.

In addition, in the countries that have wild bear populations, it was found that effective legislation for protecting species and controlling internal trade was lacking in some countries. In the USA and Canada, disparities between state and provincial laws, provided loopholes for the bear viscera trade. In Japan, under the domestic legislation, it was possible for illegally imported bear gall, bile and processed medicines to mix with legally obtained and domestic products in the market place. In another example, improved protection of the sun bear in Sarawak, Malaysia, was needed.

Differences in national legislation clearly had an effect on the level of trade in the different countries surveyed. However, in addition to this, it was clear that the attitude of the TCM community and their understanding of the legislation that had a great effect on the trade. In Taiwan, many traders were well aware of the legislation and did not sell bear products because they knew the penalties. However, in Malaysia, some traders knew it was illegal, but were suggesting ways to take the products through customs and even described their own methods for bringing the products into Malaysia. Bribery was even suggested. In addition, some traders said that since the bile was from farmed bears, the international trade was legal.

Registration of the products with health authorities

In some countries, traditional medicines need to be registered with the health authorities in a similar way as western medicines. However, in Malaysia, examples of manufactured bear bile products were found to be registered with the health authorities. This is clearly an example where close liaison between the Health and CITES Management Authority is needed. In Australia, all TCM products need to be registered or listed with the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG). As a consequence, it is virtually impossible to import or sell bear products in Australia. In addition, in the State of Victoria, a scheme to regulate and manage the TCM profession is in place, which will licence TCM professionals. The level of awareness of the illegality of selling bear products was found to be higher in this state.

The use of bear products - far from a traditional cure

Historically, bear bile has been used to prevent and reduce fever, heat and inflammation and is believed to have an efficacy of protecting the liver, improving eyesight, and breaking down gall stones. It is also a specific remedy for chronic hepatitis. However, the various national studies identified other non-traditional products that contained bear bile, including pills, oils, ointments, suppositories and tinctures, for sore throats, colds, faintness, skin rashes, pimples, muscle aches and general well-being. Many of the products could be classified as non-essential. Also, many of them did not require a prescription from a TCM practitioner; they could be sold over the counter. In Taiwan, only 3 out of 201 shops asked to see a prescription¹¹. In 1980, TCM in China only required 500 kilos of bear bile per year. By 1998, over 7,000 kilos per year were being produced, of which China could only consume 4,000 kilos. Therefore, new markets have been actively sought both domestically (legally) and overseas (illegally). Therefore, any new products that can be devised to contain bear bile, are being marketed, even bear bile wine⁴.

Disguised bear bile products and counterfeit bear products

In some of the national surveys, including Australia, it was found that in order to import or sell bear bile medicine, several methods were used to disguise the product or the contents of the product. In some products the English wording 'bear bile' was removed, whilst the Chinese text was left intact. Correction fluid was also used to cover the illegal ingredients. There definitely appeared to be a strategy to produce new packaging for some products, in order to facilitate the movement of the items through customs.

Counterfeit bear products were another issue highlighted during the surveys. Some traders stated that there were counterfeit galls (i.e. from a pig or cow) in the market place. Also, it was suggested that bear galls could be injected with pig bile, and pig galls could be injected with bear bile. The intention, in both cases, was to obtain a higher price for the so-called 'real bear gall'. The national



Bear bile product found in Malaysia.

legislation in some countries may protect the consumer against such misrepresented products, but in other countries there are no such safeguards in place. However, whether the galls are real or not, the sale of them still encourages consumption and increases the demand for bear bile and bear gall.

Profile of consumers

The consumers identified in the national studies were predominantly Chinese, Korean, Japanese. In addition, Singaporean, Thai, Indonesian, Malay, Indian, and also non-Asian, European, were identified.

Is the international bear products trade increasing or decreasing?

Whilst the international bear products trade has shown a marked increase in the Japanese market, it appears to have decreased in Taiwan^{1,8,11}. However, from the total sample of 694 shops in eight countries, 412 shops (59.4%) were found to be selling bear products. A total of 263 shops (37.9%) sold manufactured bear bile medicines, 170 shops (24.5%) sold bear bile powder, and 136 (19.6%) sold intact gall bladders. Nearly 1 in 5 shops sold bear galls! These findings are based on nearly 700 shops, however they represent only a small percentage of TCM shops around the world. Therefore, the total picture is clearly going to be far worse for bears. Therefore, as far as the global market is concerned, the situation for both wild and captive bears is still very bleak and needs addressing urgently.

The eight national studies carried out during the last three years, clearly indicate that the aggressive marketing and illegal international trade of bear bile powder and manufactured bear bile medicines



Bear wearing a metal corset on a Chinese bear farm. Some farms have bears permanently wearing these corsets which are used to help manoeuvre the bears in the cages during bile 'milking'.

from Chinese bear bile farms is having a significant, negative effect on global wild bear populations. In addition, an estimated 7,000 wild bears are held captive in extremely inhumane and cruel conditions, subjected to painful, daily bile extraction, for the lucrative bear farming industry.

Conclusion

WSPA believes that farming bears for bile should be stopped as soon as feasible on the grounds of: the extreme

animal cruelty involved; the negative effects on wild bear conservation; and the existence of suitable herbal and synthetic alternatives to bear bile.

A comprehensive set of recommendations for progress on the bear bile issue appears in Section Three: Next Steps (page 239). In addition the national Bear Market reports that follow in Section Two include recommendations relevant to those specific countries.

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