



**TRAFFIC**  
the wildlife trade monitoring network



# TACKLING WILDLIFE CRIME REVIEW 2019-21

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TRAFFIC is a leading non-governmental organization working globally on trade in wild animals and plants in the context of both biodiversity conservation and sustainable development whose mission is to ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature. More information at [www.traffic.org](http://www.traffic.org)

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# FOREWORD

Nearly 10 years ago, WWF and TRAFFIC launched a joint campaign to make illegal wildlife trade a higher priority on the international policy agenda. Today, our partnership remains strong, comprising a whole-of-trade-chain approach to stop the poaching, trafficking and buying of endangered wildlife, and advocating for stronger international policies and government responses.

In this report, we look back over the period 2019 to 2021 to share successes and challenges, and we look ahead to the future.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic brought economic activity to a near standstill in many countries, our work tackling wildlife crime continued, from providing e-courses targeting Zanzibar's law enforcement and maritime transport sector, to supporting the professionalization of the ranger workforce, to rolling out the SMART technology in dozens of new wildlife sites worldwide.

While protecting wildlife populations from poaching remains a critical part of our work, wildlife crime is a complex issue requiring a multifaceted approach. We have invested time and effort to understand the many underlying drivers of wildlife crime, and to design effective, evidence-based interventions.

In Southern Africa, for example, TRAFFIC carried out research with people serving time for wildlife crime offences to better understand their motivations in order to develop appropriate and effective responses to prevent future wildlife crime. We also brought the spotlight on financial crime to shift the focus to higher-level criminal actors, and have continued to investigate and trial new approaches to tackling corruption through the multi-partner USAID-funded Targeting Natural Resource Corruption (TNRC) project, including developing understanding of wildlife crime-related corruption as a human rights issue. The human rights dimensions of illegal wildlife trade also take centre stage in Voices for Diversity, a new project funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

Tragically, the global COVID-19 pandemic has only too clearly demonstrated the adverse impacts that unchecked exploitation of biodiversity, including through illegal wildlife trade, is having on human rights to life, health, food, water, freedom of association and an adequate standard of living. Illegal and unsustainable wildlife trade negatively impacts thousands of species and ecosystem functions, which are substantive elements of the right to a healthy environment. As the world continues to feel the impacts of the pandemic, there is growing attention on the need to protect nature, which includes preventing and addressing wildlife crime. There is also growing recognition of the links between human rights and a safe, clean and healthy environment. The former UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment, Professor John Knox, articulated this symmetry well: protecting human rights helps protect the environment, and protecting the environment helps to protect human rights.

We believe these recent developments offer an opportunity and momentum to ensure wildlife crime gets the attention it deserves, while at the same time contributing to the growing understanding that conservation work and human rights must go hand in hand. This report gives some insight into the evolving nature of conservation in this context, the challenges human rights thinking brings, but also the opportunities it offers for our future conservation work.

Thank you to all our donors and partners for making this vital work possible. We look forward to continuing working to better understand, respond to and prevent wildlife crime in the years to come, ensuring our children and future generations inherit a planet as diverse and magical as the one we were born in.

**Rob Parry-Jones**, Lead, Wildlife Crime Initiative, WWF International  
**Crawford Allan**, Senior Director, Wildlife Crime, TRAFFIC

# WWF & TRAFFIC'S WILDLIFE CRIME HUBS

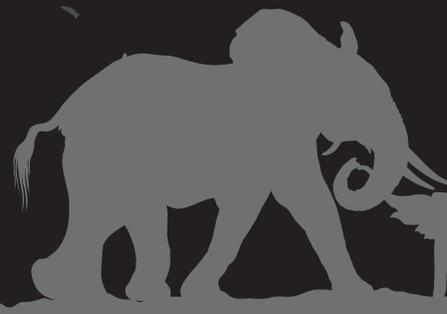
Wildlife crime is a crisis on a global scale, putting both humans and nature in peril. A threat that knows no borders, wildlife crime requires a coordinated and strategic response that pulls together diverse stakeholders and acts across sites, countries, regions and the globe. The Hubs are our response to this need for collaboration at scale.

LATIN AMERICA HUB

CENTRAL AFRIC

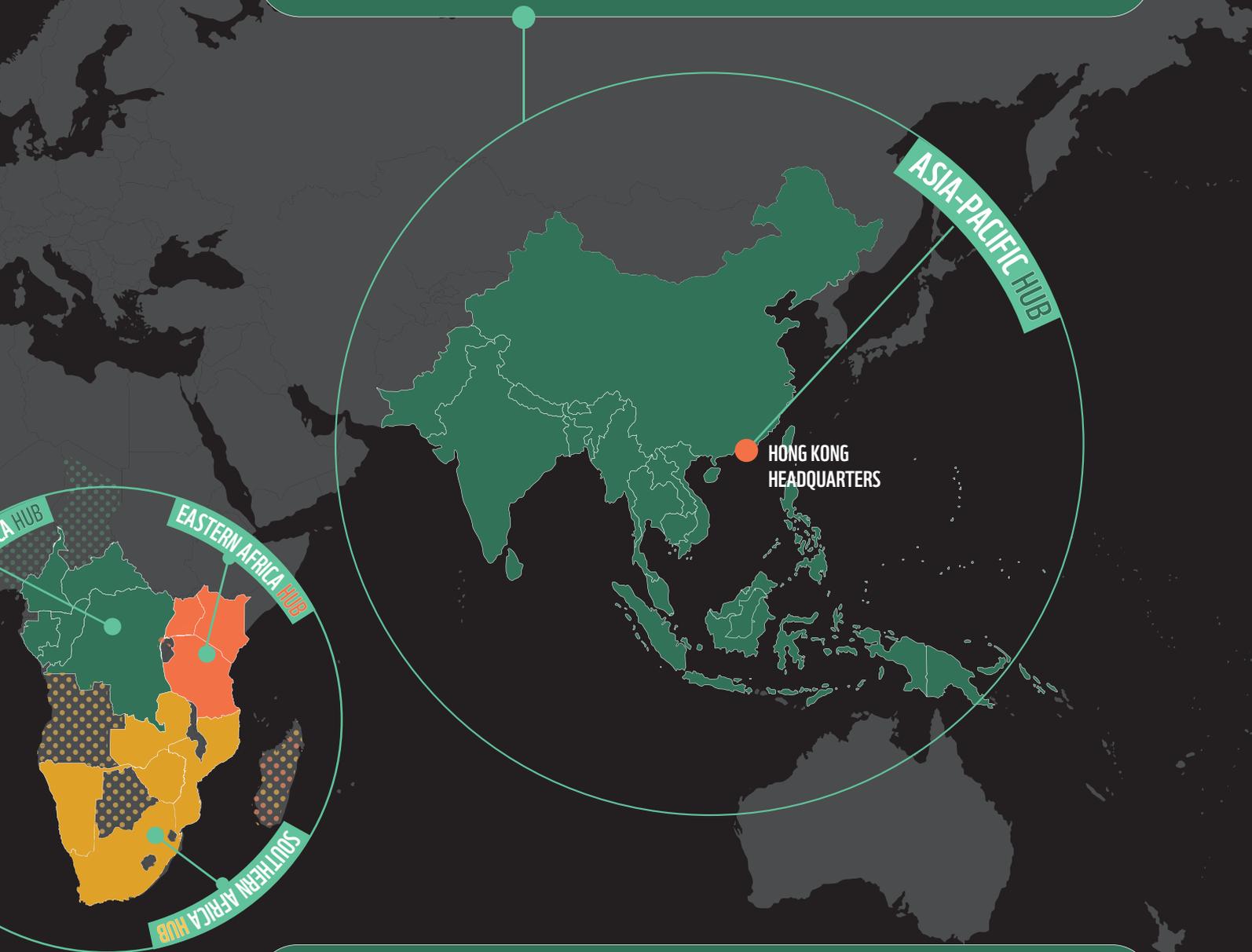
## Latin America & the Caribbean Wildlife Crime Hub

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) harbour the richest assemblages of biodiversity on the planet. But historically little attention has been paid in the region to the second biggest driver of its loss: illegal wildlife trade. The newest of all the Wildlife Crime Hubs is increasingly supporting WWF LAC offices in 12 countries to address wildlife crime through results-based, high-impact interventions that can help create new synergies and partnerships.



## Asia-Pacific Counter-Illegal Wildlife Trade Hub

Countering illegal wildlife trade requires targeted, coordinated action at key points along the trade chain, including transport bottlenecks, financial transactions and online sales. The Asia-Pacific Counter-Illegal Wildlife Trade Hub complements and builds synergies among existing WWF programmes that are taking action against illegal wildlife trade. Based in Hong Kong, a global finance and transport centre, the Hub partners with government authorities, e-commerce and finance houses, shipping and airline industries, and other NGOs to stop illegal wildlife trade. Areas of focus include tackling financial crimes underpinning illegal wildlife trade, disrupting online wildlife sales, and making the transport of illegal wildlife more difficult and costly.



## Africa's Wildlife Crime Hubs

There are now three Hubs in Africa, covering 13 countries where WWF/TRAFFIC is present, with links to other countries and regions of the continent. The Hubs play a critical role in supporting our country and regional programme offices to deliver a coordinated and consistent response to wildlife crime. They do this by providing a platform for funding development and collaborations, learning exchange and sharing tools and best practices. They also play a key role in policy development and in facilitating policy coherence from global to local, and local to global levels.

# RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC

As the world continues to feel the tragic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we must take the opportunity to re-examine the relationship between humanity's interactions with nature, wildlife trade, health and human rights. The global pandemic that began in 2020 has affected every aspect of people's lives worldwide, and consequently our lives and work too. From adapting our own operations to supporting communities and rangers affected by COVID-19, we've responded to unprecedented challenges.

## TRADE RISKS

Humanity's exploitation of nature – deforestation, agricultural intensification and loss of biodiversity, including from illegal wildlife trade – is a key factor in the increased emergence of zoonotic diseases like COVID-19.

A recent report from the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment recognizes these drivers, and the threat that the pandemic poses to human rights to life, health, food, water, freedom of association, an adequate standard of living and a healthy, sustainable environment. Acknowledging that the health of people, animals and the environment are closely interconnected, the report supports the One Health approach, which recognizes that the health of people, animals and the environment are closely interconnected. Recommendations for addressing pandemics include ending deforestation and conversion of wildlife habitat for agriculture and other uses, and strict regulation of illegal, unsustainable and high-risk wildlife trade practices.

In response to the pandemic, WWF led a global call to action on COVID-19 and wildlife trade ([preventpandemics.org](https://preventpandemics.org)), endorsed by 380 experts and advocates in more than 60 countries. We called on policymakers to shut down high-risk wildlife markets, scale up efforts to combat illegal wildlife trade, and strengthen efforts to reduce consumer demand for high-risk wildlife products. At the same time, we've sought to improve understanding of these issues: TRAFFIC's briefing on [Wildlife Trade, COVID-19 and Zoonotic Disease Risks](#) in April 2020, for example, identifies challenges and unintended consequences associated with calls to "shut down wildlife trade", while

WWF's 2021 white paper [Assessing Risk Factors for Viral Disease Emergence in the Wildlife Trade](#) examined risks around issues such as live trade and human consumption of different species, intensive wildlife farming and markets for live animals.

Complementing this global advocacy effort, the pandemic has added urgency to our efforts to close down illegal markets and to reduce demand for high-risk wildlife products in Southeast Asia – where a [survey](#) we commissioned revealed almost universal support for government action to eliminate illegal and unregulated wildlife markets. We worked to promote policy changes on wildlife trade across the ASEAN region, including in Viet Nam, where the Prime Minister issued a Directive calling for increased efforts to enforce wildlife trade laws, improved management and monitoring of wild animal farms, and destruction of elephant ivory and rhino horn stockpiles. Full and effective implementation of these policies remains a priority for our work.

## COVID AND THE ROLE OF RANGERS

Rangers have a pivotal role to play in reducing the risk of future pandemics by protecting nature from threats like illegal wildlife trade, hunting, logging and land clearance. But COVID has brought new pressures and challenges that make it harder to do so, as well as posing an immediate threat to life: to date, at least 500 rangers have died from the virus.



Community rangers in Elangata Enderit village in Kenya. By protecting nature, rangers have a pivotal role to play in reducing the risk of future pandemics.  
© Ami Vitale / WWF-UK

Responding to the urgency of the situation, we launched a [rapid survey](#) to better understand the impacts of COVID-19 on rangers and their work, receiving 915 responses from individual rangers from 60 countries. While there were significant regional differences, many rangers believed that threats to protected and conserved areas had increased since the start of the pandemic – including subsistence and commercial hunting, illegal logging, encroachment, and other pressures such as grazing and collection of non-timber forest products. The vast majority agreed that COVID-19 had negatively impacted their day-to-day operations, with COVID restrictions proving particularly damaging to community engagement. Falling tourist revenues and budget cuts are already having an impact. More than one in four rangers said their salary had been reduced or delayed and nearly one in five reported that colleagues had been laid off due to COVID-related cuts, with the worst effects being felt in Latin America and Africa.

All this adds further urgency to our efforts to improve ranger welfare, and ensure rangers are properly recognized and supported as frontline workers in our planetary health service. COVID-19 is a manifestation of what happens when the rampant destruction of nature goes unchecked – so it's a tragic irony that, as a consequence, governments are cutting back on the very services that can help protect against future emerging diseases.

At the same time, rangers have been demonstrating their commitment to playing a positive role for the wider community – from spreading stay-at-home messages in Colombia, to delivering food and other vital supplies to communities in Bhutan, to donating a day's salary each week for three months to COVID relief funds in the Indian province of Rajasthan.



**Adapting our programmes:** Our teams around the world have had to adapt their own work in response to COVID. Lockdowns and travel restrictions led to many events taking place virtually. In Tanzania, for example, a scheduled four-day training on illegal wildlife trade for judges and magistrates was instead delivered as a seven-week webinar series, while a three-day training workshop for Zanzibar's law enforcement and maritime transport sector was redeveloped as an e-course. Among the many other virtual events, online trainings and webinars we took part in included expert briefing sessions on COVID, zoonotic outbreaks and illegal wildlife trade for the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly.



**Monitoring and research:** We've increased our research into identifying and reducing the risk of zoonotic disease transmission, for example in the wild meat trade in East Africa. TRAFFIC is exploring integrating zoonotic disease risk mitigation into wildlife trafficking strategies and methods with recent funding from USAID, under the Wildlife TRAPS project.

We're also continuing to monitor the impact the pandemic is having on wildlife trade, so that we can respond swiftly and effectively. Early data from East Africa, for instance, suggests ivory trade fell as trade routes were closed, but that bushmeat trade has increased. In India, reports of poaching of wild animals for consumption and local trade more than doubled during lockdown. In contrast, wild meat trade and illegal poaching incidents appear to have declined in Viet Nam, as indicated by the number of snares removed in protected areas where WWF is involved in monitoring.

# CONSERVATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

A healthy environment is increasingly being recognized as a human right, the basis of our well-being and prosperity. This fundamental human right is now recognized in law by more than 80% of United Nations Member States (156 out of 193). Equally, there's growing recognition that respecting human rights is central to ensuring a healthy environment – including the rights of Indigenous peoples and of local communities to protect and manage their lands and resources, as well as the right of rangers to safe, decent working conditions. We aim to put human rights at the heart of our conservation work.

## EMBEDDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN NATURE CONSERVATION

The issue of human rights and wildlife crime came to the fore in 2019 with the publication of allegations of human rights violations by some government rangers in some places where WWF works, in the Congo Basin, India and Nepal. In response, WWF commissioned an independent panel of experts to assess and evaluate the allegations, and to consider the suitability and appropriateness of WWF's broader policies, procedures, and risk management processes. We wanted a robust, unbiased evaluation of our efforts in order to continue to learn and improve.

Their report, [Embedding Human Rights in Nature Conservation – from Intent to Action](#), was published in November 2020. The panel found no evidence that WWF staff directed, participated in or encouraged any human rights violations, but it made clear that WWF needs to do more to live up to its principles, and to more consistently implement policies to respect human rights, including using WWF's agency to encourage change in government policies towards more inclusive conservation approaches.

WWF has embraced the Independent Panel's report and its recommendations; our [management response](#) includes clarifying and strengthening our human rights policies, ensuring they are applied consistently across the network. We have developed an overarching Human Rights Policy

Statement, updated our social policies, and started implementing the [Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework](#) (ESSF). All of these documents were subject to a public consultation in 2021, with a target date of final revised versions being approved by the WWF International board and disclosed by end December 2021. The safeguard standard on community health, safety and security includes the principles regarding WWF's support for enforcement and rangers. A conservation law enforcement due diligence tool and guidance for law enforcement support are also in development to ensure conservation projects deliver better outcomes for communities and nature. WWF staff worldwide will be trained on these standards and on human rights, including a mandatory e-learning course being rolled out from 2021.

We're also supporting human rights training more widely, including as a means of supporting the professionalization of the ranger force (see page 12). And in addition to any local landscape level measures required under the ESSF, we're in the process of establishing grievance mechanisms in every country in which WWF works and setting up an independent ombudsperson's office to ensure accountability regarding our human rights commitments and to provide means for conflict resolution.

The protection of nature and human rights go hand-in-hand: one cannot be achieved without the other. This interconnection is clearly visible through the wildlife crime lens: wildlife crime destroys resources, territories and landscapes, as well as biodiversity and ecosystems,



**“If we fail to employ a rights-based approach to protecting the biosphere, future generations will live in an ecologically impoverished world, deprived of nature’s critical contributions to human well-being, ravaged by increasingly frequent pandemics and driven by deepening environmental injustices. If we place human rights and nature at the heart of sustainable development and succeed in transforming society, humans could attain a just and sustainable future in which people live happy, healthy and fulfilling lives in harmony with nature on this planet.”**

David R. Boyd, UN Special Rapporteur  
on human rights and the environment

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which are vital for people’s survival, well-being and right to live with dignity – the COVID-19 pandemic being one most striking example. The most marginalized groups of the population are often disproportionately impacted by the consequences of wildlife crime: Indigenous peoples and local communities for instance, who rely on natural resources for their survival, often bear the brunt of illegal wildlife trade. And when they peacefully fight back to protect those resources at risk, they face threats, intimidation, harassment and violence, jeopardizing a whole other range of their human rights, as shown by the increasing number of environmental human rights defenders who are killed annually.

At the same time, while the impacts of wildlife crime on human rights are evident, it is also crucial to understand the benefits of adopting a human-rights based approach

to tackle wildlife crime. This means not only ensuring that our actions do not cause or contribute to human rights violations, but also that we help protect and promote human rights when addressing wildlife crime, for example by providing alternative livelihoods and tackling poverty to prevent illegal wildlife trade. In its new draft Human Rights Policy Statement, WWF specifically commits to speaking up against human rights violations committed against environmental human rights defenders, which includes rangers, Indigenous peoples, local communities, and others who defend environmental rights. Embedding human rights in our responses to wildlife crime ensures conservation efforts are more efficient and sustainable, leading to harmony between people and nature – ultimately benefiting us all.

# RANGERS: FROM DECLARATION TO ACTION

Rangers play a crucial role protecting the planet, helping to conserve biodiversity, cultural heritage and vital ecosystem services, and defending the right to a healthy environment. They are among those at the frontline of protection against wildlife crime, and the first point of contact with communities. Yet all too often rangers are undervalued and ill equipped for the challenges they face. That's something we're working hard to change.

## RANGER SUPPORT

The last two years have brought significant progress in efforts to professionalize the ranger workforce. Overall, the aim is to better protect the rights of rangers, while ensuring their accountable and professional behaviour, and that they protect the rights of others, too.

In 2019, the World Ranger Congress was held in Chitwan, Nepal, bringing together more than 550 rangers – 40% of them women – from 70 countries. The “Chitwan Declaration”, adopted at the congress, reasserted the indispensable role that rangers play, called for greater international support and cooperation, and identified areas for improvement. It stated that rangers “should be fully professionalized in the same manner as other critical public sectors tasked with protecting the integrity of the state and ensuring the rule of law”.

In response, the International Ranger Federation, WWF and six other conservation organizations set up the [Universal Ranger Support Alliance](#) (URSA). By 2025, URSA aims to create “...a global enabling environment providing a unified

voice for rangers, and standards for capacity, employment, equality and conduct that build a demonstrably professional, accountable and competent ranger workforce, whose contributions are formally recognized and respected.”

URSA has already developed a global ranger Code of Conduct, and, in July 2021, launched its [2021-2025 Action Plan](#) setting out a range of targets and measures. Also in development are a set of minimum welfare standards and a safeguarding policy. Through URSA, we're also exploring the critical issues of gender in the ranger workforce and trust between rangers and communities.

Training is another key focus for URSA. We've helped institutionalize ranger training in countries including India, Bhutan and Myanmar. And we've worked with the [Southern African Wildlife College](#) – Africa's leading specialist institution for conservation education, training and skills development – to develop a curriculum on leadership for ranger colleges in Africa and Asia, covering topics including community engagement, human rights, conflict resolution and corruption.



[READ THE URSA ACTION PLAN](#)

### URSA ACTION PLAN THEMES



1. ADVOCACY,  
REPRESENTATION AND  
RECOGNITION



2. CAPACITY



3. EMPLOYMENT  
AND WELFARE



4. EQUALITY AND  
EQUITY IN THE RANGER  
SECTOR



5. COMMUNITY RELATIONS,  
RANGER CONDUCT AND  
ACCOUNTABILITY



## RANGER WELFARE

Late pay, a lack of equipment and support, abuse and threats are among the issues rangers face, according to the most comprehensive survey of ranger working conditions ever undertaken. WWF's 2019 report *Life on the Frontline* survey, based on interviews with more than 7,000 rangers in 28 countries, presented a pattern of poor working conditions.

More than half of rangers (57%) didn't often or always have access to clean drinking water. The same proportion believed they didn't have the basic equipment they needed for their job, and a third felt their training didn't adequately prepare them. A third had been paid late at least once during the previous year, and more than half (52%) believed that they wouldn't get adequate medical treatment if they needed it. During the previous year, one in three (31%) had faced verbal abuse and 8% had faced physical violence from community members in the course of their work; one in five (21%) felt that local communities did not trust them.

The survey findings have helped to guide URSA's priorities and our own efforts to improve ranger welfare:

- Globally, only 42% of rangers had insurance for serious on-the-job injury, and 38% for on-the-job fatality. With insurance company KMD Dumar, we've explored possible ranger insurance models in India, Thailand, Cameroon and Kenya.
- Malaria is a serious risk, with three-quarters of rangers in Africa having limited or no access to mosquito nets. In partnership with SC Johnson, we've been looking into how to address this issue. Building on lessons learnt in Cambodia, the partnership will provide US\$150,000 worth of insect repellents to rangers across 30 protected areas in Kenya and Tanzania.
- In South Africa, we launched a wellness and support programme for rangers working in some crucial rhino reserves. The two-year programme, supported by the German environment ministry, will involve upgrading ranger accommodation, supplying equipment and supporting counselling, as well as emergency COVID relief.

## UNCLE EDDIE AND THE GUDJUDA RANGERS

Indigenous rangers in Australia are reconnecting to their traditional territories

© WWF-Aus



“For me, it’s coming back to Country, living on Country, and working on Country. That’s one of the best things I could get.”

Eddie Smallwood – aka Uncle Eddie – is sitting in the kitchen of his home of 40 years. He’s in Brandon, Australia, near where his father was born on the banks of the Burdekin River. In the early days, his mother and father were relocated to a settlement on Palm Island off the coast of Townsville. That’s why Eddie says he has come ‘back’ to Country.

In this northeastern corner of Australia, where the Burdekin River spills into the Coral Sea and green turtles scour the Great Barrier Reef, Eddie’s ancestry runs back centuries.

“I’m a Traditional Owner from the towns off the Burdiken region, and my heritage is Aboriginal, South Sea Islander and Chinese,” explains Uncle Eddie. Throughout his life he has worked as railway labourer, a police liaison officer for 14 years, and had six years as an Aboriginal politician.

“Around here, people know me,” he smiles.

At 65 years old, Uncle Eddie has now been a ranger for eight years, and today he leads the Gudjuda Reference Group – a team of Indigenous rangers that has been working to protect the species and landscapes of this region for decades.

“Gudjuda means saltwater,” Uncle Eddie explains. “We are saltwater people, and this name was passed down from the Elders who gave it to us to set up our organization in 1999.”

“The ranger programme has become an affirmation that people are exercising their cultural authority and their property rights.”

The Gudjuda Reference Group are known in Australia for their open water turtle chases, where rangers leap from speeding boats to catch wild turtles in order to tag them and gather data. But their work is very diverse. Eddie and his team – who are all Traditional Owners – dedicate their time to looking after land and sea between Townsville and the Whitsunday Islands. They conduct research on marine species, monitor seagrass and waterways, clear beaches, revegetate key areas and conduct cultural burns and prescribed fire burns with the Department of Parks and Wildlife.

“We also run a ranger programme which is about educating our Traditional Owners,” says Uncle Eddie. “We’re marrying up education and science with cultural knowledge, and we actually show our rangers our storylines and our sites. They’re part of it now too, and they’re helping protect our Country.”

### PLANETARY CUSTODIANS

Across the planet Indigenous peoples and communities have been the custodians and defenders of forests, grasslands, wetlands and seas for generations. According to recent global analysis, at least 32% of

global land is owned or governed by Indigenous peoples and local communities, of which 91% is in good or fair ecological condition.

From centuries of experience, they have unique knowledge of their homes’ ecosystems and biodiversity, and have developed ways to manage and protect it sustainably. The examples are countless: around the world, Indigenous leadership, expertise and unique insight have led to more effective and sustainable conservation outcomes. But beyond the benefits to nature, their inclusion has also helped communities secure access rights to their customary lands – a boost for both people and nature.

“There’s a whole knowledge and science of how we’ve sustained ourselves as First Peoples,” says Cliff Cobbo, WWF-Australia’s Indigenous Engagement Manager, a proud member of the Wakka Wakka nation of southeast Queensland. “Like Uncle Eddie’s ranger group has particular focus on Sea Country because they are Saltwater People, the Indigenous ranger experience is not homogenous – it’s different right across from the people in the centre of the country who are dealing with desert lands to wet tropics, and to those who are dealing with rainforests.”

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities hold longstanding and deep connections with the flora and fauna of their area. Along the coastline, for instance, turtles, whales, dugongs, seals and albatrosses are all culturally significant. And Cliff believes that a deep and meaningful understanding of those connections is critical for conservation. “We need to support them to exercise their cultural authority to manage Country,” he adds.

Eddie, who also goes by Gungu, an Aboriginal name for ‘turtle’ – granted to him by his community’s Elders – believes that the ranger programme is helping to make this happen.

“Now I look at the relationship we’ve got with the state government and Parks and Wildlife, and we’re looking at co-managing national parks. Before, that would not have happened – in fact there would’ve been no access to Country,” he explains.

## CULTURAL AUTHORITY

Some 20 years ago, when the Australian government’s ranger programme was established, it was a valuable tool to create employment opportunities in remote and rural areas of Australia where unemployment levels could reach 70-80%.

“People there were unemployed because there were no jobs,” explains Darren Grover, WWF-Australia’s Head of Healthy Land and Seascapes. “So in the early days the ranger programme was seen as an employment and training scheme as much as anything. But over time it has evolved to include land management and wildlife conservation – and that’s really important, because it has enabled them to go out on Country, practising their culture but also getting trained and getting employment opportunities.”

“It has become an affirmation of sorts, that people are exercising their cultural authority and their property rights,” adds Cliff. “And it’s great to see that the government is willing to grow and support what the rangers are doing.”

“Yeah, everything’s changing,” Eddie says, “but the government needs to look at how we build that relationship with all of the rangers across Australia.”

“At this point in time,” Cliff adds, “besides native title, the only interface for interaction that’s recognized by Australia as a whole are the ranger programmes which are funded at a commonwealth and state level. But what I’d like to see in 20, 30 years’ time is that that has grown tenfold. Because there’s a saying amongst our mob here: it always was, and always will be Aboriginal land.”

Formalizing the legal rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities to manage their customary lands may be the most effective and socially just way to deliver global conservation targets. But for Uncle Eddie, it represents something else as well: “It’s a chance to make sure everyone is welcome on Country,” he says.

## OPPORTUNITY

Eddie’s hope for stronger inclusion of Indigenous people in ranger work transcends beyond Country. He was among the 550+ rangers from 70 countries who signed the Chitwan

Declaration at the 9th World Ranger Conference in Chitwan, Nepal. The Declaration was a global call to action on a number of ranger needs and concerns – including further inclusion of Indigenous rangers worldwide. In response to their call, WWF and eight other global conservation organizations formed the Universal Ranger Support Alliance and are working towards implementing the Declaration.

“We’ve now got the opportunity to promote Indigenous tourism, with our rangers as the guides,” Eddie says. “We do bush tucker tours, rock art tours, and we also get the Elders involved. We make sure everyone is welcome on our Country, and it’s good to be working together so that we can share our knowledge and culture with Australia.”

Working with the James Cook University and WWF-Australia, the Gudjuda Reference Group sets an inspiring precedent for Indigenous rangers across the country.

“It’s been good working together,” Uncle Eddie says, “because we all want the same things. We’re all just trying to make our Country healthy.”

“Formalizing the legal rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities to manage their customary lands may be the most effective and socially just way to deliver global conservation targets.”



**“We need to challenge the very system that allows for women to be exploited, marginalized and continuously silenced in the fight against wildlife crime and beyond. We can only create a better world for every living thing on this planet the day we unapologetically and unlimitedly allow for women and girls everywhere to take control of their lives, decisions and their dreams.”**

Greta Francesca Iori (pictured),  
wildlife crime and anti-poaching expert



# INTEGRATING GENDER IN ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

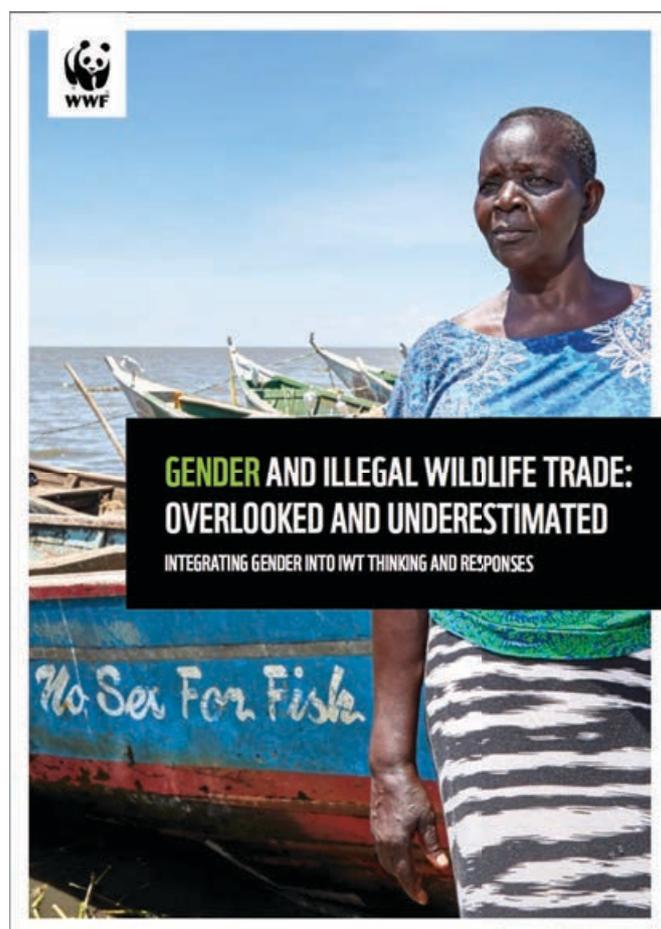
It's crucial to consider the gender implications of illegal wildlife trade if we want to respond to it in an inclusive and efficient manner – and improve the likelihood of conservation success.

Because of gender norms, illegal wildlife trade impacts men and women differently, and gender plays an important part in behaviours and attitudes in illegal wildlife trade – even shaping it to some extent. The place, role and dynamics of women in relation to illegal wildlife trade may differ, and recognizing these nuances opens up avenues to better understand, prevent and respond to it.

Despite increasing awareness of the need to integrate and mainstream a gender perspective in international policy arenas, gender blindness remains widespread in the illegal wildlife trade space; research, thinking and responses have generally failed to look at half of the world's population, and gender more generally. Mainstreaming gender perspectives should be a win-win: the social and economic structures that promote gender equality, such as inclusive decision-making, participation and acknowledgement of universal human rights, are the same prerequisites for environmental sustainability.

WWF's ground-breaking report [Gender and illegal wildlife trade: overlooked and underestimated](#), released in July 2021, paves the way for integrating gender into the thinking and actions of practitioners addressing illegal wildlife trade. The report gives an overview of available knowledge regarding gender-related roles, impacts and considerations related to tackling illegal wildlife trade, and provides a framework for how gender-sensitive thinking and responses can be integrated into local, national and global programmes.

WWF also supported an URSA report, [Towards gender equality in the ranger workforce: challenges and opportunities](#), released in July 2021. The report highlights how bringing gender equality into the workforce could reduce ranger misconduct, and have the potential to improve conservation, relationships with communities, park management and wildlife management. It also identifies some of the structural challenges for integrating women into the ranger workforce, and lays out best practices and recommendations to help us move forward toward gender equality.



# TACKLING CORRUPTION

Corruption greases the wheels of wildlife crime, and undermines efforts to address it. Over the last two years, we've been digging deeper into this complex issue – from exploring the links between human rights, illegal wildlife trade and corruption, to working with the finance industry to clamp down on money laundering related to wildlife crime.

## TARGETING NATURAL RESOURCE CORRUPTION

Exploring and addressing the threats corruption poses to wildlife, forests and fisheries, and the human rights of those who depend upon them, is the focus of our Targeting Natural Resource Corruption (TNRC) project. This USAID-funded project is led by WWF in partnership with TRAFFIC and anti-corruption specialists from the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre at the Chr. Michelsen Institute and the Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Centre (TraCCC) at George Mason University.

Over the last two years, TNRC has published nearly 20 knowledge papers covering issues ranging from corruption risks in the wild plant trade and the CITES permitting process, to community-based anti-corruption efforts and the role of gender. We've shared these learnings with conservation and natural resource management professionals through regular webinars and panel discussions, blogs and podcasts. One example was a [webinar](#) led by TRAFFIC's behaviour change coordinator Gayle Burgess, which presented a framework for using a behavioural science approach to tackling corruption using the mnemonic INTEGRITY.

We're bringing these new insights into our own working practices – for example, WWF has incorporated anti-corruption thinking into the monitoring and evaluation tool for of the Zero Poaching Framework approach, while TRAFFIC now routinely considers corruption issues in its planning, project proposals and work plans.

We've also encouraged governments and other stakeholders to prioritize and collaborate on anti-corruption thinking and approaches. Forums where we've presented these issues include CITES meetings, the annual meeting of the OECD Task Force on Countering Illicit Trade, and in response to the [EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment](#) where we presented to international organizations, law enforcement and other NGOs.



### SEE MORE FROM TNRC

#### *Governance and corruption in South*



**America:** WWF teams in Colombia and Ecuador are involved in a USAID-funded initiative, Transparency in the Governance

of Natural Resources. In Colombia, the initiative investigated the patterns of corruption and illegality that contribute to four key drivers of deforestation and biodiversity loss – illegal mining, land grabbing, illegal timber trade and wildlife trafficking. In Ecuador, the initiative is looking to address corruption that fuels illegal trade in wildlife, seafood and timber. The four-year project aims to generate feasible, high-impact approaches to tackling corruption and wildlife crime.

**“These important partnerships go a long way towards bridging the gaps in the financial systems that criminals exploit to move, hide and launder the proceeds of the illegal trade in wildlife.”**

Margaret Kinnaird, Wildlife Practice Leader, WWF

The stock of ivory confiscated in 2017 in the town of Ouessou, Republic of the Congo © Daniël Nelson

## FOLLOWING THE MONEY

Illegal trade in wildlife, seafood and timber generates billions of dollars – but it’s only recently that the finance industry has begun to get serious about money laundering and illicit financial flows connected with wildlife crime. We’ve been at the heart of these efforts:

- In August 2020, we launched an initiative with ACAMS, the global association for certified anti-money-laundering specialists and financial crime prevention professionals. The partnership seeks to drive collaboration among financial institutions, governmental bodies and non-profit groups by raising awareness and developing tools and training materials.
- With support from The Basel Institute on Governance, The Royal Foundation and United for Wildlife, we launched a free training kit and certificate. It covers steps that the financial sector should take to identify, report, mitigate and remedy the risks associated with each stage of the illegal wildlife supply chain, including guidance on how to uncover shell companies and import-export schemes.
- TRAFFIC worked with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on a [Case Digest](#) highlighting the various payment methods, money laundering techniques and modus operandi of criminal networks related to wildlife crime. We presented the findings at a webinar hosted by the Financial Action Task Force, the leading global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog.
- In partnership with [RUSI](#) and UNODC, we worked with the Laos government on a review of closed cases related to ivory seizures that didn’t follow financial leads or use financial information. The review identified missed opportunities in the original investigations – like the failure to seize receipts and point-of-sale card machines – and identified financial trends and methods involved. The findings have been taken up by the Laos government, and highlighted in [a publication by the Financial Action Task Force](#).
- We participated in a workshop on wildlife and forestry crime in Bangkok with the [Egmont Group](#), which represents 166 national financial intelligence units.
- Through the online training platform [FIU Connect](#), TRAFFIC supported training for 3,500 people on five continents from financial intelligence units, banks and law enforcement on the role of financial intelligence in combatting trafficking.





# STOP THE POACHING

While our work addresses the many underlying drivers of wildlife crime, the urgent task of protecting wildlife populations from poaching remains critical. Supporting communities and rangers in the field is crucial to prevent the loss of these species, and the devastating impacts this would have on ecosystems and the people who depend upon them.

Relationships with local people can make or break efforts to address wildlife crime. We work closely with communities living alongside wildlife and nature to uphold their rights, resolve conflicts and enable them to benefit from protecting and sustainably managing their natural resources.

## SILENCE OF THE SNARES

Industrial-scale snaring, driven by illegal wildlife trade, is the biggest threat to terrestrial wildlife populations in the Greater Mekong, according to WWF's *Silence of the Snares* report. Released in July 2020, the report lays bare the scale of the snaring crisis in the region. An estimated 12 million snares are present at any one time in the protected areas of Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam, potentially affecting more than 700 mammal species and presenting the greatest threat to the survival of tiger populations in the region. The report gained significant attention, including news stories in the *Southeast Asia Globe* and the *Asia Times*.



© Neil Ever Osborne / WWF-US

We've shown it's possible to tackle industrial-scale snaring. The area occupied by snares in the Hue and Quang Nam Saola nature reserves in the Central Annamites of Viet Nam fell from 68% in 2011 to 14% in 2019, according to an analysis of data collected between 2011 and 2019 as part of WWF's Carbon and Biodiversity Project (CarBi II), supported by KfW. WWF-supported ranger patrols in 10 protected areas across the Greater Mekong region removed almost 15,000 snares and traps in 2019 alone, significantly reducing the threat to wildlife.

In the BelumTemengor landscape in Malaysia, where tiger numbers have fallen by half over the last decade, WWF launched an ambitious initiative called Project Stampede, supporting teams of Indigenous rangers to patrol the forest and remove any snares they found. The project has made a dramatic difference, with far fewer snares being placed since the Indigenous teams began patrolling the area. While WWF-Malaysia teams had removed 200 active snares across 8,000km of foot patrols in the three years before Project Stampede, by 2019 the Indigenous ranger teams detected just two snares in 11,000km of patrols.

## A SMART APPROACH



Technology can provide invaluable tools to help protect wildlife – and SMART is one of the most important. The “Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool” makes it easy to collect and analyse intelligence on wildlife movements and poaching threats, and enables rangers and management staff to deploy scarce resources where they are needed most. We've helped roll out the free, open-source tool to dozens of wildlife sites worldwide, providing training and capacity building to ensure it's used effectively.

- In 2020, we conducted a global assessment to better understand how the SMART approach is working in the field. The assessment covered over 60 sites in 18 countries spanning Asia, Africa and Latin America, and will help us design future training and improvements.
- The use of SMART is continuing to expand. It's now being used in Mexico, Guatemala, Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay to improve jaguar surveillance; in Norway, Russia and Greenland to manage potential conflicts between people and polar bears; and in the Himalayas to support snow leopard conservation.
- Connectivity can be a challenge in remote areas. In Bhutan, we've worked in partnership with technology company Sigfox to develop a system that enables rangers' devices to communicate with HQ even when they are out of signal range. This has been integrated into the SMART interface to ensure continuous communications between management staff and rangers.

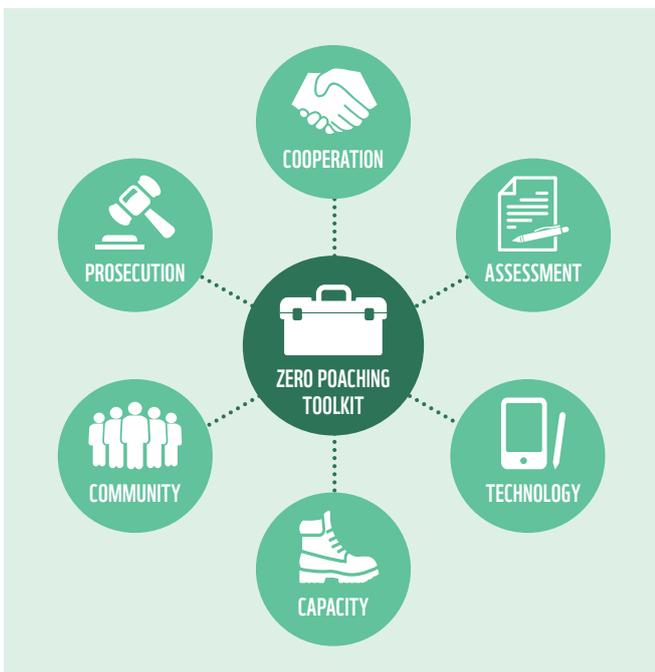


### Wildlife Crime Prevention

**Framework:** Wildlife sites around the world will be better able to monitor and manage progress toward zero poaching with the launch of our Wildlife Crime Prevention Framework. The framework contains a set of questions, designed to be easily answered by those on the ground, that can help track how sites are performing against the six pillars of the Zero Poaching approach, and identify where improvements are needed. Although designed as an internal monitoring tool for WWF teams, the framework can also be adapted by government agencies and other conservation partners.



**In Latin America, WWF developed a 10-year strategy for conserving jaguars, the continent's top predator.**



### **Regional jaguar conservation**

**strategy:** In Latin America, WWF developed a 10-year strategy for conserving jaguars, the continent's top predator. It builds on a regional strategic framework developed by a group of 19 governments and NGOs and the multi-country "Jaguar 2030" roadmap. Poaching and illegal trade pose an increasing threat to jaguars. The strategy uses the SMART approach as well as the Wildlife Crime Prevention Framework.



### **Tackling poaching with technology:**

Working with technology partners including FLiR and CISCO, we've been using thermal imaging cameras and sensors to detect poachers at night.



We've piloted the technology in national parks in Kenya and Zambia, where it's successfully contributed to reducing poaching. The technology is now being rolled out nationally and in neighbouring countries.

## COMMUNITY APPROACHES IN THE GREATER LIMPOPO

The Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area (GLTFCA) is one of the biggest networks of conservation areas in Africa, spanning 100,000km<sup>2</sup> across Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Limpopo National Park in Mozambique, Kruger National Park in South Africa, Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe and numerous private and community-owned protected areas hold an abundance of wildlife, including important populations of rhinos, elephants and lions.

In the GLTFCA, people have a complex relationship with wildlife, protected areas and conservation due to the political history of the landscape, the increasing socio-economic challenges, and continued pressure from human-wildlife conflict on people's livelihoods and safety. Criminal syndicates have taken advantage of this situation to establish themselves in communities near protected areas with high-value wildlife.

There can be huge benefits for local communities that emerge from protecting natural resources from illegal trade: some economic benefits such as revenue generation through ecotourism or regulated trade, and employment opportunities, as well as social and cultural benefits, amongst others. But conserving wildlife depends on the safety, security and socio-economic wellbeing of the people who live in these communities. This can only be achieved through good communication and cooperation between protected areas and neighbouring communities.

Around Kruger National Park in South Africa, we've seconded community liaisons to the South African

National Parks (SANParks) to facilitate this all-important relationship. By supporting and working with community structures such as traditional authorities and forums, they are helping to broker and manage partnerships and collaborative approaches between communities, protected areas and conservation agencies.

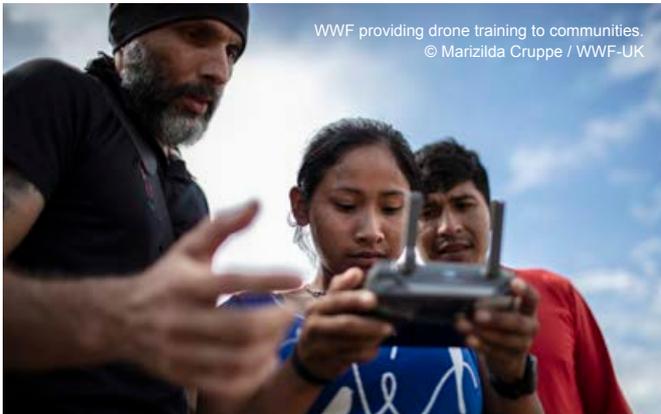
In Mozambique, district natural resource management committees are responsible for the co-management of wildlife and natural resources between communities and protected areas. We're supporting the formation of new committees and strengthening existing ones to ensure that communities have a say in any decisions that affect them.

One major challenge in the GLTFCA – and in many of the landscapes where we work – is human-wildlife conflict. Crop raiding and predation by wild species – particularly elephants and lions – can threaten the lives, livelihoods and property of people living in or alongside protected areas, further straining the relationship between communities and protected areas. Affected community members may respond by killing or harassing animals, and actively or tacitly supporting poaching. We recently completed an assessment to explore the depth of [conservation conflict in the Mozambique and South African parts of the GLTFCA](#) and potential links with illegal wildlife trade, and developed recommendations for mitigating conflict and subsequently improving relationships between communities and conservation authorities.

As well as this, we undertook an extensive assessment of community-based approaches to prevent wildlife crime in the landscape, so we can get a clearer understanding of how effective they are. Drawing on lessons from criminology, behavioural economics and psychology, as well as ideas from governance and law enforcement, we developed [recommendations](#) for preventing wildlife crime.



Savanna landscape, Kruger National Park, South Africa © WWF / Folke Wulf



WWF providing drone training to communities.  
© Marizilda Cruppe / WWF-UK



### **Indigenous monitoring in the Amazon:**

In Brazil, we've been supporting Indigenous communities to defend their territories from illegal land invasions. Indigenous territories cover 13% of Brazil, and are crucial for conserving biodiversity and forests. In the Amazonian state of Rondonia, WWF has been working

with local NGO Kanindé to support the people of the Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau Indigenous land. Indigenous teams have been monitoring deforestation and illegal land incursions, and we've been supporting them to do so by offering training in the use of SMART (see page 22) and drones, as well as gaining media attention.



### **Engaging women and youth:**

In East Africa, we've been looking into how better engagement with women and young people from local communities can help to prevent wildlife crime. Working with IUCN, we ran a series of webinars with over 100 law enforcement staff from five countries and trained a further 70 conservation practitioners in the "first line of defence" methodology, which seeks to strengthen community engagement in anti-illegal wildlife trade interventions. As part of this, we're supporting pilot projects to engage women and youth in Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda.



Schoolchildren tending a WWF-supported tree nursery in Cameroon. © Ola Jennersten / WWF-Sweden





# STOP THE TRAFFICKING

We work to disrupt wildlife trafficking at every stage. We've developed various tools to track trade and stop trafficking of wildlife products, and are working with the transportation sector to close down wildlife trafficking routes by air, sea and land.

Access to justice, good governance and broad support for rules and regulations are crucial for keeping poaching and illegal trade in check. We provide information, training, tools and other support to enable those tasked with upholding the law to play their part in tackling wildlife crime – from customs officials and government agencies to the police, prosecutors and judges.

## ENFORCEMENT IN THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

The “Golden Triangle” – the border area connecting Laos, Myanmar and Thailand – is one of the epicentres of wildlife trafficking. Trafficking thrives across porous borders, and products from endangered wildlife, including tigers, elephants, bears, pangolins and rhinos, were openly sold in the Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone, attracting tourists from China, Viet Nam and neighbouring countries. With support from the US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, we’re running a project to increase cross-border collaboration between enforcement agencies to clamp down on wildlife trafficking.

We work with a number of wildlife enforcement networks in the Greater Mekong region, which aim to step up coordinated action against wildlife crime at provincial, national and transnational levels. In Laos, WWF has been working closely with the Lao Wildlife Enforcement Network led by the Department of Forest Inspection. This collaboration has led to several actions against retail outlets and some significant wildlife product seizures, including two major ivory seizures in 2019 and a raid on a shop selling pangolin scale, elephant skin and bear bile in January 2020.

In Thailand’s northernmost province, we helped set up the [Chiang Rai Provincial Wildlife Enforcement Network](#) task force, the first of its kind in Thailand. The Thailand government has since decided to replicate the model and establish two more provincial wildlife enforcement networks in the border provinces with Laos and Malaysia.

Complementing these efforts, TRAFFIC produced a unique guide for law enforcement officers to identify wildlife species traded in the Golden Triangle. It includes information to help officials distinguish between species, including images showing how their parts might appear in trade, as well as on common wildlife smuggling techniques and spotting fraudulent CITES permits.

Available in English, Laotian, Burmese and Thai, the comprehensive guide will be printed and distributed to officers in all three countries. We also provided training workshops to more than 100 enforcement officers working in the region – more than 80% of whom had never received training in vital skills like species investigation.

## STRENGTHENING THE JUDICIARY

Courts in South Africa and Mozambique are seeing an increase in wildlife trafficking cases. It is crucial that prosecutions and penalties are swift, fair and reliable if they are to prove an effective deterrent, and we’ve carried out a range of training and capacity building activities to this end. In Mozambique, we trained prosecutors and investigators on collecting evidence and standard operating procedures at wildlife crime scenes, and trained judges from the Inhambane, Gaza and Maputo provinces on illegal wildlife trade, wildlife law and crime scene procedures. In South Africa, we updated the guide for the judiciary on environmental crimes with a chapter on wildlife trafficking. And we co-hosted a Joint Mozambique-South Africa Judicial Colloquium on Wildlife Trafficking for 60 magistrates, prosecutors and judges, where they shared lessons, experiences, observations and challenges in adjudicating environmental crimes.

We’ve also supported awareness training for members of the judiciary in the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA) in southwestern Africa. We carried out training for 346 members of the criminal justice system from Angola, Botswana, Namibia and Zambia, and we are developing a mobile app for the Directorate of Public Prosecutions in Botswana that law enforcement personnel and prosecutors can use to investigate and prosecute wildlife crime.

**Training:** Over the last two years, we’ve delivered training to hundreds of law enforcement officials all over the world, on topics ranging from forensic use of DNA analysis, to techniques for inspecting timber shipments and analysing seafood trade data to spot suspect activity. Some recent highlights include:

- Training webinars on tackling wildlife cybercrime in the EU, reaching nearly 120 officials from 27 countries
- Workshops for law enforcement officials in China on combating ivory trafficking, particularly at hotspots of smuggling and illegal trade
- Training on CITES and illegal wildlife trade for law enforcement officials in Zanzibar, delivered online because of the pandemic.



Temminck's ground pangolin  
© naturepl.com / Neil Aldridge / WWF



**Project TRIPOD:** A new project in Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines will provide more than 250 law enforcement officials with training and tools to improve species identification, investigations and handling of seized live animals, among other subjects. Project TRIPOD (Targeting Regional Investigations for Policing Opportunities and Development), a collaboration between WWF, Freeland and IFAW and funded by the US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, aims to improve interagency coordination and regional cooperation to dismantle transnational wildlife crime.



**Countering trafficking in Brazil:** WWF is supporting integrated approaches to counter wildlife trafficking in Brazil, as part of a project

led by Freeland Brazil. The project aims to improve capabilities to detect, investigate, prosecute and adjudicate wildlife crime cases. This includes creating a “special investigations group” with representatives of CITES management authorities, police, customs and prosecutors from Brazil and neighbouring countries Colombia, Guiana, Peru and Suriname. The scale of trafficking in Brazil was laid bare in a 2020 TRAFFIC publication, [Wildlife Trafficking in Brazil](#), which revealed how millions of native animals are illegally targeted each year for domestic and international trade. While species including turtles, fish, jaguars, frogs, insects, primates, songbirds and parrots are widely trafficked, a lack of good quality data and enforcement coordination between states and federal authorities conceal the true extent of the illicit trade.

## DNA DATA

We're using DNA to disrupt the trade in tortoiseshell products that threatens the future of critically endangered hawksbill turtles. Illegal trade in hawksbill products – from small-scale local markets to large-scale international operations – has changed significantly, so being able to retrace turtle products back to their source is critical to combat illegal harvesting and trafficking.

In partnership with researchers, universities, NGOs and governments, we're developing and applying genetic tools that will identify poaching hotspots and pinpoint the hawksbill populations that are most affected across the Asia-Pacific region. Because turtles always return to the same nesting sites, it's possible to identify their origin from differences in their genetic 'signature'.

We've already collected hawksbill DNA samples from 10 Asia-Pacific countries. In Australia, we've established the first ShellBank, a comprehensive genetic database of turtle populations drawing on surrendered tortoiseshell items and samples from nesting females. We've also kicked off a public campaign, Surrender Your Shell, calling on members of the public to donate historically bought tortoiseshell items to add to the database. Other countries in the region are interested in replicating this approach.

DNA forensics is an integral part of criminal investigations and prosecutions in today's world – and wildlife crime is no exception. The Wildlife DNA ForCyt Forensic Reference DNA Database, co-developed by TRAFFIC, has continued to grow, and now contains information on the entire mitochondrial DNA genomes of 38 species in trade – 25 mammals, 8 reptiles and 5 birds. DNA evidence helps conclusively identify species in trade, which can secure convictions, and provides valuable information about their origin.

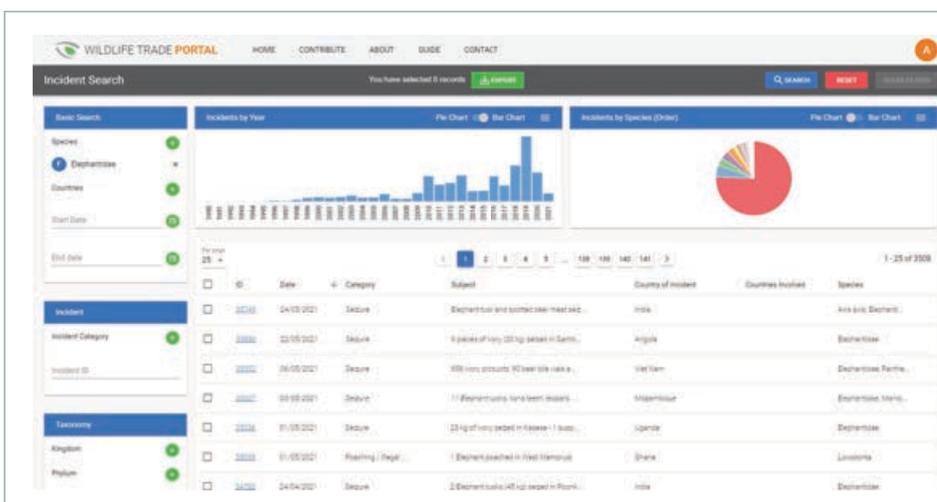
## TWIX NOW IN EAST AFRICA

Officials in Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya now have vital wildlife crime information and contacts at their fingertips with the launch of East Africa TWIX in February 2020. Co-developed and managed by TRAFFIC, TWIX (Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange) enables users – including police, customs, fisheries authorities and prosecutors – to share up-to-the-minute information on seizures or smuggling routes and methods, exchange messages and request support.

East Africa's is the latest TWIX network, following successful roll-outs in Central Africa and the Southern African Development Community. In Europe, the EU-TWIX system has more than 1,000 users and has supported numerous investigations and prosecutions, as well as providing invaluable information for analysing trade dynamics.



**Ivory stockpiles:** In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), TRAFFIC investigated how government ivory stockpiles are managed, and developed recommendations for a robust national ivory stockpile inventory management system. Without secure management, government-held ivory can leak into unregulated local markets and illegal overseas trade. Between 1990 and 2007, more than seven tonnes of ivory went missing from government custody in DRC.



### Wildlife Trade Portal:

In April 2020, TRAFFIC launched the Wildlife Trade Portal ([www.wildlifetradeportal.org](http://www.wildlifetradeportal.org)) – the largest open-source database of wildlife seizures and other incidents. Users can find and filter information from TRAFFIC's database, and upload relevant information of their own. To date, there are over 500 registered users from more than 60 countries.

## WORKING WITH THE TRANSPORT SECTOR

In September 2020, member states of the International Maritime Organization approved a proposal by the Kenyan government to develop guidelines to prevent wildlife smuggling using international shipping. An estimated 72-90% of illicit wildlife products by volume is trafficked by sea, with over 90 tonnes of pangolin scales and 15 tonnes of elephant ivory seized from container cargo transported between Africa and Asia in 2019.

We support this commitment and are working with governments and industry to support them to take action. For example, we've worked with the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers to help develop a course for port operators on addressing illegal maritime wildlife trade.

Our work with the aviation industry continues through the USAID Reducing Opportunities for Unlawful Transport of Endangered Species (ROUTES) Partnership led by TRAFFIC. The ROUTES Partnership is now expanding into

Latin America, where we've held meetings and workshops with airports and airlines in Brazil, Mexico, Colombia and Ecuador to help them take action to detect and deter wildlife trafficking. In Southern Africa, we've worked with ROUTES partners to launch a transport taskforce to help develop a regional strategy and collaboration to combat wildlife crime. And AirAsia became the latest airline to incorporate illegal wildlife trade modules developed by ROUTES into staff training.

We've also been working with the freight forwarding industry, responsible for the logistics of international shipments. "Prevention of wildlife trafficking" is now one of the standards companies must meet in order to obtain a diploma from FIATA, the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations. To support this, TRAFFIC helped FIATA develop a digital course on wildlife trade issues in the freight forwarding industry. The free course, currently available in English, French, Chinese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Arabic, equips freight forwarders with the information they need to protect themselves from inadvertently transporting smuggled wildlife goods and to report and respond to instances of wildlife trafficking

© WWF / Mike Goldwater



**An estimated 72- 90% of illicit  
wildlife products by volume is trafficked by sea**



A close-up photograph of a tiger resting on a tree branch. The tiger's head is on the left, and its body extends towards the right. The background is a blurred forest with green leaves and brown branches. A dark grey rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text.

# STOP THE BUYING

Poaching, overexploitation and trafficking will continue as long as there's a market for endangered wildlife products. We're working to reduce the demand that drives illegal trade, and to close down opportunities for people to profit from it.

## SHUTTING DOWN CYBER TRAFFICKING

Tech companies removed or blocked more than 3 million online listings in the first two years after the formation of the Coalition to End Wildlife Trafficking Online in 2018. These included live tigers, reptiles, primates and birds for the exotic pet trade, as well as products derived from species like elephants, pangolins and turtles.

WWF, TRAFFIC and IFAW convened the Coalition to address the growing threat of illegal online wildlife trade, with 21 of the world's biggest social media, e-commerce and tech companies on board. [Offline and in the Wild](#), a report released in March 2020, details the progress made so far. Currently, 42 companies are members of the coalition, putting aside commercial rivalries to collaborate for wildlife.

The Coalition has helped companies strengthen wildlife policies and staff capacity to detect potential illegal wildlife products and live wild animals. Algorithms, data sharing, expert monitoring and reports from volunteers through the Coalition's Wildlife Cyber Spotter Program have all contributed to shutting down cloud-based trade routes.

We remain actively involved in guiding the Coalition but we also draw attention to challenges faced by its members. In Myanmar, for example, WWF monitored a member company's user accounts to track profiles and groups that engage in wildlife trade in the first few months of 2020. We presented our findings to the company, and managed to get personal accounts of four high-profile traders and seven groups that specialize in buying and selling wild animals removed from the platform.



### **Clamping down on wildlife sales in Myanmar:** In Myanmar, WWF started the [Voices for Wildlife](#) coalition in 2017, calling

for an end to illegal wildlife sales in the country. A 2017-2018 campaign in Yangon led to the regional government announcing stricter enforcement against illegal wildlife trade: open sales of elephant ivory, once a common site in tourist markets in Yangon city, have now ended. The Yangon Forest Department also destroyed ivory stockpiles. The regional government in

Mandalay, where our campaign events in 2019-2020 included a wildlife-themed street parade, has also announced its commitment to work toward a Mandalay free of illegal wildlife trade.



**Sustainable tourism:** Fighting illegal wildlife trade is one of the aims of the Sustainable Tourism Alliance, launched by WWF-China in September 2020. Chinese tourists travelling abroad are often identified as significant buyers of illegal wildlife products. The alliance, which includes a number of Chinese travel companies and other major players in the sector, aims to influence consumer behaviour and strengthen industry practices to prevent travellers from buying and bringing home illegal wildlife products. We've also been working with the travel industry and customs officials to dissuade Chinese tourists in Laos from buying illegal wildlife products.

## BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Reducing consumer demand for wildlife requires more than just awareness-raising campaigns. For several years we have been drawing on behavioural science to design effective demand reduction strategies, and sharing what we've learnt through the [Social and Behaviour Change Community of Practice](#).

To mark World Wildlife Day in March 2020, TRAFFIC released a new [online course in Behaviour Change for Conservation](#) to inspire and guide anyone involved in this rapidly developing field. The course includes succinct summaries of some of the core concepts in behavioural science, as well as short videos, quick quizzes and other interactive elements. It was accessed more than 8,000 times in the first five months.

The course complements a range of resources available in the online [Wildlife Consumer Behaviour Change Toolkit](#), including 250+ research reports, consumer datasets and other technical and information resources.



### **DEMAND UNDER THE BAN: READ OUR LATEST RESEARCH INTO ATTITUDES TO IVORY CONSUMPTION IN CHINA**



### ***Demand reduction in China:***

Pangolins and rosewood – two species threatened by illegal trade – were the focus of our Champions of Change project in China, which ran from May 2018 to August 2020. We carried out market surveys, analysis of laws and policies and research to understand consumer behaviour, and followed this up with campaigns to reduce demand for illegal wildlife products, including pangolins, and encourage responsible consumption of rosewood.

We've continued online campaigns to reduce demand for rhino horn, as part of a project funded by Save the Rhino. We also produced campaign materials for a GIZ-funded project to reduce demand for ivory in China. The campaign is using social media platforms' big data analytics capability to identify and target high-risk consumers based on their online activity – a first for the conservation sector. In addition, TRAFFIC has conducted online and physical market surveys in China and across the Greater Mekong region to understand trends in ivory availability, with recommendations for action.





# CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

From publishing advocacy reports and policy briefs to driving agendas at international conferences, we push for stronger policies and action to tackle wildlife crime at national, regional and global levels. We offer tools and support to help governments put their commitments into practice – and will hold them to account through international mechanisms like CITES if necessary.

For our work to remain relevant, science-based and effective in a rapidly changing world, research and monitoring are vital. Our research reveals new insights that can influence policy and practice, while regular monitoring – from poaching incidents and wildlife seizures to products on sale in markets – helps us take action where it's needed most.

## CITES SUCCESSES

Tigers, hawksbill turtles, sea cucumbers and mako sharks were among the species to benefit from new rulings at the 18th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES CoP18) in Geneva in August 2019. We joined representatives from 170 countries as well as numerous conservation and industry organizations at the event, and our advocacy helped secure several important outcomes.

There was strong support for tackling the trade in big cats, including tigers, leopards and jaguars, with improved scrutiny and reporting for captive breeding facilities like tiger farms. In a welcome move, governments also fast-tracked strong measures to address the trade in marine turtles.

Three species of sea cucumbers – under severe decline due to their popularity in luxury cuisine in Asia – received trade protections for the first time, as did tokay geckos, mako sharks, guitar fishes and various timber species including Mulanje cedar, Mukula and Spanish cedar. Trade was banned altogether for several reptiles threatened by the exotic pet industry, including pancake tortoises from East Africa and Southeast Asian box turtles. Birds receiving increased protection included the black-crowned crane and the helmeted hornbill.

Governments voted to maintain a total ban on any international trade in elephant ivory. Disappointingly, though, there was limited progress in strengthening individual country plans to address their roles in illegal ivory trade, such as closing down domestic markets.

Other important developments included a resolution to strengthen cooperation between CITES and the World Heritage Convention to address illegal harvest and trade of threatened species in World Heritage sites. Parties also agreed to adopt more flexible rules for artisanal production of CITES-listed plants to support community-led livelihood initiatives.

To improve our capacity to advise and influence governments, we designed and delivered an internal CITES training course under the Voices for Diversity project, funded by Sida. The course included a mock CoP and committee meetings, and will help us in our advocacy efforts as we prepare for CITES CoP19 in 2022.

## TIGER TRADE

With only around 4,000 tigers left in the wild, illegal trade remains a threat to their survival. TRAFFIC's [Skin & Bones: Unresolved](#) report, released during CITES CoP18, revealed that 2,359 tigers were seized globally in 19 years, and highlighted where urgent action is needed to stop tiger trade.

One key area we're seeking to address is the role of tiger farms and other private captive tiger facilities. Our report [Falling through the system: The role of the European Union captive tiger population in the trade of tigers](#) showed how weak legislation and monitoring across the EU and the UK allow tiger parts, such as skins and bones, to enter illegal trade. Our analysis of CITES trade data reveals how the EU and UK continue to trade in live tigers and tiger parts and products with countries where tiger farms are known to feed the illegal tiger trade, such as China, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

In Thailand, WWF teamed up with World Animal Protection to campaign for an end to tiger farms. More than 10,000 people signed our petition calling for a ban on commercial breeding of tigers in captivity, and we presented evidence on the negative impacts that commercial breeding has on wild tiger conservation and our recommendations for phasing out tiger farms to the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment.



Smuggled tiger cub  
© WWF / James Morgan



**Pangolin protection:** In China, we're campaigning for a complete ban on domestic pangolin trade, and for stronger law enforcement at domestic and international level. International trade in all pangolin species was prohibited under CITES in 2016 but, as with ivory, legal domestic markets are used to launder illegally trafficked animals. In June 2020, the Chinese government upgraded the protection of pangolins to the highest level, which closed an important loophole for consumption of the species in-country. Pangolin scales have also been removed from the list of raw ingredients in China's latest traditional Chinese medicine pharmacopoeia, although pangolin scales were still listed as a key ingredient in various patent medicines. There are also currently no plans to undertake an inventory of existing stockpiles of pangolin scales.



**Ivory bans:** In 2019, Singapore became the latest country to announce a total ban on ivory sales, and has since focused greater effort addressing its role as a major transit country. The law comes into effect in 2021, as does a similar ban in Hong Kong. The closure of these two markets, coupled with China's ivory ban in 2017, further reduces opportunities to buy and sell ivory in Southeast Asia. We're also ramping up policy engagement to call to account those countries in Asia which have national ivory bans in place but where ivory is still openly sold.



**Cross-border cooperation:** International cooperation is crucial for tackling illegal wildlife trade. As a result of our Fighting Illegal Wildlife Trafficking in the Golden Triangle project (see page 28), three cross-border agreements were signed between Laos-Myanmar, Laos-Thailand and Myanmar-Thailand, identifying areas of high trafficking risk and planning joint enforcement actions and intelligence sharing.



Seized poachers' weapons, Gabon © WWF / James Morgan

**“Yes, I was fully aware that my decision was illegal, but I was encouraged to take the risk in order to make ends meet for my family.”**

**“If I were working, I would not have gone and done this. It’s just sometimes when you are in [a] tough situation, you resort to desperate measures.”**

**“There is no money where I am from. That’s why I was tempted.”**

Extracts from interviews with convicted wildlife offenders in South Africa. Watch: [The People Beyond the Poaching](#)

## UNDERSTANDING OFFENDERS

What drives people to become involved in poaching and wildlife crime – and how can a better understanding of their motivations help design effective interventions? During 2020, we carried out two research projects with people serving time for wildlife crime offences.

In South Africa, TRAFFIC interviewed 73 wildlife offenders. Almost three-quarters had been convicted for rhino-related offences; others were involved in illegal trade in abalone and cycads. More than half (55%) had been involved in poaching; other activities included transport, processing and storage, recruitment, and selling to buyers and intermediaries.

Most offenders had low education levels and had been either unemployed or informally employed. While they become involved in illegal wildlife trade for a variety of reasons, many said the main reason was to provide for their families, and that they lacked legal economic alternatives.

In Namibia, we interviewed a further 45 offenders serving custodial sentences between 1 and 14 years for wildlife-related crimes. Again, financial pressures were the main motivation. Some offenders were also unaware that their actions were illegal, or of the consequences they carried.

While strong penalties for poaching and other illegal activities have a role to play in protecting wildlife, custodial sentences may not always be the most appropriate penalty for low-level offenders, nor the most effective response to prevent future wildlife crime. Our research backs up the importance of taking a human rights-based approach to preventing poaching, suggesting that law enforcement efforts need to be complemented by behaviour change campaigns targeting potential offenders, as well as supporting alternative livelihoods and economic opportunities.



### READ THE REPORTS:

[The People Beyond the Poaching: Interviews with convicted wildlife offenders in South Africa](#)

[Trading Years for Wildlife: Wildlife crime from the perspectives of offenders in Namibia](#)



**Caviar crime:** A [WWF market survey](#)

found that a third of the sturgeon meat and caviar products in four key sturgeon countries – Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine – were sold illegally. Specifically, 19% of all samples came from wild sturgeon, which cannot currently be legally caught or traded anywhere in the region, while another 12% did not comply with international trade regulations. With all but one of Europe’s remaining sturgeon species facing extinction, the scale of the poaching and illegal trade in wild sturgeon caviar and meat threatens the survival of these iconic fish.



**Jaguar trafficking:** We developed

a report in conjunction with the Mexican Association of Mastozoology (AMMAC) on the growing threat posed by trafficking of jaguars and jaguar parts in Mexico. The findings were shared with the Mexican government and with the CITES Secretariat, which has commissioned a study into the regional jaguar trade. The report identified jaguar trafficking in the Yucatán Peninsula, mainly linked to jaguar-human conflict and other opportunistic events and mostly supplying local and national markets rather than international or Asian markets. It also found a dynamic market on social media platforms, with jaguars and other threatened species being traded and shipped by post. Skins for a wide array of species are offered in specialist groups, with ads posted and removed constantly to avoid detection.

## MARKET MONITORING

Our market monitoring provides insights into trends and trade dynamics leading to more effective responses, intelligence that leads to arrests and prosecutions, and evidence to support improved regulation and enforcement. Some of our monitoring work over the last two years includes:

- Monitoring of physical and online markets in the Greater Mekong (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam), which recorded thousands of ivory products and parts from other species including tigers, bears, pangolins and saiga.

- Online trade surveys of freshwater tortoises and turtles, with information compiled on key traders.
- Daily monitoring in the Philippines of the 20 most active online groups for trade in birds and reptiles respectively, and ad hoc monitoring of the activities of some identified traders. The authorities used this information to conduct a buy-bust operation, which led to a trader being convicted of illegal possession and trading of wildlife species.
- A six-month survey of social media and online platforms where birds are traded in Indonesia which highlighted the popularity of online bird singing competitions as a response to COVID lockdowns. Many of the estimated 66-84 million caged birds in Java are trapped and traded illegally, putting extreme pressure on wild populations. Illegal trapping and unsustainable trade of songbirds in Southeast Asia has reached crisis point, but is also a concern in other regions, including in Europe where illegal songbird hunting for food continues on a huge scale.



Javan Green Magpie (*Cissa thalassina*).  
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We work in partnership with a huge range of organizations and funders from the public, private and voluntary sectors. Thank you to everyone for your support: together, we will tackle wildlife crime.





# OUR MISSION IS TO CONSERVE NATURE AND REDUCE THE MOST PRESSING THREATS TO THE DIVERSITY OF LIFE ON EARTH.



South American river turtle (*Podocnemis expansa*) © Jaime Rojo / WWF-US



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