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DATE: 15 September 2017
SERIAL: A-M-15092017
COUNTRIES: Nigeria, Malaysia, China, Global

ALERT ---- MARITIME

SUBJECT: **Peanuts/Groundnuts a Concealment Method for Large Quantities of Ivory and Pangolin**

DATA: Wildlife traffickers regularly use peanuts or groundnuts as a concealment method to smuggle large quantities of illegal ivory and pangolin, including in multiple recent cases.

Modus Operandi:

Declared shipments of peanuts and groundnuts have been associated with several large scale shipments of illegal wildlife products, in particular elephant ivory and pangolin, according to open and confidential sources. The method involves packing wildlife contraband into shipping containers to be obscured by bags or cargo boxes of actual peanuts or groundnuts.



Approximately 3 tons of ivory and 5 tons of pangolin scales with an estimated combined value of \$23 million concealed in a shipping container declared to be containing peanuts. Seized by Malaysia Customs at Sepanggar Port on 9 September 2017. (Photo: The Star / Asia News Network)

This method was very recently used in an unsuccessful attempt to traffic 1,148 elephant tusks, weighing more than three tons as well as five tons of pangolin scales, from Nigeria

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likely to China, via Malaysia and at least one other country. The illegal shipment was detected and confiscated at Sepanggar Port by Malaysian Customs (pictured). Additionally, peanuts were used in a reported 3-ton ivory and pangolin shipment also from Nigeria in spring 2017, according to confidential NGO reporting, as well as in another 3-ton shipment of ivory from Mombasa in July 2013, according to open sources.

Geography:

Use of peanuts and groundnuts to conceal illegal wildlife products likely occurs globally, although with particular apparent concentration in shipments of illegal wildlife products to destinations in East Asia, with declared origins in Africa and in recent cases, Nigeria in particular.

Red Flags:

Although traffickers regularly modify their tactics and routings to avoid detection, shipments with the following routing and commodity declaration pattern may indicate a higher risk of wildlife trafficking activity, especially relating to attempts to smuggle ivory or pangolin:

- *Declared Commodity:* Peanuts or Groundnuts (HS Code header 1202)
- *Routing:* Nigeria to China, via Malaysia or other Southeast Asian ports; or less specifically West Africa or East Africa to China, via Southeast Asia

ACTIONS:	<p>This alert is assessed as most relevant to the general categories of action checked below.</p> <p>**All decisions and actions informed by this alert are the sole responsibility of the receiving organization**</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conduct reasonable checks on shipments fitting a similar profile <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Execute / enhance internal controls or procedures relevant to this information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report / share information to customs / law enforcement <input type="checkbox"/> Information has potential security implications for company employees
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SOURCE: This advisory is based on UfW Transport Taskforce analysis of recent enforcement actions as well as open source and confidential reporting from partners. We have *high* confidence in the reliability and validity of this information, with the following caveat: the data upon which this analysis is based is exclusively anecdotal and is therefore inherently limited to available information and likely incomplete.

PRIORITIES: This alert is related to the following Transport Taskforce information sharing priorities (checked):

- Wildlife trafficker networks, behavior, intentions, and operational tactics and strategy
- Indicators of suspicious or higher risk activity ('red flags') related to wildlife trafficking
- Data potentially reportable to or shareable with law enforcement
- Security/physical risks and vulnerabilities to transport company operations, facilities, or staff
- Unintentional facilitation of illegal wildlife demand or retail trade

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CONTACT:	<p>For questions or additional data/analysis relevant to this alert, or to report suspicious shipments or indicators of wildlife trafficking activity, please contact the UfW Transport Taskforce:</p> <p>transport@unitedforwildlife.org</p>

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