

Ivory Bill

Factsheet – Illegal Wildlife Trade



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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The Illegal Wildlife Trade

The illegal wildlife trade (IWT) is worth up to £17 billion a year. It undermines state institutions and the rule of law. Between 2004 and 2015 data submitted by parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) recorded more than 164,000 seizures, in 120 countries that affected nearly 7,000 different species. Such large scale seizures suggest involvement of transnational organised criminal groups being facilitated by corruption. This can involve obtaining false permits, paying bribes at borders, or laundering the proceeds of crime through international financial centres.

Species threatened by IWT can be found around the world and only habitat destruction is a more significant threat to species survival. Countering the illegal wildlife trade, requires concentrated multilateral and bilateral action – to raise awareness, eradicate markets, strengthen legal frameworks, fortify the law enforcement response and promote alternative livelihoods.

The UK as global leader on tackling IWT

The UK has shown global leadership and led international efforts to tackle IWT, hosting the first international conference in 2014 at which more than 40 governments agreed to urgent co-ordinated action against the trade. This conference was hailed as a turning point in global efforts to tackle IWT and UK's current work on the trade fits within the four strategic pillars agreed at the conference:

1. eradicating the market for IWT products;
2. ensuring effective legal frameworks and deterrents;
3. strengthening law enforcement; and
4. providing sustainable livelihoods and economic developments.

The UK has also played a leading role in supporting follow-up at events in Botswana (2015) and Vietnam (2016) where the UK announced further action to tackle IWT. This included sharing expertise with Vietnamese customs enforcement; supporting co-operation between Chinese and African border forces; and providing financial support to the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime to strengthen criminal justice

systems and co-ordinate support at national, regional and international levels. There is, however, much more that needs to be done.

To help reaffirm political commitment at the highest levels we are bringing global leaders back to London this October for another conference. The conference will focus on tangible outcomes for delivery – in particular it will strengthen international partnerships across borders and beyond government, and will focus on three key themes:

1. tackling illegal wildlife trade as a serious organised crime;
2. building coalitions; and
3. closing markets.

UK IWT funding programmes

To support our global leadership on tackling the illegal wildlife trade the UK Government is investing £26 million in practical solutions around the world. These include:

- additional funding for Interpol to expand their work with key nations, tracking and intercepting illegal shipments of ivory, rhino horn and other illegal wildlife products;
- funding the British Military to provide tracker training for park rangers in African states;
- up to £4 million for the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime to help strengthen criminal justice systems and coordinate support at regional, national, and international levels to combat wildlife and forest crime; and
- supporting 47 projects around the world through Defra's Illegal Wildlife Challenge Fund. Projects include those which: train rangers, border force agents, and prosecutors; campaign to reduce the demand for products in key markets; support legislative reform to increase conviction rates and penalties for wildlife crime; and help communities to manage their wildlife and benefit from it – for example through tourism.



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:

The Ivory Bill Team

Email: IvoryConsultation@defra.gsi.gov.uk