



4TH INTERMUN

ANIMAL

TRAFFICKING



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WEBSITES

- INTERPOL (Official Portal): Environmental Crime – Wildlife Crime.
- Available at: <https://www.interpol.int/Crimes/Environmental-crime/Wildlife-crime>
- INTERPOL & UNEP Joint Report: The Rise of Environmental Crime – A Growing Threat to Natural Resources, Peace, Development and Security. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and INTERPOL.
- Available at: <https://www.interpol.int/News-and-Events/News/2016/N2016-079>
- INTERPOL Global Operations: Operation Thunder (Annual Global Law Enforcement Operations against Wildlife and Timber Crime).
- Available at: <https://www.interpol.int/Crimes/Environmental-crime/Thunder-operations>
- UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime): World Wildlife Crime Report: Trafficking in protected species. United Nations, Vienna.
- Available at: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/wildlife.html>

GLOSSARY

- **Poaching:** The illegal hunting or capture of wild animals (UNODC, 2024).
- **Smuggling:** The secret and illegal transportation of wildlife across borders (UNODC, 2024).
- **Endangered species:** Animals or plants that face a high risk of extinction (UNODC, 2024).
- **Wildlife trafficking:** The illegal collection, transportation, and trade of wild animals and plants (UNODC, 2024).
- **Biodiversity:** The variety of plants, animals, and ecosystems in the natural world (UNODC, 2024).
- **Seizure:** Wildlife or wildlife products taken away by authorities because they were illegally traded (UNODC, 2024).
- **Conservation:** Actions taken to protect wildlife, species, and their natural habitats (UNODC, 2024).
- **Habitat:** The natural environment where an animal or plant lives (UNODC, 2024).
- **Seizure:** The act of authorities taking possession of illegally traded wildlife or products (UNODC, 2024).
- **Illegal trade:** The buying and selling of wildlife in violation of national or international laws (UNODC)

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF INTERPOL ?

Our full name is the International Criminal Police Organization and we are an inter-governmental organization. We have 196 member countries, and we help police in all of them to work together to make the world a safer place.

The General Secretariat coordinates our day-to-day activities to fight a range of crimes.

We also coordinate networks of police and experts in different crime areas, who come together through working groups and at conferences to share experiences and ideas.

INTERPOL focuses especially on terrorism, cybercrime, organized crime, and financial crime and anti-corruption. Its headquarters are located in Lyon, France. INTERPOL remains politically neutral and works within the laws of its member countries

OVERVIEW

Transnational Wildlife Crime

Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) is not merely an environmental concern; it is a high-profit, low-risk global criminal industry. Ranked as one of the largest illegal markets worldwide—alongside drug, arms, and human trafficking—it generates an estimated USD 20 billion annually. Criminal networks exploit wild flora and fauna at every stage of the supply chain, from illegal poaching and transportation to processing, laundering, and distribution.

Why Our Committee Matters

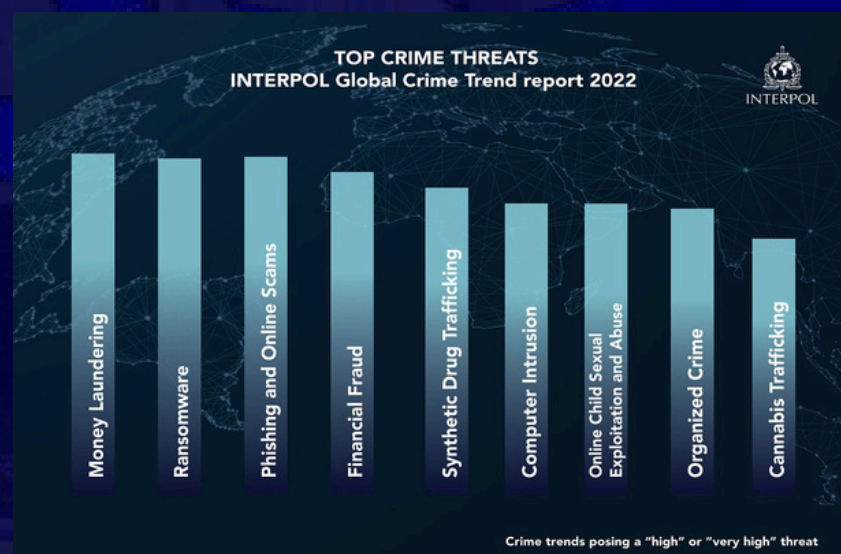
Addressing transnational wildlife crime requires multi-disciplinary collaboration, rigorous policy research, and coordinated enforcement strategies. By joining this committee, delegates will engage in high-level debates, analyze international legal frameworks (such as CITES), and develop innovative resolutions aimed at disrupting illicit supply chains, protecting global biodiversity, and strengthening international security.



GENERAL INFORMATION

Key Data & Official Insights from INTERPOL

- **Transnational Organized Crime:** Wildlife trafficking relies on sophisticated global networks that engage in financial crimes, such as money laundering, document falsification, tax evasion, and corruption. Criminals often utilize existing narcotics and arms trade routes to move illicit animal and timber products across borders.
- **Impact on Biodiversity & Security:** Poaching drives endangered species toward extinction, degrades delicate ecosystems, and destabilizes rural economies. Furthermore, illegal wildlife markets pose severe risks to global health by facilitating the emergence of zoonotic diseases.
- **Global Enforcement Operations:** Through targeted global initiatives—such as Operation Thunder, Project Predator, and Project Wisdom—INTERPOL coordinates multi-agency operations (police, customs, border control) across more than 90 countries. These efforts have led to thousands of seizures of illicit products and the dismantling of major international trafficking rings.



CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Illegal wildlife trafficking remains a global problem. According to UNODC, between 2015 and 2021, around 4,000 species were affected across 162 countries and territories. Despite international efforts, this crime continues to threaten wildlife and ecosystems.

Wildlife trafficking is also connected to organized crime, corruption, and money laundering. The internet and social media have made the illegal trade of animals, especially exotic pets, easier. (UNODC, 2024)

In Operation Thunder 2025, coordinated by INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization, authorities from 134 countries made 4,640 seizures and confiscated nearly 30,000 live animals.

INTERPOL plays an important role by helping countries share information, identify criminal networks and trafficking routes, and coordinate international operations. (INTERPOL, 2025)



POINTS TO DISCUSS

1. **The role of social networks:** Private encrypted chat rooms allow syndicates to advertise exotic animals globally while evading traditional cyber-intelligence trafficking.
2. **Money laundering and Institutional corruption:** Transnational cartels exploit underfunded border checkpoints by bribing local officials.
3. **Biosecurity failures:** Unsanitary, high - stress, and crowded illicit supply chains dramatically raise the risk of zoonotic spillover and potential global pandemics.
4. **Minimal Judicial Risk:** Wildlife trafficking is often prosecuted as minor infraction, attracting organized crime due to its high profits and low legal risk.
5. **Habitat Degradation & Wild Extraction:** Systematic extraction of wild species disrupt ecosystems structures, pushing endangered populations toward rapid extinction.
6. **Uninspected Freight & Maritime Routes:** Commercial sea transport is exploited to move tons of illicit animal parts hidden within massive legal cargo containers.
7. **Exploitative Wildlife attractions:** Social media trend driving commercial selfie tourism encourage the illegal capture

POINTS TO DISCUSS

8. **Consumer demand driven by traditional medicine myths and luxury status symbols:** Ingrained cultural beliefs regarding the medicinal properties of animal parts and the glorification of rare animals as luxury status symbols fuel continuous extraction.
9. **Inadequate Border Inspection:** Customs checkpoints lack advanced screening tools, allowing concealed, wildlife shipments.
10. **Species Laundering:** Traffickers falsely label wild- caught animals as legally captive-bred specimens using fraudulent breeding permits.

ORGANIZATIONS

- International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC)
- Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- World Customs Organization (WCO)
- World Bank Group (WBG)
- International Crime Police Organization (INTERPOL)



MEASURES TAKEN

The INTERPOL Wildlife Enforcement team helps to disrupt and dismantle transnational organized criminal networks involved in the illegal wildlife trade. We assist our member countries to enforce national and international laws and treaties effectively.

- **Project Predator:** This project has been enhancing law enforcement's capacity to conserve Asian big cats and other wildlife since its creation in 2010. These big cats are killed due to the high value of their fur on the black market and the demand for their body parts for traditional medicines and other uses.
- **Project Wisdom:** Elephants and rhinoceros are poached for their ivory and horn respectively. Ivory is carved and sold as artifacts, while rhino horn is reduced to powder and used in traditional. Project Wisdom supports member countries in the conservation of these precious species and bring down the criminal networks that are hunting elephants and rhinos
- **Operation Thunderstorm:** This operation targeted the people behind the illegal trade in wildlife and timber, and involved police, customs, border, environment, wildlife and forestry agencies from 93 countries. The operation saw almost 2,000 seizures and the identification of some 1,400 suspects, triggering arrests worldwide.



WHY IS IMPORTANT

Importance of the Topic

Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) poses a direct threat to global biodiversity, environmental stability, and international security. Classified by INTERPOL as a major form of transnational organized crime, wildlife trafficking fuels systemic corruption, deprives developing nations of critical natural resources, and threatens delicate ecosystems with irreversible collapse.

Beyond its environmental impact, the illegal wildlife market directly intersects with other gravity-driven crimes, including financial fraud, tax evasion, money laundering, and human trafficking. Furthermore, the unregulated movement of wild species poses significant public health risks by drastically increasing the likelihood of zoonotic disease outbreaks. Addressing wildlife crime is not only a matter of conservation, but an urgent necessity for global security, economic integrity, and international law enforcement.



OBJECTIVE

Committee Objective

The primary objective of this committee is to analyze, discuss, and formulate multi-layered international strategies to combat wildlife trafficking across the global supply chain. Delegates will evaluate current international legal frameworks—such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)—and leverage enforcement methodologies modeled by organizations like INTERPOL.

Throughout the sessions, delegates will aim to:

- **Disrupt Illicit Supply Chains:** Draft measures to strengthen border enforcement, improve customs inspections, and enhance intelligence-sharing mechanisms.
- **Tackle Financial Crime:** Formulate policies targeting money laundering and the illicit financial flows that sustain wildlife trafficking networks.
- **Strengthen Legal & Regulatory Frameworks:** Close legislative loopholes that enable poachers and traffickers to operate with impunity.
- **Promote Cross-Border Cooperation:** Foster effective collaboration between law enforcement agencies, judicial systems, and international regulatory bodies.

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