ifaw

disrupting illegal wildlife trade through training

400+

species confiscated in the MENA region over 2 years from 2019 to 2020

establishment of a wildlife court in DR Congo to prosecute wildlife and environmental crimes

▶ This Sunda pangolin has been successfully released after undergoing rehabiliation by 1StopBrunei Wildlife Clinic in Borneo. Pangolins are illegally taken by poachers from their habitat and killed to be used as part of medicine.

Photo: M. Shavez/1StopBrunei Wildlife

Wildlife trafficking is not only a threat to the survival and conservation of species, but also poses a threat to the communities that share their lands with wildlife. It has been linked to other forms of organized crime and is one of the most lucrative crimes due to its low risk and high rewards.

Supporting law enforcement to identify illegal trade

Law enforcers including the police, customs officials, prosecutors and judiciary are responsible for the prevention, arrest, investigation and prosecution of wildlife traffickers found with illegally traded wildlife and wildlife products.

However, there is often times a lack of awareness among enforcement agencies about what constitutes legal vs. illegal trade, as well as about the consequences of illegal trade for endangered species. In addition, some countries that act as transit countries, have insufficient resources to ensure that these officers have the skills and knowledge to enforce international regulations and requirements mainly due to varying challenges including civil unrest, lack of inter-agency collaboration and language-appropriate materials.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is an international agreement between governments that took effect in 1975. Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. Because the trade in wild animals and plants crosses borders between countries, the effort to regulate it requires international cooperation to safeguard certain species from over-exploitation. CITES was conceived in the spirit of such cooperation. Today, it accords varying degrees of protection to more than 37,000 species of animals and plants, whether they are traded as live specimens, fur coats or dried herbs. 183 parties are bound by the convention to date.

Photo: IFAW

Photo: IFAW

151

trainings conducted by IFAW with 6,446 participants in over 40 countries from 2005 to December 2019

40

trainings with 3,430 enforcers conducted by IFAW in China from 2011 to 2019

◀ Participants at an IFAW-supported DISRUPT in Hekou, Yunnan province in China in June 2019. The training aimed to enhance the capabilities of enforcement agency personnel to combat wildlife trade along the China-Vietnam border.

▶ Participants in a DISRUPT to combat illegal wildlife trade held in Tunisia in December 2019.

Detecting Illegal Species through Prevention Training (DISRUPT)

IFAW developed a specialized capacity building workshop called Detecting Illegal Species through Prevention Training (DISRUPT) since 2007, to provide concerned local authorities with the essential knowledge and expertise to stop wildlife trafficking, and to implement the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

DISRUPT is a customs and enforcement training program on illegally traded species with thousands of participants trained in over 100 trainings across 40 countries

Using practical hands-on approaches, IFAW builds the capacity of officers in enforcement agencies to identify and correctly handle commonly trafficked species. The trainings are conducted in collaboration with CITES management authorities and other government agencies in source, transit and consumer countries of wildlife. Trainings focus on the wildlife trade status of species, wildlife crime and enforcement, and international trade conventions. To aid and improve international and regional communications in detecting, interdicting and combating wildlife crime and trafficking, participants are drawn from multiple agencies.

DISRUPT has tackled critical trade routes in source and transit countries across the globe. DISRUPT focuses on bringing critical law enforcement and customs agencies together at key ports of entry/exit and provides illegally traded species identification, CITES permit, and other relevant training.

Case study Asia region

In December 2011, in order to strengthen the supervision of international trade in endangered species and jointly crack down smuggling and illegal use of endangered species, the China CITES Office coordinated 15 relevant departments (including forestry department, forestry police, China Customs, Fishery law enforcement departments, Market supervision and management department, Transportation management department, etc.) to launch the mechanism called National Inter-agency CITES Enforcement Coordination Groups (NICE-CG). The provincial level CITES office also established corresponding regional mechanisms. From 2011 to 2019, IFAW has conducted 40 trainings with 3,430 enforcers in China.

After years of efforts, the joint law enforcement mechanism and law enforcement capability in different provinces in China have been significantly strengthened with support from IFAW, and combating wildlife crime has become a high priority for regional governments and law enforcement departments.

Photo: J. Nyagah | IFAW

Photo: IFAW

30

trainings were administered in IFAW East Africa over 10 years (2010 - 2020)

74

trainings were carried out in Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region to combat wildlife trafficking

◀ Participants at a DISRUPT in Kenya identify wildlife products. Wildlife product identification is a critical component to stop wildlife crime.

▶ Participants look at possible wildlife products at one of the DISRUPTs conducted by IFAW in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in June 2019.

▶ see how at ifaw.org

#StopWildlifeCrime

Case study East Africa region

Since 2010, IFAW East Africa has administered over 30 national and regional DISRUPTs with over 800 front-line and managerial law enforcement officers drawn from Customs, Wildlife Authorities, Police, Immigration, Airport Authorities, Military and Forestry trained. Countries covered include Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Djibouti, South Sudan, Malawi Tanzania, DR Congo, Burundi and Rwanda. The training curriculum is tailored based on needs assessments done in source and transit countries of wildlife and wildlife products.

A DISRUPT undertaken in 2019 in the Queen Elizabeth-Virunga Landscape targeting participants from Uganda and DR Congo led to the establishment of a wildlife court in Goma, DR Congo. This court was the first in the region and was set up solely to prosecute wildlife and environmental crimes. Support from government agencies in the region is of critical importance in the success of these trainings and consequently in combatting wildlife trafficking.

Case studies MENA region

Since IFAW opened a branch office in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in 2007, over 74 DISRUPTs have been carried out in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region to combat wildlife trafficking. The trainings seek to equip the concerned authorities with information and tactics they need to disrupt wildlife trafficking, build stronger communication amongst countries that share borders to encourage cooperation in addressing illegal trade and support implementation of CITES which protects endangered wildlife. To enhance the implementation of CITES, the IFAW MENA office often offers in-kind support to the management authorities in the region.

In addition, the IFAW MENA office has implemented several campaigns and activities to raise awareness on the negative impacts on animals, habitat and exotic pet ownership. The main challenge with owners of exotic pets is to change behavior that has been passed down to younger generations. The campaigns are undertaken in collaboration with the governments in the region.

Since IFAW opened a branch regional office in the United Arab Emirates, IFAW trained 2,500 officers through 74 trainings in 19 countries across the Middle East and North Africa.