

Eliminate, Neutralize, and Disrupt Wildlife Trafficking Act of 2016
P.L. 114-231, Sec. 301(d)
2021 Strategic Review

The Eliminate, Neutralize, and Disrupt Wildlife Trafficking Act (P.L. 114-231; 16 U.S.C. §§ 7601-7644) (the “END Act”) directs the Presidential Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking (“Task Force”) to submit an annual strategic review and assessment of its work that includes, among other things, a review and assessment of its implementation of the Act; a description of Task Force member agencies’ priorities and objectives; an accounting of U.S. funding for combating wildlife trafficking (CWT); and recommendations for improving U.S. and international efforts to prevent wildlife trafficking in the future.

Wildlife trafficking is a serious transnational crime that threatens security, economic prosperity, the rule of law, long-standing conservation efforts, and human health. Executive Order 13773 issued in February 2017 called for a comprehensive and decisive approach to dismantle organized crime syndicates, and specifically recognized the connection between wildlife trafficking and transnational organized criminal networks.

The Task Force is co-chaired by the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Attorney General and brings together 17 Federal departments and agencies to implement the National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking (the “National Strategy”). The U.S. government’s (USG) three-pronged approach to CWT – strengthening law enforcement, reducing demand, and building international cooperation – makes illegal wildlife trade riskier and less profitable for criminals.

The U.S. government programmed approximately \$116 million in fiscal year 2020 funds to combat wildlife trafficking worldwide. This funding

has been directed to support a range of efforts at the local, bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels.

The Task Force's work on CWT is making a difference on the ground – at home and worldwide. Through the Task Force, efforts and activities are better coordinated across the USG; efficiencies are being identified and leveraged, redundancies eliminated, and resources used more strategically. International outreach continues to expand. Working in partnership with the private sector, local communities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the United States leads the way globally by securing agreements from governments and commitments from stakeholders to take action.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic challenged efforts to combat wildlife trafficking around the globe in 2020, U.S. programs, activities, and internal coordination to combat wildlife trafficking continued. The Task Force held weekly calls with the Department of State, the Department of Justice (DOJ), the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to ensure communication lines were always open and issues could be addressed quickly. Virtual monthly working group sessions to review member efforts in particular countries, or to consider new evidence and approaches, ensured U.S. resources were used strategically and effectively, avoiding duplication of effort, and identifying both gaps and coordination opportunities in USG efforts to combat wildlife trafficking. Task Force members also continued to meet virtually with individual non-governmental and private-sector partners, as well as with our international partners at the bilateral and multilateral levels. This coordination encourages and fosters new and expanding partnerships between and among agencies, effectively leveraging our whole-of-government approach.

Coordination among U.S. agencies in the field also continued to deepen and expand. U.S. embassies and USAID missions with substantial programs to address wildlife crime continued to convene CWT working

groups involving resident federal agencies concerned with conservation, law enforcement, security, defense, and other relevant areas. In collaboration with the Department of State, USFWS Office of Law Enforcement (USFWS/OLE) attachés were posted to U.S. embassies in South Africa, Brazil, China, Gabon, Mexico, Peru, Tanzania, Thailand, Vietnam, the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), Kenya, and the United Kingdom. Similarly, DOJ's Office of Overseas Prosecutorial, Development, Assistance, and Training (OPDAT), in coordination with the Environment and Natural Resources Division (ENRD), placed a Resident Legal Advisor (RLA) at the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane, Laos, specifically dedicated to bolstering the capacity of governments in Southeast Asia to investigate and prosecute wildlife trafficking crimes. In addition, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) had 80 foreign offices in 53 countries to facilitate investigations of transnational criminal organizations (including those involved in wildlife trafficking); support U.S.-sponsored training and capacity-building initiatives; and assist foreign law enforcement investigations into wildlife trafficking.

The guiding priorities and objectives of the Task Force agencies derive from the National Strategy, as expressly recognized by the END Act, and from the END Act itself. Those priorities and objectives are subject to further refinement in light of continuing progress and lessons learned from our ongoing efforts, as well as the country-specific assessments and strategic reviews required by section 301 of the END Act. Although the COVID-19 pandemic complicated our CWT activities throughout 2020, Task Force agencies continued to work with U.S. embassies and host governments in Focus Countries (major source, transit, and/or destination countries for trafficked wildlife) to assess the threats posed by wildlife trafficking and the capacity of the respective host governments to address those threats. Agencies also worked with U.S. embassies, in conjunction with relevant government officials and NGOs, to implement strategic plans to address wildlife trafficking in Focus Countries.

In November 2020, the Secretary of State approved a new visa restriction policy targeting individuals who are believed to be, or have been, complicit in or involved in trafficking in wildlife, wildlife parts or products, timber, or timber products, and the immediate family members of those individuals under section 212(a)(3)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). This policy provided the Department of State with a new tool for disrupting trafficking networks by ensuring that wildlife and timber traffickers, as well as members of their immediate family, are denied entry to the United States. The Department of State has subsequently taken action to impose this visa restriction on dozens of wildlife and timber traffickers from over 30 countries around the world. These individuals are responsible for trafficking elephant ivory, pangolin scales, rhino horn, lion bones, tiger parts, and numerous live animals to include primates, birds, and fish.

Looking ahead, the Administration will continue to prioritize disrupting and eliminating transnational criminal networks, including disrupting the illicit financial resources generated by wildlife trafficking that flow to those criminal entities. In addition, we are increasing efforts to develop and incorporate innovative technologies to combat wildlife trafficking while scaling up our collaboration with the private sector to address, among other things, online illegal trade and further engage the transport and financial sectors. We are also identifying and leveraging the connections with other conservation crimes, such as illegal logging and associated trade (ILAT), illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, illegal mercury use and trafficking associated with artisanal and small-scale gold mining, and the illegal extraction and trade in other minerals including precious metals and gemstones.

There is still much work to do. We need to continue supporting the involvement of the Intelligence Community (IC) in our counter-trafficking efforts. This is especially important given linkages between wildlife trafficking and transnational organized crime and the threat wildlife trafficking poses to human health.

We also remain mindful of the ongoing need to evaluate the effectiveness of our interventions using robust metrics among other measures. In 2019 the Task Force established indicators, as recommended by the Government Accountability Office, to assess our progress around the world. We worked with posts in Focus Countries to incorporate these indicators into country strategies, establish baselines, and set targets. For 2020, posts in all 28 Focus Countries submitted data on indicators monitored by the Task Force. Almost every post reported supporting host countries' wildlife law enforcement efforts with training or other resources in 2020. Across all Focus Countries over 34,900 individuals were trained to improve capacity to combat wildlife trafficking. Approximately 16 percent of people trained in 2020 were women.

Twenty-five of 28 Focus Country posts reported seizures of assets, proceeds, and illegal wildlife or wildlife products by law enforcement authorities, with an estimated value of \$223 million. Authorities trained or otherwise supported by the U.S. government seized more than \$8 million in illegal wildlife and wildlife products. Not all seized items were assessed a value. Seizures included high volumes of pangolin scales, bushmeat, elephant ivory, timber, and more than 19,000 live animals. Assets seized alongside wildlife products numbered over 18,000 items with an estimated value of at least \$200,000 and included at least 630 firearms, 260 vehicles, and tens of thousands of animal traps and snares. Twenty-two of 28 posts reported data on arrests, prosecutions, and convictions of wildlife traffickers. Many of these arrests and convictions were supported by U.S. government resources. Available data on arrests, prosecutions, and convictions, however, was largely ad hoc due to the absence in most countries of a central clearinghouse for compiling this information.

All Focus Countries are Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). U.S. experts assessed that 15 of 28 Focus Countries demonstrated poor implementation of CITES overall in 2020. Countries encounter

numerous obstacles to implementing CITES, including insufficient national legislation, low political will, and limited capacity and resources. According to reports by the CITES National Legislation Project, 12 of 28 Focus Countries had insufficient national legislation to carry out requirements under CITES. When a member Party fails to implement CITES, it may undergo compliance measures. For instance, eight Focus Countries (Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Laos, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Togo) are currently subject to trade suspensions under CITES. Trade suspensions can be recommended for commercial trade in certain CITES-regulated specimens or for all CITES-regulated trade and are typically levied as a result of ongoing compliance issues with CITES. In addition to these countries, U.S. experts also noted particular concern for CITES implementation in Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

Twenty of 28 Focus Countries were reported to have demonstrated a commitment to address supply and/or demand for illegal wildlife and wildlife products. China, Indonesia, Laos, Philippines, and Vietnam changed or solicited changes in laws to strengthen conservation and/or protect people and wildlife from unsafe or unsustainable uses. Many more countries showed commitment through robust enforcement of existing wildlife laws, including Bangladesh, Cambodia, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Indonesia, Madagascar, Republic of Congo, and Togo. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) established an interagency wildlife crime task force. Governments in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Mozambique, and Thailand took active roles in consumer demand reduction campaigns.

Businesses are also increasingly lending their reputation, staff, and funds to the cause, amplifying the reach and impact of USG efforts to combat wildlife trafficking. Task Force members documented private sector support for wildlife law enforcement or demand reduction in half of the 28 Focus Countries. In China, 16 companies and cultural institutions contributed ad space or distribution assistance for public awareness campaigns, including at least nine media corporations, two zoos, two

museums, and one airline. In Vietnam, 56 businesses posted demand reduction campaign materials on their premises, and 14 business leaders from diverse industries (industrial products, candy making, resorts) each made a public declaration to personally stop consuming illegal wildlife products and to encourage people in their networks to do the same. U.S. government efforts in the transportation sector engaged numerous airlines as partners in wildlife crime detection and deterrence.

Strengthening Enforcement

In collaboration with the Department of State, USFWS Office of Law Enforcement (USFWS/OLE) has attachés posted to U.S. embassies in South Africa, Brazil, China, Gabon, Mexico, Peru, Tanzania, Thailand, Vietnam, AFRICOM, and Kenya. In 2020, USFWS/OLE continued to expand its Attaché program to include additional Foreign Service National Investigators and Technical Advisors stationed in Thailand, Peru, and Gabon. Also in collaboration with the Department of State, the DOJ RLA assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane, Laos, focuses on combating wildlife trafficking in Southeast Asia. A veteran federal prosecutor with extensive experience with international cases, the RLA works with law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, and judges throughout the region to pursue and punish wildlife criminals, address the effects of wildlife crime and its connections to transnational criminal organizations, and ensure that wildlife crime laws in the region are adequate, if applied, to deter wildlife crimes.

Task Force agencies employ domestic laws and regulations to combat wildlife trafficking, including prosecuting wildlife traffickers for crimes that cross international boundaries and are tied to transnational criminal organizations. Prosecution of traffickers in U.S. courts is one of the most impactful enforcement activities, accomplished through coordination across multiple Task Force agencies. Domestic prosecution of wildlife trafficking requires close collaboration, as the prosecutors in DOJ's ENRD Environmental Crimes Section work closely with U.S. Attorney's Offices around the country and ENRD's

partner agencies (such as the USFWS/OLE, NOAA, and HSI) to prosecute wildlife trafficking cases in federal courts. These prosecutions, several of which are highlighted below, often require international cooperation among enforcement agencies to bring international traffickers and criminal organizations to justice. In such cases, DOJ routinely seeks punishments that include significant periods of incarceration, fines, and restitution or community service to help mitigate harm caused by the offense, forfeiture of the wildlife and instrumentalities used to commit the offense, and disgorgement of the proceeds of illegal trafficking.

USFWS/OLE continued to lead a law enforcement operation, in coordination with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), in East Africa focused on a criminal enterprise involved in a conspiracy to traffic rhinoceros horn and elephant ivory valued at more than \$7 million USD as well as heroin. A Kenyan national who was indicted as part of the conspiracy was extradited from Kenya to the United States to answer to the charges in the case.

Throughout 2020, the USFWS Attaché in Brazil collaborated with the Brazilian Federal Police (DPF) in a transnational investigation involving the trafficking of a rare and endangered species of live killifish. The investigation has documented hundreds of illicit transactions and identified a global trafficking network involving dozens of individuals across numerous countries who are trafficking endangered species via internet platforms, social media, and international mail. Many of the traded species are so rare and critically endangered that they persist only in singular locations on earth and are protected under national legislation in their respective jurisdictions. Thus far, the joint investigation has resulted in arrest and search warrants executed in both Brazil and the United States; the permanent removal of several Facebook Groups promoting global trafficking in protected species; pending prosecutions of subjects in Brazil, the United States, and Europe; and the repatriation to Brazil of thousands of live, endemic and endangered killifish seized in the United States.

USFWS/OLE Agents continued an investigation into what is believed to be one of the most organized and sophisticated smuggling operations of live wild species of reptiles and birds in the history of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Over the course of the investigation the Agents were able to document tens of thousands of animals that had been smuggled from Mexico and Central America into the United States. Platforms such as Facebook played a major role in the criminal enterprise's activities with almost all of the advertising and transactions taking place via social media, encrypted apps, and payment services. The market value of these animals has been conservatively estimated to be worth over \$6 million. Several Mexican nationals as well as a U.S. citizen have been charged with felonies for violations of the Lacey Act, smuggling, and money laundering.

USFWS/OLE and the DEA also obtained the first round of indictments resulting from a multi-year undercover operation involving the large-scale smuggling of shark fins, sea cucumber, and totoaba bladders, as well as international drug trafficking and money laundering. Members of this conspiracy included shark fin dealers who illegally exported shark fins; drug dealers, wildlife importers, owners and operators of front businesses who laundered proceeds; middlemen who further laundered illegal proceeds through multiple bank accounts; and marijuana stash house operators. In August 2020, 23 search warrants were executed across the U.S. with 12 subjects being arrested. The investigation culminated with the seizure of approximately 18,000 marijuana plants; 34 pounds of processed marijuana; approximately \$11 million in diamonds, gold, silver, and other precious metals; nine firearms; over six tons of shark fins (valued at approximately \$360,000); numerous other protected wildlife such as totoaba fish bladders (valued at approximately \$90,000); and approximately \$4.1 million in cash and bank seizures.

DOJ prosecuted several other notable wildlife trafficking cases in 2020. For example, a Florida resident pleaded guilty to illegally trafficking over 20 live water monitor lizards protected under CITES from the

Philippines. As part of his plea, the man admitted that he knew the monitor lizards he received had been taken in violation of Philippine law and imported in violation of federal law. In another case, DOJ charged a New York man for trafficking African wild cats in interstate commerce, violating the Lacey Act and the U.S. Animal Welfare Act. The dozens of caracals and servals that were illegally imported and sold are also protected under CITES and New York state law. DOJ also announced in another 2020 prosecution that a Florida couple had pleaded guilty for smuggling wildlife from Indonesia to the United States and reselling across the country and internationally approximately 3,100 CITES-protected wildlife items online worth more than \$200,000. In another case, an Irish national was sentenced to 12 months in prison for conspiracy to violate the Lacey Act for illegal rhinoceros horn trafficking. DOJ also announced that co-owners of a Puerto Rican saltwater aquarium online business pleaded guilty to export smuggling and violating the Lacey Act for collecting, falsely labeling, and shipping approximately \$400,000 worth of protected marine invertebrate species to customers in the United States and internationally.

In 2020, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's International Affairs program supported grantees across the world who experienced dire challenges related to COVID-19. The impacts of COVID-19 have varied, but almost every grantee has been affected in some way. Many grantees have had to completely stop activities due to local, regional, or international travel restrictions and to ensure the safety and well-being of their staff. To address these challenges, International Affairs helped connect grantees to opportunities to utilize administrative flexibilities offered across the U.S. government. These flexibilities have eased some of the administrative burden on grantees during this incredibly challenging year and have allowed grantees additional time to continue their work. USFWS will continue to support its valued field partners around the world as they navigate not only the public health crisis but also continued conservation challenges.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Homeland Security Investigations (ICE HSI) has 80 foreign offices in 53 countries. Each office facilitates investigations of transnational criminal organizations, including those involved in wildlife trafficking; supports U.S. sponsored training and capacity-building initiatives; and assists foreign law enforcement investigations into wildlife trafficking. ICE HSI and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) implement and utilize bilateral Customs Mutual Assistance Agreements (CMAAs) with 79 countries, which permit information sharing related to offenses administered and enforced by customs administrations, and serve as a legal basis for wide ranging cooperation with foreign partners.

In February 2020, ICE HSI participated in a workshop co-sponsored by the Ugandan government aimed at strengthening their National Wildlife Crime Coordination Task Force. This three-day event brought together 30 key law enforcement officers from various agencies represented within Uganda's task force, the Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF) and the National Taskforce on Anti-Poaching of Tanzania. The workshop shared information on the duties of task force members and measures taken to prevent and combat poaching and illegal wildlife trade. ICE HSI shared presentations on transnational wildlife trafficking investigative techniques and best practices, and participated in panel discussions on wildlife crime and illegal logging. Additionally, ICE HSI participated in discussions with LATF officials expressing interest in the development of standard operating procedures for investigating wildlife crime while promoting inter-agency coordination during intelligence gathering, investigations, and prosecutions.

From February to March 2020, the ICE HSI Nairobi, Bangkok and Singapore offices conducted joint ivory DNA sampling operations in collaboration with the University of Washington's Center for Conservation Biology (CCB). As part of ongoing ICE HSI investigations into international wildlife trafficking associated with ivory seizures in Africa and Asia, ICE HSI partnered with the CCB, Thailand's Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant

Conservation, Thai Customs, the Royal Thai Police, the Thailand Office of the Attorney General, and the National Parks Board of Singapore.

From September 14 to October 11, 2020, USFWS/OLE, ICE HSI, CBP, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), NOAA, and the INTERPOL National Crime Bureau in Washington, DC, coordinated their collective participation in Operation Thunder 2020, organized by INTERPOL and World Customs Organization. This month-long police and customs cross-border operation focused on particularly vulnerable species protected under CITES, and resulted in more than 2,000 seizures of wildlife and forest products. In total, 699 offenders were apprehended and at least one INTERPOL Red Notice for a wanted criminal was requested based on information gained during the operation.

In September 2020, an international conspiracy that profited from drug trafficking and the illegal wildlife trade and hid the illegal nature of the proceeds was shut down in a multi-agency law enforcement operation. Millions of dollars' worth of gold, silver, jewels, cash, and illegally traded wildlife were seized after multiple nationwide search warrants were executed. Initiated by USFWS/OLE and DEA, Operation Apex brought together multiple agencies, including ICE HSI, the U.S. Marshals Service, U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS), CBP, and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, under the umbrella of the Organized Crime Drug Task Forces. The operation targeted two businesses, in Florida and California, and a dozen individual defendants whose activities included international trade in illegal wildlife products, trafficking in marijuana, and a money laundering conspiracy to disguise the massive proceeds of the unlawful activities over at least a 10-year period. The case is being prosecuted for the United States by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Georgia with assistance from the DOJ Criminal Divisions' Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Section.

In October 2020, as the result of a joint investigation conducted by ICE HSI, USFWS/OLE, NOAA, CBP, USPIIS, and the U.S. Coast Guard and a federal prosecution led by the ENRD, the owner of a Japanese-flagged fishing vessel pleaded guilty to aiding and abetting the attempted export of shark fins out of Hawaii in violation of the Lacey Act. The company was sentenced to pay a fine of \$126,000, pay a forfeiture of \$119,000 representing the value of the vessel, and serve a period of probation of three years. This sentence represents the largest monetary penalty ever imposed for a federal shark finning case. During the three-year probation period, the company must adhere to a robust compliance plan developed in coordination with DOJ and supervised by the probation officer. The company must also retire and relinquish the fishing license in Japan previously associated with that vessel.

In October 2020, a joint ICE HSI and USFWS/OLE investigation concluded with a federal court judge sentencing an El Paso, Texas, man to complete a three-year term of probation, pay a \$5,500 fine, and \$7,200 in restitution. The defendant also forfeited 41 protected cacti and paid a \$100 special assessment. He was the sixth and final defendant sentenced in this investigation started in 2012, involving a substantial trafficking ring engaged in smuggling thousands of protected living rock cacti from the Big Bend region of Western Texas to customers around the globe. Cooperative investigative work conducted by USFWS/OLE, ICE HSI, the National Park Service, USPIIS, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and the USDA led to agents executing six residential search warrants and authorities making several arrests after intercepting multiple falsely labeled parcels at international mail facilities. Thousands of cacti seized by law enforcement during this investigation were cared for and donated to non-profit entities through assistance provided by Sul Ross State University. This successful prosecution was led by the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Western District of Texas and resulted in the six defendants collectively being sentenced to pay over \$140,000 in restitution and fines.

From December 8-10, 2020, an interagency team of U.S. government instructors delivered two half-day Illegal Logging and Forest Crimes Alumni Refresher Training workshops for participants of the February 2020 course on Illegal Logging and Trade for sub-Saharan professionals. These interagency trainings reflect a strong partnership between the USFS, ICE HSI, DOJ Environmental Crimes Section, and the Department of State to reduce illegal logging globally and to work cooperatively with source countries to prevent illegal wood from entering the United States. The workshop was held via a virtual platform hosted by ILEA Gaborone. Twenty-seven officers attended the two ILEA workshops, with officials from Botswana, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Cameroon, Gabon, Madagascar, and the Republic of Congo in attendance.

Throughout 2020, the AFRICOM Counter Threat Finance (CTF) Branch continued its counter wildlife trafficking effort in support of USAFRICOM Lines of Effort requirements and priorities, and the Presidential Taskforce. Due to the increased risk of zoonotic disease emergence relative to the illicit live animal trade, AFRICOM CTF focused efforts on networks involved in this activity. In 2020, CTF supported several USFWS/OLE priority cases involving networks trafficking rare and endangered species, and CITES Appendix II species, from Africa onward to the Middle East and China. Additionally, the branch contributed to four Congressional briefs – including one for the Senate Armed Services Committee – related to IWT, and supported operational efforts to mitigate illegal mineral extraction and logging, and IUU fishing.

The relationship between AFRICOM CTF and USFWS/OLE again proved valuable in 2020. CTF used information provided by USFWS/OLE to further Intelligence Community understanding of transnational criminal organizations (TCO) responsible for trafficking wildlife throughout the African continent. For example, in collaboration with USFWS/OLE, CTF determined that a TCO with – elements in east Africa – which previously operated exclusively in the illicit rhino horn

trade had diversified and possibly now trafficked contraband such as big cats, elephant ivory, and pangolins with most destined for Chinese markets. Within Africa these TCOs are highly organized, often demonstrating sophistication in the sourcing of contraband, smuggling techniques, and money laundering. In some instances, the TCOs operating in Africa are empowered by the highest levels of state and local government.

USFWS/OLE information also helped illuminate several instances of IWT convergence with drug trafficking and other organized criminal activities in Africa. Using this information, AFRICOM CTF uncovered shipment, organizational, and route convergence of drug trafficking and IWT networks, once assessed to be operationally independent of one another. As evidenced above, the information shared with AFRICOM CTF by USFWS/OLE continues to be critical in understanding and combatting IWT and related crimes within Africa. An improved understanding of the linkages between these TCOs with elements in Africa benefits the response undertaken by DoD and U.S. law enforcement, as the techniques and tactics often employed by these criminals are similar.

The Department of State implements CWT programs to help partner nations improve their interdiction, enforcement, investigative, and prosecutorial capacities, and foster cooperation within and across governments. Programs are strategically targeted to respond to local characteristics and ensure they are showing demonstrable results. The State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL), for instance, funds the Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park Wildlife Crime Unit in the Republic of Congo. For more than three years this crime unit, which has also been supported by USAID, worked with the Republic of Congo's Anti-Poaching Department, the Ministry of Forest Economy, the police, and prosecutors on a criminal case against a notorious poacher and ivory trafficker Mobanza Mobembo Gérard. In August 2020, a criminal court in the Republic of Congo sentenced Mobembo Gérard to 30 years in prison for the attempted

murder of park rangers, trafficking of ivory from poached elephants, and possession of military weapons. This criminal conviction and strong sentence marked a new precedent for the sentencing of wildlife traffickers in the country and served as a deterrent to would-be-criminals.

INL continued to provide tools and technology to counter illegal wildlife trade. For instance, INL provided support to operations centers to provide better intelligence in protected areas in DRC, Kenya, Thailand, and Zambia. In DRC's Kahuzi-Biega National Park, rangers use SMART, Garmin InReach, and satellite imagery to support their operational planning, enabling them to be more effective by targeting patrols and enforcement actions. In 2020, rangers using these techniques uncovered dozens of deforestation sites, encampments, and illegal artisanal mines. Recent surveys show that the population of highly endangered eastern lowland gorilla is increasing in areas of the park where these technological tools have been deployed and rangers are able to conduct more frequent patrols. This contrasts with the other sectors of Kahuzi-Biega National Park where gorilla numbers continue to decline. In addition, INL supported the deployment of the Electronic Stockpile Management System (SMS) to Angola, Nigeria, and Cote d'Ivoire. The SMS has been deployed to Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire for a little over a year and has already improved the ability of wildlife management authorities in both countries to manage existing ivory stockpiles and submit their annual report to CITES.

In Uganda, INL partnered with the Natural Resource Conservation Network (NRCN) to reduce trafficking of protected wildlife in and through Uganda. NRCN works to enhance the capacity of criminal justice entities in Uganda to interdict, investigate, and enforce wildlife laws and improve cross-border collaboration between Uganda and its neighbors. This project has cumulatively assisted in over 150 intelligence-led investigations, leading to 83 successful arrest operations and 147 suspects arrested.

A longtime-INL-funded partner in Malawi, the Lilongwe Wildlife Trust (LWT), helped support authorities in a number of high-profile arrests during 2020. In late 2019, Chinese national Lin Yun Hua was arrested after an extensive manhunt and financial intelligence investigation. In the months that followed, more than 20 family members and co-conspirators were arrested. The expansive Lin Zhang criminal network operated across Africa, trading in pangolin scales, rhino horn, ivory, and other illicit wildlife products. In July 2020, nine members of the criminal syndicate were jailed for a total of more than 56 years for their involvement in wildlife trafficking. INL helped Malawian authorities with case management as well as training on financial investigation and criminal analysis.

In 2020, INL launched its first program focused on CWT in China. This program aims to improve China's will and capacity to investigate criminal organizations involved in wildlife trafficking and arrest, prosecute, convict, and sentence those affiliated with them including the leaders of these organizations. Through a grant to the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the program supports information sharing between Chinese law enforcement and countries along major illicit supply chains for wildlife; develops and shares intelligence products to trusted government counterparts on wildlife trafficking; provides real-time support to CWT cases; strengthens interagency coordination; increases cooperation between law enforcement agencies and the e-commerce/social media and logistics sector; and ensures CWT remains on the agenda of the Anti-Money Laundering Department of China's central bank.

Through another grant with WCS, INL funds the Wildlife Crime Leadership Initiative (WCLI) in Vietnam and Indonesia. WCLI is a unique, long-term program to develop a corps of leaders who are prepared and committed to combat wildlife trafficking. Learning is structured through an interdisciplinary course that brings together an appreciation of wildlife, excellence in operational CWT techniques, and executive and management skills. The vision of this program is not only

to build great officers that are good at their job, but also to generate change-makers with a deep understanding of the illegal wildlife trade and the strategies needed to counter it. This represents a unique and pioneering approach to CWT efforts in Asia and is focused on long-term, sustainable change. The Government of Vietnam demonstrated its commitment to institutionalizing the program by providing high level support and incorporating WCLI into its approved list of training programs.

In Brazil, an INL-funded NGO, Freeland, is working with the government to bolster legislation on wildlife trafficking, develop and institutionalize a comprehensive CWT curriculum tailored to Brazil, and help the country engage in regional and transcontinental cooperation and information exchange. Freeland has created a wildlife legislative database by analyzing Federal legislation, regulatory norms, and State level legislation from every State. The database also contains several thousand notices of infractions, import and export registries, permits, and information on enforcement systems. While researching and conducting interviews for the database, Freeland identified 111 bills that affect wildlife trafficking and those that are potentially damaging to future cases. The database is also informing draft bills that will help counter wildlife trafficking in Brazil.

Through an INL grant, WCS worked with Guatemala to prepare a 2020-2029 national strategy and action plan to counter wildlife trafficking. The plan includes inter-institutional coordination, institutional strengthening, training, awareness, and sustainable management activities.

The Department of the Treasury continued to leverage its authorities and partnerships with enforcement and intelligence agencies to deter and disrupt wildlife trafficking networks by detecting and taking action on illicit proceeds of wildlife trafficking. Treasury components in the Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence (TFI) continue to engage with the interagency, civil society, and international partners to support

actions against criminal actors and enhance information sharing on wildlife trafficking.

In 2020, Treasury developed a strategy to engage interagency partners in the use of TFI tools to counter wildlife trafficking as a serious crime. Treasury actively engaged international partners as it led the U.S. government's extensive participation in the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) project on the money laundering risk associated with the illegal wildlife trade. As part of the project, more than 50 jurisdictions across the FATF Global Network provided relevant insight and case studies for the report, which informed environmental agencies, financial intelligence units, and law enforcement of wildlife trafficking typologies. Treasury coordinated the U.S. government's submission of eight case studies and crucial insight for the study. The report presented the FATF standards as a framework for jurisdictions to address wildlife trafficking threats by strengthening their national laws, policies, domestic coordination, and also promoted international cooperation and partnerships with the private sector and non-profit organizations. This will also serve as a tool for the private sector and not-for-profit organizations to encourage governments to adopt the good practices against this harmful crime.

Treasury's Office of Technical Assistance (OTA) developed material to raise awareness of the illicit finance aspects of wildlife trafficking, including by engaging with counterparts in Financial Intelligence Units and law enforcement on how to detect, investigate and prosecute these offenses. Treasury also continued to support and enhance interagency actions against criminal actors by leveraging its sanctions authorities and sharing Bank Secrecy Act (BSA) data. In addition, Treasury increased engagement with the private sector, particularly with dealers in precious metals, stones, and jewels to share information on money laundering threats associated with illicit wildlife trafficking.

Treasury also leverages BSA data to support the development of financial intelligence in domestic and foreign illegal wildlife trafficking

cases. TFI works with law enforcement and the financial industry to identify illicit actors suspected of engaging in illegal wildlife trafficking, laundering of illegal wildlife trafficking proceeds, financial connections, and key nodes in major transnational organized crime networks involved in trafficking activity. Through the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), training support and direct access to BSA data (suspicious activity, currency transaction, and other reporting) is provided as appropriate for members of the law enforcement community that investigate and trace proceeds related to various crimes, including wildlife trafficking. This includes law enforcement agencies that routinely investigate these crimes, such as USFWS/OLE.

USAID strengthened conservation law enforcement capacity in over 30 countries in 2020, primarily in Africa and Asia, and laid the groundwork for new responses to wildlife trafficking and broader conservation crime in Western Hemisphere countries. From parks to prosecutors, Agency partners made criminal justice systems worldwide more effective and responsive to wildlife crime. Many mission programs also worked to productively and safely engage communities to secure wildlife and natural resources on land they manage, to jointly patrol national protected areas, and to monitor and report illegal activity. USAID investments in 2020 resulted in 17,000 people applying improved law enforcement practices to fight conservation crimes, of whom more than 10,000 focused on combating wildlife trafficking.

In Central Africa, USAID partners continued support for ranger patrols in several protected areas. Supported units patrolled 82,306 km in FY2020, about 90 percent of the distance covered the prior year despite COVID disruptions. Patrols resulted in 166 arrests for wildlife crime, 65 percent fewer arrests during patrols compared to 2019. This declining rate of arrests per kilometer patrolled suggests rangers are effectively deterring poaching. DRC's Garamba National Park, for instance, recorded zero elephants poached in 2020, down from 100 or more per year prior to 2017, following four years of comprehensive USAID investment in law enforcement capacity within the park and targeted

development outside it. Training in 2020 included a ten-week command and tactics course that helped promote eleven rangers to the rank of officer. With INL's complementary support for anti-poaching training, community sensitization and engagement, and stronger prosecutions, USAID and the Department of State have improved enforcement responses inside and outside the park, as demonstrated by authorities seizing 129 kg of pangolin scales and arresting the trafficker responsible.

In East Africa, USAID's Conserving Natural Capital and Enhancing Collaborative Management of Transboundary Resources in East Africa (CONNECT) partnership conducted two training sessions on the Local Communities - First Line of Defense against Illegal Wildlife Trade methodology. The 87 participants, including 63 women, learned from case studies highlighting successes and challenges of community engagement in fighting illegal wildlife trade in the East African Community economic region. The participants, representing governmental and intergovernmental agencies, NGOs, and civil society organizations will continue to be engaged by at least seven webinars organized on this topic.

In Kenya, USAID supported 897 community rangers from 56 community conservancies to apply improved law enforcement practices. USAID support included funding for anti-poaching patrols and equipment such as ranger uniforms, two-way radios, data collection tools, and vehicles. USAID also helped the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association to develop a code of conduct for rangers, critical to ensure high standards are maintained across the country and region. USAID supported community rangers in Kenya to increase joint patrols--including transboundary patrols between Kenya and Tanzania--and promote closer collaboration between community conservancies and the Kenya Wildlife Service in reducing wildlife poaching, trafficking, and human-wildlife conflict.

USAID's conservation partnership in southern Tanzania continued to secure elephant corridors, detect poachers' camps, and help Tanzanian

communities and officials respond to threats. Aerial monitoring across 10,550 square kilometers was critical to law enforcement and corridor creation. The project increased connectivity between the Ruaha and Katavi National Parks, home to one of the largest populations of elephants in Sub-Saharan Africa, by working with communities to resolve their competing land claims and demarcate two wildlife corridors totaling 188 miles in length. The project also trained and deployed 20 village game scouts to monitor corridor integrity. Anti-poaching patrols in the corridor led to three arrests in 2020.

USAID's Landscape Conservation in Western Tanzania (LCWT) activity works with rural communities to secure area for chimpanzee range connectivity between protected areas on village land and forests where most chimpanzees are located. Efforts to strengthen natural resource management and land use planning are complemented by health and family planning services and related behavior change strategies. In FY 2020, LCWT's reserve management and enforcement training enhanced the skills of 798 village forest monitors, including 189 women, to conduct 66 patrols discouraging illegal activity in four districts. Patrols resulted in the collection of \$50,000 worth of fines and confiscations of forest products. All revenue from fines was returned to the district, successfully demonstrating improved local capacity to safeguard public funds through natural resource management.

In Uganda, USAID worked to strengthen donor partner coordination and consultations with Ugandan government institutions charged with combating wildlife crime, including the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife, and Antiquities, the Uganda Wildlife Authority, the Judicial Training Institute, Makerere University School of Law, and the National Wildlife Crime Coordination Task Force. Partners reviewed wildlife-related legislation and observed court proceedings to identify barriers to prosecution of wildlife crimes.

When the COVID-19 pandemic reduced tourism revenues needed to finance the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), USAID provided fuel

and other critical ranger supplies needed for the UWA's Law Enforcement Unit to continue patrols. In only two months, UWA rangers in Kidepo and Murchison Falls National Parks conducted 299 patrols, registered 293 cases of poaching, and made 77 arrests. Patrols had dropped to 40 percent during the pandemic, but USAID support allowed the UWA to increase patrols to 70 percent of pre-pandemic levels.

In Madagascar, USAID intensified control activities in protected areas in the Menabe and Makira-Masaola-Antongil Bay ("MaMaBay") landscapes, including support for 10,833 person-days of patrolling by community agents covering 24,662 km. More than 2,000 people applied improved law enforcement practices through training in and application of the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) to detect and report illegal activities. In the two landscapes, 24 of the patrols detected 27 crimes. USAID also empowered local communities, civil society organizations, and forestry agents to speak out about illegal logging and wildlife trafficking in Menabe and MaMaBay. To ensure community and government vigilance leads to action in the criminal justice system, USAID conducted training to improve prosecutor and judge understanding and appreciation of the legal framework for environmental crime, including wildlife trafficking.

USAID assistance to Mozambique's Niassa Special Reserve (NSR) supported 43,611 km of foot patrols and 43,398 km of aerial patrols by rangers operating out of 18 stations throughout the protected area, resulting in 48 arrests and reducing incidents of illegal hunting, mining and logging in the reserve. Emergency support to the Luwire Conservancy, a private concession within the reserve, maintained anti-poaching patrols along two-thirds of NSR's southern boundary despite COVID-related revenue shortfalls, and joint NRS-Luwire operations resulted in the arrest of two notorious elephant poachers with warrants outstanding since 2016. This sustained, comprehensive work to secure Niassa kept the park free from elephant poaching for another year, with zero elephants shot by poachers since May 2018. A law enforcement

advisor embedded in the conservation areas authority helped scale Niassa approaches and results nationally, and improved collaboration with neighboring South Africa and Tanzania.

USAID's partnership with the Gorongosa Project continued to reduce conservation crime in and around the Gorongosa National Park in central Mozambique while expanding park size and ecological connectivity with nearby conservation areas. One hundred and ninety-four trained rangers used digital radios and EarthRanger real-time surveillance technologies to secure all five sectors of the park, in one three-month period making 63 arrests and removing 814 wire snares and 88 steel-jaw traps. No lion has been killed in a snare or trap in the park since March 2019.

USAID's comprehensive approach in Mozambique includes assistance to the country's Attorney General's Office to improve the prosecution of wildlife crime cases perpetrated by transnational organized criminal syndicates, often facilitated by government corruption. In 2020, a team of Mozambican legal experts from three government institutions trained 162 rangers, prosecutors and judges, and supported a focal prosecutor to assist with collection and handling of evidence and case-building. These efforts resulted in 158 cases being prosecuted, including 95 wildlife crime cases. About 95 percent of initiated cases reached the courts, and 85 percent of cases heard led to convictions--an increase from less than 50 percent just three years ago. Prison sentences averaged 12-16 years for wildlife crimes.

USAID's multi-landscape, regional response to wildlife trafficking in southern Africa strengthens wildlife departments, forensics laboratories, and interagency task forces. In 2020, partners built the capacity of 7,101 people to combat wildlife crime, and helped 2,202 people apply improved conservation law enforcement practices. In the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA), a rhino poaching hotspot shared by South Africa, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe, 689 rangers were trained in enforcement ethics and standards to facilitate

their fair and respectful application of the law, important for building trust with local communities. In the Namibian part of the five-country Kavango-Zambezi TFCA, 226 game guards were trained in conservancy communication structures and management processes, game-count methods, and management of human-wildlife conflict. Partners supporting the Malawi-Zambia TFCA trained 320 law enforcement officers, 12 of whom joined the instructor cadre, and strengthened performance of rangers across the landscape. To expand and institutionalize ranger training throughout the region, a ranger leadership curriculum known as "Braveheart" was developed and piloted at the Southern African Wildlife College.

USAID also strengthened criminal justice capacity and coordination among prosecutors, magistrates, and judges in southern Africa through workshops and mentoring, judicial networks, and legal analysis. Interventions included a wildlife crime awareness symposium for members of the Angolan judiciary, a workshop on wildlife crime scene investigation (WCSI) and prosecution for members of Botswana's criminal justice system, two workshops on evidence identification and collection and standard operating procedures for WCSI in Mozambique, and a joint Mozambique-South Africa judicial colloquium.

Law enforcement capacity building and collaboration among Southern Africa rangers, police and members of the judiciary is catching criminals, deterring wildlife crime, and helping wildlife recover, as illustrated by results from the Malawi-Zambia TFCA. In FY 2020, 838 people were arrested on various wildlife offences and 1,170 kg of ivory were seized. Prosecutions resulted in 32 convictions, including a combined sentence of 52 years in prison for nine Chinese traffickers, and the voluntary surrender of 225 kg of ivory and wildlife skins valued at \$20,000. In Malawi's Kasungu National Park, within the TFCA landscape, the number of elephants has doubled from 55 in 2017 to an estimated 110 in 2020.

Community engagement and inclusion are essential elements of addressing wildlife crime in the region. In 2020, Greater Limpopo TFCA partners supported two community liaison officers and a coordinator to help South African National Parks (SANParks) strengthen community-park relationships on the western boundary of Kruger National Park. These positions assisted in drafting the SANParks Community Engagement Charter and facilitated negotiations for a cooperative agreement between SANParks and the Mdluli Trust/ Mdluli Safari Lodge, which operates inside Kruger on community-titled land.

USAID's support for transboundary landscapes in southern Africa is enhanced by cross-site coordination, learning and collective action. In 2020, USAID's VukaNow partnership convened 43 learning events and launched the "eVukaLearn" online learning platform to advance the sharing of information and best practices in combating wildlife crime. Landscape partners and government stakeholders explored diverse topics including crime-scene management, sentencing, tackling corruption, building partnerships for sustainability, behavior change communication, and the interaction among community livelihoods, human-wildlife conflict, and wildlife crime.

In Bangladesh, USAID and DOJ designed a new activity to build local law enforcement capacity and interagency collaboration while mobilizing networks of community stakeholders to combat national and transnational wildlife and other environmental crimes. USAID also launched new partnerships in 2020 to promote environmental conservation in rural communities and reinforce their existing roles supporting the Bangladesh Forest Department, including rescue and wild release of confiscated animals. Areas of support include training, strengthening participation and rights, transportation allowance for patrolling, and helping diversify local livelihoods.

USAID continued support for the Philippines Department of Justice's training program for prosecutors on wildlife and environmental crime prosecution, guided by the Supreme Court's Rules of Procedure for

Environmental Cases. Partners also organized a World Wildlife Day ceremony recognizing outstanding law enforcers and the NGOs that supported them in the past year.

In Indonesia, USAID strengthened the capacity of officials to conduct anti-poaching activities in six protected areas totaling 2.5 million hectares. Wildlife Crime Units also established informant networks in North Sumatra and Aceh Province, and identified suspected wildlife trafficking 'kingpins' and other criminals, turning information into government action. Twenty-six sting operations resulted in 54 wildlife poacher and trafficker arrests, of which 85 percent were prosecuted in 2020.

Wildlife trafficking sometimes starts as retaliation killing, as habitats shrink due to deforestation and wildlife comes increasingly into conflict with rural communities. To address this issue in Indonesia, USAID supported dedicated Wildlife Response Units (WRU) in the Leuser landscape to work with Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MOEF) officials and reduce human-wildlife conflict. With USAID support, WRUs responded to 257 community reports of human-wildlife conflicts, including 107 tiger, 93 elephant, and 52 orangutan incidents. WRUs established conflict mitigation measures with local communities to de-escalate incidents and prevent future conflicts. WRUs and MOEF officials scaled up this successful model in 221 communities while training over 1,200 community members. Since 2015, no tigers have been killed due to wildlife conflicts in this landscape.

In Vietnam, USAID developed and published three handbooks on wildlife crimes detection, investigation, and handling for Vietnam's Policy Academy, Forest Protection Department, and Customs Agency. In addition, USAID completed the Wild Animal Section of a handbook on Environmental Crime Investigation, intended for distribution to environmental crime investigation units in the country's 63 provinces. USAID partners also advised on and supported work to promulgate a circular, dated December 31, 2019, clarifying government policy

regarding handling of forest animals confiscated by or voluntarily surrendered to wildlife authorities. The circular includes guidance on how to manage and secure forest animals and their products as evidence for potential investigation and legal action. Applying the new guidance is expected to increase the effectiveness of wildlife protection, rescue, and release in Vietnam.

USAID planned or awarded new dedicated CWT or broader conservation crimes activities in Western Hemisphere missions in 2020, and several landscape-scale and protected area conservation activities also had CWT objectives. For example, the Partnership for the Conservation of Amazon Biodiversity (PCAB) contributed to countering illegal activities in Brazil by strengthening community-based management and monitoring in the Amazon's protected areas and Indigenous lands. Activities focused on training and supporting environmental agents; building the capacity of forest-dependent people to use technology for effective data collection, mapping and reporting; developing sustainable value chains that reduce incentives to engage in illegal activities; and supporting public policies related to environmental and territorial management.

The NOAA Office of Law Enforcement supported counter wildlife trafficking enforcement efforts through Joint Enforcement Agreements under the authority of the Cooperative Enforcement Program (CEP). Enforcement partners conducted inspections onboard vessels and at ports of entry to interdict illegal wildlife and IUU fishing products. In 2020, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) helped ensure the international trade in seahorses was being conducted in accordance with CITES and in a sustainable manner through a project designed to analyze the implementation and enforcement by Parties to CITES that have trade suspensions in place or are key importing countries. The project is also analyzing shifts in trade patterns since strict trade controls came into force in May 2004 following the inclusion of seahorses in the Appendix II list of CITES. Delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, analyses should be completed by the end of 2021

and will provide useful guidance on management and enforcement gaps and help identify any trends and emerging issues.

Recent work suggests that Southeast Asia serves as a global hotspot for the direct take of endangered sea turtles. As the coastal waters in this region support an intense level of fishing effort, the bycatch and direct take of sea turtles is likely linked to the illegal wildlife trade. NMFS is collaborating with partner government agencies at the national, provincial, and local levels as well as NGOs and local universities to better understand the scope of sea turtle trafficking in the region and the region's role as a source, transit, and consumer of illegally traded sea turtles and sea turtle products.

In 2020, NMFS created a partnership with the Philippines Department of Natural Resources, Palawan Council for Sustainable Development, the local NGO LAMAVE, and the wildlife forensics and genetics laboratory at the University of Philippines to catalogue and monitor seizures of green and hawksbill sea turtles being trafficked through the country. This partnership standardized data collection protocols, developed genetic tissue sampling kits, and created a response team to support law enforcement interdiction of sea turtle trafficking. Tissue samples were collected and properly stored at the University of Philippines with plans for genetic analysis to determine the origin of the sea turtles. For past interdiction events, a database was developed and, when possible, linked to samples in storage warehouses. These initial activities serve as a foundation for further conservation efforts aimed at reducing sea turtle bycatch and illegal wildlife trafficking.

Through its Species in the Spotlight Initiative, NOAA continued to build on partnerships aimed at monitoring, assessing, and reducing direct harvest of leatherback sea turtles in nesting and foraging habitats in Indonesia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands. Collaborations between NMFS and a broad coalition of international partners are working to reduce threats from poaching and predation on two island areas of the Maluku Province in Indonesia. In the Kei

Islands, a robust regional monitoring and conservation outreach program was implemented and has documented a reduction in leatherback sea turtle hunting. On Buru Island, the establishment of a beach monitoring and conservation outreach program has reduced poaching of leatherback sea turtle nests.

Despite COVID restrictions, in-country partners helped pass village-level regulations and educational outreach that encourage sea turtle conservation and protection. These initial successes will require sustained commitment to maintain conservation momentum and ensure long-term success.

The Solomon Islands is another hotspot fueling the illegal trade, consumption and sale of sea turtles in local markets. In 2020, NMFS continued work in the Solomon Islands at Isabel Island to protect and monitor key leatherback sea turtle nesting areas. Community-based assessment efforts were geared towards quantifying nesting activity and reducing anthropogenic threats, including the reduction of poaching pressure. The addition of a sea turtle conservation officer helped build the capacity within the Isabel Provincial Government and lead sea turtle conservation initiatives, greatly enhancing leatherback, hawksbill, and green sea turtle conservation work in the province.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the IC was unable to make progress on additional counter wildlife trafficking efforts in the year 2020. With the easing of the pandemic and the return to normal operations for the workforce, the IC looks forward to reassessing how it can contribute to combating wildlife trafficking starting in 2021.

Reducing Demand

The National Strategy recognizes that, as we work to strengthen enforcement, we must also reduce demand among consumers at home and abroad. This involves raising awareness about laws and penalties associated with buying or selling illegal wildlife and wildlife products,

the efficacy, safety and public health risks of illegal wildlife used as food, medicine or pets, and the economic, social and ecological impacts of wildlife crime. To help people make better choices, we need to reduce opportunities and incentives to buy illegal wildlife products.

In 2020, USG efforts to reduce demand for illegal wildlife products and to raise awareness about wildlife crime reached an estimated 344 million people across 18 Focus Countries. These behavior-change campaigns and communication initiatives targeted illicit products such as elephant ivory, rhino horn, and pangolin scales and meat, as well as trade in species less covered in the media such as songbirds and hornbills. Task Force members and partners used a broad array of creative approaches to raise awareness and reduce demand. For instance, one campaign reached as many as 60 million people in Vietnam, including millions of passengers travelling through Da Nang airport. In Thailand, USG-funded demand reduction messages reached as many as 52 million people, through a combination of public service announcements, short videos played at hotels, and digital deterrence: Google ads, prompted by ivory-related search terms, intended to persuade or frighten potential buyers from continuing to search for and buy ivory. In China, public service announcements on pangolin, ivory, rhino horn, and tiger trafficking reached an estimated 45 million people. In Kenya and East Africa, a U.S.-supported television series on wildlife conservation reached an estimated 13 million viewers.

Close to 50 awareness campaigns were implemented to inform roughly 180 million people in target audiences, such as business professionals, community members, tourists, students and the general public. Despite restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, campaigns effectively disseminated demand reduction messages to target audiences mostly through social media, but also print materials (i.e., billboards, posters, pamphlets), PSAs on radio and/or television, virtual presentations, or more often than not, a combination of outreach approaches. Awareness and demand reduction campaigns informed the public and potential consumers about a variety of wildlife species and conservation issues,

but largely focused on native and/or endangered wildlife species such as pangolins, elephants, rhinos and tigers.

USAID leads USG efforts to decrease demand for illegal wildlife products through Social and Behavior Change Communications (SBCC) campaigns targeted at specific consumer groups. SBCC training increased during FY 2020, demonstrating a more sophisticated level of U.S. government support for demand reduction. SBCC campaigns in Asia aim to decrease demand for high-value products such as ivory, tiger parts, rhino horn, and pangolin. In China, Thailand and Vietnam, powerful behavior-change campaigns reached over 165 million potential consumers. In FY 2020, SBCC efforts also began in Indonesia to decrease demand for live songbirds and in East Africa for bushmeat.

In Thailand and China, USAID supported the successful launch of nine SBCC demand reduction campaigns similar to those USAID was already supporting to reduce demand for rhino horn in Vietnam. Complementary efforts in Thailand reached 53 million potential consumers of ivory and tiger products. The “Beautiful Without Ivory” campaign produced a series of short videos and PSAs, while videos and PSAs from the “A Good Life is Free of Killing” campaign targeted the general public and consumers of ivory and tiger products.

Thailand’s “Beautiful Without Ivory” campaign was amplified through a pilot Digital Deterrence campaign in which keywords searched in Google generated pop-up advertisements presenting would-be buyers with one of three statements: “Ivory is never beautiful and never acceptable,” “Beautiful without Ivory: Pledge to stop using ivory,” or “Warning! The content that you are searching may violate wildlife law.” Monitoring demonstrated significant impact: campaign viewers stated they were 40 percent less likely to buy ivory and 42 percent less likely to view ivory as acceptable.

To reach a broader audience, the Wildlife-Free Gifting campaign in China aimed to decrease demand for ivory, rhino horn, and tiger

products by placing on-line content on video websites, news applications, and social platforms as well as public spaces such as outdoor lightboxes in residential communities and TV screens in apartment and office buildings and on metro lines. An estimated 46 million potential consumers were reached.

In Vietnam, USAID funded a multifaceted campaign targeting demand for ivory and pangolin scales, with 100 billboards and videos on Facebook and YouTube. A series of longer sitcom-like videos, such as the one entitled “Tiger Bone is Not a Gift,” targeted some of the social drivers behind consumption of illegal wildlife products. The Chi Initiative Phase III campaign in Vietnam released new PSA video content disseminated through Facebook, YouTube, and news websites aimed at reducing demand for rhino horn. Chi PSAs were displayed free of charge at Da Nang Airport and on LED screens displayed at multiple locations, including wharves, tourist information booths, and hotels. Chi posters and Chi campaign materials were also disseminated by the Vietnam Automobile and Transport Association and its members on 300 passenger cars and trucks and in six bus stations in six cities.

Private sector support for SBCC campaigns was substantial in FY20. More than \$7 million of in-kind support was leveraged from stakeholders such as the China Railway Guangzhou Group and the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Longer-term sustainability of demand reduction efforts was secured through consistent fostering of international collaboration. For example, moving forward, the Digital Deterrence campaign will be continued by WWF Thailand using funds from a United Nations Development Programme/Global Environment Facility project.

USAID-funded SBCC train-the-trainer workshops were held in Vietnam with longstanding private sector partner Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) and a new partner, the Hanoi Association of Women in Small and Medium Enterprises. High-level events organized with government partners helped embed SBCC in on-

going government communications and ensure that counter wildlife trafficking messages will be communicated beyond the life of the activity. The 40 individuals trained at VCCI later held 124 trainings for 7,313 business people, distributing conservation messages to the business community throughout Vietnam without additional USG funding. USAID also collaborated with Vietnam's University of Social Sciences and Humanity to support training for nearly 160 tourism industry managers on wildlife trafficking-related responsibilities in Quang Ninh and Ho Chi Minh City.

The impact of USAID-supported awareness raising campaigns and events with the University of Social Sciences and Humanity and the Vietnam E-commerce Association was impressive: more than 500 entrepreneurs and tour guides signed a pledge committing to not use illegal wildlife products and agreeing to promote wildlife protection to customers; 58 companies committed and took action to join hands against wildlife crime; 32 travel agents representing tourism cruises and 4- and 5-star hotels displayed stands and/or integrated messages in their tour booking leaflets or informational brochures; fifteen travel agents and 17 tourist accommodation agents integrated wildlife protection messages into their tourism leaflets and information; and, more than 100 tour guides signed a pledge committing to inform tourists about the new penalties for wildlife violations and boycott of purchasing or using wildlife products. National television agencies, such as VTV, Hanoi TV, and National Assembly TV, broadcast video clips about illegal wildlife trade more than 200 times in three months, reaching on average 30,000 - 40,000 viewers each time. In addition, approximately 500 in-person participants and over 5,000 online viewers were trained on how to integrate wildlife-driven corporate social responsibility practices into their daily operation.

SBCC training was also an important component of USAID's work in the Philippines. Partners trained local governments and protected area management boards on community-based behavior change campaigns around wildlife demand reduction and biodiversity conservation. One

such campaign, Wild and Alive, included billboards, online messages, and outreach events for tourists and potential wild bird consumers. Key communities were engaged through events such as an awareness parade, costumed wild bird mascots, and a conservation pledge booth.

Songbirds are the most widely traded species group in Indonesia and are often unsustainably caught in the wild. To reduce this trade, USAID developed and implemented a behavior change campaign designed to reduce consumer demand. Over 71,000 songbird-keepers were reached through informational announcements and peer influencers on Facebook, YouTube and Instagram, and through songbird keeper and breeder associations. Separately, USAID mentored representatives from seven Indonesian CSOs and four universities through the process of designing and implementing a collaborative social media campaign to raise awareness of helmeted hornbill conservation.

In addition to targeted demand reduction campaigns, USAID supported extensive messaging to raise awareness among key stakeholders and the general public, reaching more than 178 million people in 2020. CWT awareness-raising efforts supported by USAID ranged from Facebook posts, such as approximately 100 messages related to counter-wildlife trafficking posted for Cambodian followers, to community radio programs and public debates in Mozambique. In Kenya and East Africa, thirteen episodes of a USAID-supported wildlife conservation television series have aired, with each episode focused on a particular species and the local conservation heroes working to protect it. The series is also linked to educational materials for “Wildlife Warrior” clubs in schools.

USAID continued support in 2020 for the courageous efforts of environmental and investigative journalists to inform the public about wildlife crimes and underlying corruption. Following four years of USAID support to build journalists’ advocacy skills on key local environmental issues, Indonesia’s Environmental Journalists’ Forum received a wildlife conservation award from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. In South Africa, USAID created a short

training module on investigative and environmental journalism that is available on the eVukaLearn platform.

USAID partnered with the Department of the Interior's International Technical Assistance Program (DOI-ITAP) to support Internews' Earth Journalism Network efforts to empower East African journalists, editors, media outlets, and journalism associations in the region to improve media coverage of conservation issues, including wildlife trafficking. In-person training was provided to 29 East African journalists (11 women and 18 men) on "solutions towards ecosystem conservation and combating the illegal wildlife trade." Travel stipends awarded to 12 East African journalists produced nine in-depth stories on conservation and wildlife topics. A series of three webinars attracted hundreds of participants from around the world to discuss topics such as the role of wildlife trade in the spread of zoonotic diseases, the impact of COVID-19 on wildlife conservation in the East African Community, and investment in communities to conserve wildlife.

Building International Cooperation

The Department of State's Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES) works globally to strengthen international cooperation, maximize diplomatic efforts, and secure U.S. interests on CWT. OES engages through a range of regional and multilateral fora, including the Group of Seven (G7), Group of Twenty (G20), United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), High-level Political Forum (HLPF), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), East Asia Summit (EAS), Mekong-U.S. Partnership, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative on trade agreements (e.g. United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)).

The COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted the zoonotic disease risks of wildlife trafficking and the threat these diseases pose to human health. In 2020, OES efforts to elevate attention to the zoonotic disease risks of wildlife trafficking secured new commitments in EAS, ASEAN, and APEC, along with a variety of CWT efforts in the new US-ASEAN work plan. Speaking to ASEAN in April 2020, the Secretary of State urged the People's Republic of China (PRC) and ASEAN members to take additional steps to prevent future pandemics by closing high-risk wildlife markets and increasing efforts to combat wildlife trafficking. The PRC subsequently temporarily banned wildlife consumption for food and shut down wildlife farms, while Vietnam halted wildlife imports and ramped up enforcement on illegal wildlife markets. OES also convened a June 2020 virtual zoonotic disease roundtable for Southeast Asia to encourage further action by other countries in the region and continues to urge the PRC to permanently close its markets and close loopholes in its wildlife bans.

Despite ongoing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, OES continued to strengthen transboundary cooperation for wildlife enforcement networks. In 2020, OES continued to promote international cooperation and coordination on CWT through support to regional Wildlife Enforcement Networks (WENs). WENs are regional intergovernmental networks that bring together wildlife authorities, law enforcement, customs and border officials, prosecutors, and other stakeholders to build cross-border cooperation as part of this award. OES helped strengthen WENs worldwide through a nearly \$1 million award to the International Consortium for Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC), a collaborative partnership of the CITES Secretariat, INTERPOL, UNODC, World Bank, and World Customs Organization. The award to ICCWC provided support to the Horn of Africa WEN (HAWEN) and the South Asia WEN (SAWEN). The United States also partnered with UNODC to support meetings of the South American Wildlife Enforcement Network (SudWEN).

To advance international cooperation on wildlife crime cases, the Department of State supported the World Customs Organization, which is a member of ICCWC. The United States also continued to push for near-complete ivory bans in all countries where the trade contributes to poaching of wild populations and pressed countries with legal ivory trade to ban their domestic ivory markets. OES also held its annual Zoonhackathon in 2020, bringing together teams of university students, software professionals, and wildlife enthusiasts from a record number of cities in a weekend-long coding competition to create unique technological solutions to combat wildlife trafficking challenges. This program supports U.S. efforts to reduce wildlife trafficking by strengthening USG relationships with private sector stakeholders, raising public awareness among new and diverse audiences, and empowering participants to become part of the solution.

Due to COVID-19, the fifth annual Zoonhackathon moved to a new virtual format, bringing together nearly 700 participants from 53 countries around the world, and generating more than 60 innovative technology solutions. To help develop winning solutions, OES and U.S. Embassies in host countries recruited private sector technology and NGO partners such as Microsoft, Vulcan, Traffic, and TechSoup. The 2020 global winner, Brazil's team BioUp, created a mobile app for enforcement officials that uses blockchain technology to verify whether animals come from legal breeding sites based on their license or band numbers.

The State Department also continued to lead the U.S. interagency effort on the Administration's priority initiative to combat conservation crimes, which includes wildlife trafficking, illegal logging, crimes associated with IUU fishing, and the illegal extraction and trade of gold and other minerals, precious metals, and gemstones. These illegal activities have links to transnational organized crime, including drugs, weapons, and human trafficking, and pose similar threats to national security, economic prosperity, the rule of law and the environment. Under this initiative, OES spearheads an interagency

effort to tackle financial crimes and money laundering associated with wildlife crime. This effort includes policy approaches, capacity building and training, and working with the financial sector. In 2020, this effort included a series of workshops to build private sector and enforcement capacity to combat financial crimes associated with wildlife trafficking in the Mekong region.

The U.S. government continued to engage with U.S. trading partners on efforts to combat wildlife trafficking under its free trade agreements (FTAs) with Central America and the Dominican Republic (CAFTA-DR), Peru, Chile, Jordan, Oman, and Morocco. Technical support is operationalized under work programs implementing environmental cooperation agreements negotiated in parallel to free trade agreements. Additionally, to further enhance monitoring and implementation of the environmental obligations of Mexico under the USMCA, including related to combating the illegal take and trade of wild fauna and flora, USTR placed three environment attachés in Mexico City to conduct on-the-ground monitoring of priority trade and environment issues.

Under the framework of CAFTA-DR, the Department of State and the USFWS/OLE provided funding to DOI-ITAP to support foreign government officials in combating conservation crimes. In 2020, DOI-ITAP coordinated with the Central American and Dominican Republic Wildlife Enforcement Network, CAWEN (ROAVIS in Spanish – www.roavis.net) and other partners to train 368 officials in 11 events. Topics included wildlife cybercrime, environmental crime money laundering, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) implementation/enforcement, Belizean park ranger development, environmental legislation updates, electronic permit systems, and enhancing enforcement and inspection efforts. Despite COVID19 restrictions, countries continued to conduct national operations and investigations, primarily re: fires, illegal wildlife shipments, and timber trafficking.

In February 2020, DOI-ITAP and partners held graduation ceremonies for two six-month long environmental judicial courses in Honduras and El Salvador, developed and delivered with the Public Ministries, judicial schools, and a university. DOI-ITAP worked with the Public Ministry of Costa Rica to thoroughly revise the policies/regulations for prosecuting environmental and cultural property crimes in Costa Rica. DOI-ITAP and CAWEN/ROAVIS organized the 9th regional CAWEN/ROAVIS meeting (virtual) in July-August 2020 with CAWEN/ROAVIS officials; U.S. Embassies in Central/South America, USFWS/OLE, and the CITES Secretariat. DOI-ITAP and CAWEN/ROAVIS officials also celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Network with coordinated social media posts and expanded this into a four-month social media campaign in Spanish to reduce demand for wild flora and fauna.

DOI-ITAP and Costa Rican authorities continued to update the electronic permit system used by the Costa Rican government to track CITES and other permits, provide public access for permit applications, track government enforcement actions, and provide access to agencies to verify permits at ports of entry. DOI-ITAP continued to work with regional governments and experts to enhance the Vida Silvestre mobile app (www.vidasilvestre.net) and support the region in highlighting the app with an official Notification to the Parties (CITES 2020-58). In November 2020 with the support of European Union Red Jaguar Program and the collaboration of the Guardia Civil's Service for the Protection of Nature of Spain, DOI-ITAP designed and delivered a virtual Cybercrime Webinar for 77 law enforcement officials combating wildlife trafficking from 18 countries and 32 agencies.

Under the 2018-2021 work programs for environmental technical cooperation under the FTAs with Jordan, Morocco, and Oman, the Department of State, through an interagency agreement with DOI-ITAP, provided support on CITES implementation. In Jordan, DOI-ITAP worked with NGO partners, the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Sustainable Human Development and the Royal Society for the

Conservation of Nature (RSCN), to carry out a mobile app contest to support CITES-listed species identification and permit review and authentication. DOI also worked with RSCN, the CITES management authority, and other key implementing agencies in Jordan to develop an electronic permitting database to strengthen legislation and implementation of CITES, and to provide training on CITES laws and regulations in Jordan and internationally. In Morocco, DOI-ITAP worked with the Department of Water and Forest (DEF), the CITES management authority, to establish a CITES steering committee, to develop an electronic database to strengthen CITES coordination, to provide technical assistance and training to Customs inspectors, and to develop a national outreach campaign on wildlife trafficking. DOI-ITAP also continued work with an NGO, Barbary Macaque Conservation in the Rif (BMCRif), on raising awareness to protect the endangered Barbary macaque. DOI provided an in-country advisor to assist Oman's Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs (MECA) in drafting CITES implementing regulations, but this was cut short by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This support continued remotely with DOI expertise as well as input from the CITES Secretariat, although regulations are not yet in place.

The United States has also supported global coordination efforts to improve implementation and enforcement of CITES. The USFWS International Affairs program carries out functions of the Secretary of the Interior as the U.S. Management Authority and Scientific Authority for CITES. International Affairs convenes USG agencies to prepare for CITES meetings and enhance implementation of CITES globally. As one example of inter-agency efforts to build CITES capacity, International Affairs, with Department of State funding, supports the CITES Secretariat to combat wildlife trafficking by executing activities outlined in Decisions and Resolutions adopted by CITES Parties through a cooperative agreement. Additionally, an inter-agency agreement between International Affairs and INL aims to enhance implementation of CITES in Southeast Asia. This work has led to numerous outcomes, including the development of National Ivory Action Plans and enhanced

CITES implementation in Cambodia and Lao PDR. An interagency agreement with USAID established in 2020 provides further opportunities to build the capacity of Parties and support the work of the Secretariat.

USAID global and regional programs foster international cooperation through joint training, enforcement collaboration tools, and other means. For example, USAID's Combating Environmental Crime partnership with INTERPOL provided the resources to staff the coordination of Operation Thunder 2020. INTERPOL also organized a meeting in Thailand with police, customs, and wildlife authorities from Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, and Thailand in which participants analyzed the turtle and tortoise trafficking networks operating in South and South-East Asia and identified key members of the networks for a joint investigation. The meeting focused on the smuggling of live exotic species from Africa to South Asia for the pet trade stemming from the overlapping trafficking routes. Bangladesh was highlighted as a preferred transit hub, often used by networks to smuggle wildlife in and out of India, including turtles and tortoises, birds, crocodiles, primates, and big cats. INTERPOL has been working closely with the Bangladesh police authorities to collect and analyze data linked to these illegal wildlife traffickers and has organized meetings with the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau of India to develop a list of known individuals facilitating contraband transport across the India-Bangladesh border crossing points.

In 2020, USAID supported the South African Judicial Education Institute, in partnership with the Mozambican Legal and Judicial Training Centre, to host a wildlife trafficking colloquium attended by 60 members of the Mozambican and South African judiciary. South African and Mozambican prosecutors and judges shared best practices in CWT intelligence, surveillance and case development.

Following years of USAID support, a significant milestone was achieved in 2020 with the Ministerial-level adoption of the West Africa Strategy to Combat Wildlife Crime, which established a comprehensive

strategy and framework for members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to address CWT issues, a first for the region.

Through its Counter Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC) model, USAID brought together law enforcement professionals from Asia and Africa to learn from each other and build rapport needed to cooperate in the future to disrupt criminal networks. USAID also produced a handbook offering detailed information on how governments or donors can host their own CTOC events. Over 90 percent of responding participants found CTOC informative and relevant to their responsibilities.

In collaboration with USAID/ASEAN, USAID's Regional Development Mission in Asia supported the ASEAN Working Group on CITES and Wildlife Enforcement to develop their new five-year regional plan of action. This new plan harmonizes and strengthens the policy framework that guides the ten ASEAN Member States in their regional cooperation on wildlife trafficking.