INDIAN ROCK PYTHON

Photo courtesy: Sanjeev Pednekar

ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

BEHAVIOUR & BIOLOGY

- Largest non-venomous snake in India, nocturnal, is terrestrial but a good climber

- Occurs in a wide range of habitats, including grasslands, swamps, marshes, rocky foothills, woodlands, 'open' jungle and river valleys. Commonly found in caves, mounds, dense vegetation and old trees.

- Timid, slow moving and lethargic.

- Rock pythons are excellent swimmers and can stay underwater for a while, but prefer to remain on the banks.

- When provoked or threatened, a python will coil its body, keeping its head above the ground and hiss repeatedly.

- Rock pythons are strict carnivores and feed on mammals, birds and reptiles. The python is a constrictor meaning it captures its prey and kills it by suffocation that it does by coiling around the prey with a tight grip.

<u>Schedule I</u> of the Indian Wildlife Protection Act

ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE CATEGORY

♛ STATUS SYMBOL
(skin used to make clothing, fashion accessories)

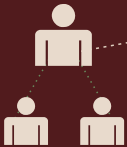## ▦ LIVE TRADE (bought and sold as exotic pets)

A consumer places an order for python skin; Calls the urban dealer, who in turn gets in touch with a local distributor

Local distributor gets in touch with his local contact, who puts a local hunter on the job

Local hunter goes in search of a rock python, captures it by hand, bags it and carries it off to his location

A skinner is employed to kill and expertly skin the animal

Then the skin is processed, paid for by the local distributor who sells it to the urban dealer

Urban dealer transports it to international markets like Bangkok, Thailand

Traders purchase wild animal raw material

Sold as raw materials to companies in the business of fashion accessories, jewellery etc. and those who deal in animal hide, fur and skin

The skin goes to a factory where it is made into a bag or boots

The product is bought by a wholesale distributor, stored at his warehouse

The product goes on display at a retail outlet in a high end, designer fashion store

A consumer like a fashion designer buys the product, takes it to his/her studio

A model wears the coat / boots or bag in a high end fashion show in Paris or New York

PEOPLE, PLACES & PROPS

Hunter

Gunny sack

Hunter's house

Skinner

Knife & skinning equipment

Local distributor

Urban dealer

Airport

Airplane

Bangkok pet market

Trader

Factory

Fashion accessory

Wholesale distributor

Warehouse

High-end boutique

Fashion designer

Model

Fashion show

Money